



Mill Water School

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COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Mill Water School

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1.0 **Context**

This appendix has been developed in response to and aligned to Department for Education guidance [Covid-19 Safeguarding in schools colleges and other providers](#) published 27th March 2020.

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable children and those of workers **critical to the COVID-19 response** - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children –

- **children who are vulnerable** (see para 2) and
- children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This appendix to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during this period and is likely to be reviewed at regular intervals, particularly when new advice is released by the Local Authority (LA) or Department for Education (DfE). This appendix to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will also be reviewed should Mill Water School play 'host' to a collapsed provision or direct pupils/staff to a 'cluster' school. The review will then consider any information about 'hub' working issued by the DfE, and consideration will be made, for example, on the sharing of vulnerable pupil information, the reporting of concerns and updating of safeguarding files.

It remains the case that **safeguarding is everybody's responsibility**; therefore, this additional information needs to be shared with all staff and volunteers who in turn must read, digest and seek support from their DSL team or school leaders if further clarification is required. All staff should continue to have access to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and KCSiE 2019, where further details and information can be found.

The schools' safeguarding team (DSL, DDSLs and Safeguarding Governor) and their contact details can be found in the main body of Mill Water School's Safeguarding Policy. Changes to the DSL and DDSL during these exceptional circumstances can be found in para 3 of this appendix. Any changes will be shared with all staff and volunteers of the school.

2.0 **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker (including children in care) and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed (by the school, or other professional) as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Every child attending Mill Water School has an EHC Plan. Every child will therefore be risk-assessed individually, in consultation with parents and the Local Authority, where necessary, to decide whether they should be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. We expect all but a very few children to remain at home because that is where they will be safer.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Mill Water School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if not possible by other means.

Mill Water School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. If current plans and support packages exist for these pupils, the school will continue to provide for these as best as possible in conjunction with the relevant agencies. The lead person for this will be Lynne Hasell.

2.1 Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Key staff and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need and those on CP should be attending school – we will then follow up ([Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19](#)) on any pupil that we were expecting to attend, who does not.

Mill Water School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

We will complete a return online so the DfE can monitor who is in school and who isn't by midday everyday [Covid-19 Attendance recording for educational settings](#)

The LA has a duty to monitor vulnerable children's attendance and Mill Water School will be completing the necessary spreadsheets and returning to schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk daily.

2.2 How will this look in our school?

To support the above, Mill Water School will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Mill Water School will take the actions described in the [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#).

2.3 Children not attending school

All children who are not attending school will be contacted on a regular basis (at least once per week) so that we are satisfied that they are safe. School will follow the [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#) along with that from other agencies working with the pupil and family. The DSL or Deputy DSL will review their RAG ratings for this group at least weekly taking into account any reported concerns from school contact or any information from partner agencies such as ViST reports. Any changes will be recorded on the school's central vulnerable group spreadsheet and shared with the Headteacher, if not DSL. **Any changes in the RAG rating will be sent to the LA on this link so the master records can be updated.** schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mill Water School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and three Deputy DSLs. During this extraordinary situation their contact details are as follows:

Role	Name	Contact Number 1	Contact Number 2	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lynne Hasell	01395 568890	07752 275256	lhasell@millwater.devon.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Pickering (Head Teacher)	01395 568890	07717 776693	spickering@millwater.devon.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Rowan Allen	01395 568890	07752 275262	rallen@millwater.devon.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Vicky Eul-Barker	01395 568890		veulbarker@millwater.devon.sch.uk

3.1 DSL cover in school

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone when working from home. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection records and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

3.2 Informing staff

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy), or the named school leader. Mill Water School will inform all staff and volunteers of changes to the details above.

Therefore, each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them. The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings which can be done remotely, or seek support and liaise with Early Help professionals.

Any changes to the DSL on duty will also be shared with those staff working from home via email. School will also have a daily information board sharing the DSL and safeguarding contacts for the day for all staff working on site.

Any changes to the Safeguarding team details will also be shared with Babcock LDP and Devon County Council.

4.0 Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy which can be done remotely via email or through telephone. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access any electronic system from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher or Safeguarding contact. This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. All staff should follow the escalation process as laid out in [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#).

4.1 Reporting a concern about an adult/the Headteacher

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher immediately.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Andrew Gardner, agardner@millwater.devon.sch.uk.

5.0 Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is **very unlikely** to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they have or will miss their refresher training. All existing school staff who have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019), are similarly likely to not receive whole staff training during this time. DSLs should therefore communicate with staff any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. This should be achieved through emails and similar electronic means.

6.0 Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, Mill Water School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact. Where Mill Water School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under **no circumstances** will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Mill Water School will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE. Mill Water School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Mill Water School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Where staff are required to work in schools that are not their normal place of work, senior leaders take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

There is no requirement to list such individuals in the school's SCR, unless leaders choose to do so, as long as such written confirmation is received. Mill Water School will retain this evidence until such time as the current restrictions on schools are lifted and in line with our current data and information retention policies.

7.0 Online safety in school

Mill Water School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

7.1 Children and online safety away from school

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk or suffering abuse. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (and where appropriate the [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#)). Referrals should still be made to MASH/social worker and as required, to the police. Online contact with pupils/families should follow the same principles as set out in the Code of Conduct.

Mill Water School will ensure any use of **online learning tools** and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Staff contacting pupils outside of school should follow the **Guidance for teachers making online/visual contact with pupils from personal devices/numbers during the coronavirus school closure**, dated 3rd April 2020.

Below are some things to consider when considering any digital interaction with pupils and their families:

- There should always be a parent in the room.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms.
- Interaction should be kept to a reasonable length of time.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including from any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by school leaders.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

7.2 Online safety at home

Mill Water School will continue to support parents, sharing online safety information, websites and resources for them to utilise on the school website and in school communications and updates.

8.0 Supporting children not in school

Mill Water School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children whilst they are at home. Robust plans are in place for all children and families, with teachers contacting each family at least weekly. Details of this plan must be recorded, as should a record of contact made. The communication plans can include: email contact, phone contact, door-step visits (if appropriately risk assessed). The plans put in place will as a minimum reflect the [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#)). Other individualised contact methods should be carefully considered, ideally working with families, and recorded.

Mill Water School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. Any such plan must be reviewed at least weekly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages. Mill Water School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff at Mill Water School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' learning where they are at home. Mill Water School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded. Mill Water School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Mill Water School will continually refer to the most recent Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19. Where staff have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they discuss them immediately with senior leaders.

9.0 Peer on Peer Abuse

Mill Water School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.