



## **Venerable Bede CE Academy - Addendum to Child Protection Policy due to the circumstances of COVID-19 – updated January 2021**

Due to the current unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 virus it is necessary that all schools are prepared and have appropriate arrangements in place in relation to the management of any safeguarding or child protection concerns both on and off site during this time. Therefore, we have produced this addendum to our existing Child Protection Policy to ensure all staff, directors and parents/carers understand our protocols for managing child protection concerns during this time.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies**

The school site remains open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Richard Goodman and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Jason Exley, Sally Holt and Gemma Riley. However due to these unprecedented circumstances they may not physically be on our school site every day. In this case, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be physically on site each day and will liaise directly with the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies if any incidents of a child protection nature occur. If a parent/carer has any safeguarding concerns, then they should contact the main office on 0191 5239745 to speak to the member of the Senior Leadership Team during office hours.

Should our school site be entirely closed then we will update our website and Child Protection Policy with our arrangements.

### **Identification of vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus outbreak are those across all year groups who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment (risk assessment guidance), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion

### **Attendance at school of vulnerable children**

The attendance of vulnerable children to school is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

Parents and carers will not be penalised if their child does not attend school.

### **Arrangements for Contact with Vulnerable Children**

The school's Attendance Team, as well as the Senior Leadership Team, including the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies, are fully aware of their vulnerable children and those they are expecting into school each day. Should that child not arrive then a member of the Attendance Team or the member of SLT on duty that day will make contact with the parent or carer immediately. Any issues that arise will be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies who will liaise with social care if necessary.

The safeguarding team will contact the parents of those vulnerable children currently not attending school (and/or their social worker) to discuss their return to school.

Pastoral staff (including the safeguarding team, attendance team, SEN department and Heads of Year) will continue to contact vulnerable children and their families for those children who are not on site (using the minimum timescales):

- Children the subject of a Child Protection Plan (twice weekly)
- Children who have a Child in Need Plan (weekly)
- Looked After Children (weekly/twice weekly, depending on situation)
- Children where there is currently a CP/CIN assessment underway (weekly/twice weekly, depending on situation)
- Children with an EHCP (weekly/fortnightly, depending on situation)
- Children with an Early Help Plan (weekly/fortnightly, depending on situation)

If there are any issues raised regarding the child's care, safety or ability to be contacted then this will be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies who will follow their local safeguarding procedures and contact the Local Authority's front door services immediately (as per our Child Protection Policy).

### **Availability and contact arrangements for families and professionals who wish to make contact with the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies**

During these unprecedented circumstances the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies will be available to be contacted by children, families and other services and agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of all our vulnerable children. They can be contacted via the school telephone number in the first instance and whether they are on or off site they will gain contact with any family or professional as soon as possible.

The School Reception telephone number is: 0191 5239745 (open Mon-Thurs 8.00am-4.00pm and Fri 8.00am-3.00pm).

The school's office staff will then make contact with either the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies.

Contact with the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies should be within the hours of the school day 8.30am-3.30pm ONLY (including over the February half-term). Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies cannot be responsible for not receiving calls and messages outside of these times. In the event that children or families need support immediately please contact the Local Authority front door services immediately (as per the information within the Child Protection Policy) or contact the Police.

## **Response to safeguarding or child protection concerns**

As always our school's duty of care is to keep children safe and while the arrangements of the physical care of children and physical presence of our Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies may be different during this time the school's response remains the same and follows the guidelines as set out in our school's Child Protection Policy.

### **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents/carers. As a school we have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and all other children accessing their education remotely, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The school will utilise the government's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools. This is designed to help schools to identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess.

Support for pupils in the current circumstances may include existing provision in school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Teachers will be made aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of children's work.

The academy's website contains information and resources linked to mental health and wellbeing. This is regularly updated. This page can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.venerablebede.co.uk/wellbeing/>

## **Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus**

### **Safeguarding pupils and teachers online**

As the majority of pupils are accessing their education remotely from home, it is important that we continue to provide a safe online environment for all pupils. Those who remain at home. While pupils are working remotely from home, the Venerable Bede CE Academy recognises that it is important to continue to follow safeguarding procedures.

As set out in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) guidance, online education will follow the same principles set out in our school's staff behaviour policy (known as a code of conduct).

Keeping teachers safe when providing remote education is also essential. Remote education is a new experience for both staff and pupils, so it's important that schools understand how to approach safeguarding procedures online.

School contact with parents and carers during this time will be used to reinforce the importance of children staying safe online.

It's especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do, including:

- sites they will be asked to use
- school staff their child will interact with

Venerable Bede CE Academy emphasise the importance of a safe online environment and encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on.

The following resources can be used to support parents and carers to keep their children safe online:

- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [London Grid for Learning](#) has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- [Let's Talk About It](#) has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

The academy's website contains information and resources linked to online safety. This is regular updated. This page can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.venerablebede.co.uk/key-information/staying-safe-online/>

### **Reporting concerns**

This addendum outlines clear reporting routes so that children, teachers, parents and carers can raise any safeguarding concerns.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should continue to be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Below are some signposts to the practical support that's available for reporting harmful or upsetting content as well as bullying and online abuse.

## **Harmful or upsetting content**

Get support by:

- reporting harmful online content to the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- getting government advice and trusted resources from [Educate Against Hate](#) on safeguarding from radicalisation, building resilience to extremism, and promoting shared values

## **Bullying or abuse online**

You can:

- get advice on reporting online abuse from the National Crime Agency's [Child Exploitation and Online Protection command](#)
- get advice and support from [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) for children who are being bullied

## **Communicating with parents, carers and pupils**

Although the majority of education is taking place remotely, it's important for schools, teachers and pupils to maintain professional practice as much as possible. When communicating online with parents and pupils, Venerable Bede CE staff will:

- communicate within school hours as much as possible (or hours agreed with the school to suit the needs of staff)
- communicate through the school channels approved by the senior leadership team
- use school email accounts (not personal ones)
- use school devices over personal devices wherever possible
- advise teachers not to share personal information

## **Microsoft Teams lessons and the use of Foldr**

For pupils who are accessing their education remotely, they will be following their normal school timetable. Pupils should be accessing Microsoft Teams and participating in online lessons delivered by their teachers. These lessons will be complimented by work that is contained within Foldr (accessed from the academy's website).

During Teams lessons teachers will speak to the class through a microphone and will share resources. Teachers' cameras will not be turned on. Pupils will be able to communicate with the teacher through the chat function on Teams and also through the school email system. Pupils' microphones and cameras will be pre-set by the teacher to not be turned on as they enter the Team lesson. Teams lessons are recorded and may be stored in Foldr for pupils to access at a later date.

## **Providing pastoral care remotely**

Pastoral care and support will continue to be provided by the Safeguarding Team to our most vulnerable learners. Regular welfare phone calls will be made to the parents/carers of

these children to discuss their welfare and the progress they are making in relation to the work that has been set.

Form tutors and Heads of Year will continue to make welfare phone calls to the pupils in their groups. Staff will be expected to speak with both the parent and child to discuss issues related to their welfare and the work they are completing. Any safeguarding concerns should immediately be passed on to the Safeguarding Team using the channels outlined in this addendum.

As the school is still open, Office Staff are here to take phone calls from parents/carers, as well as professional agencies (open Mon-Thurs 8.00am-4.00pm and Fri 8.00am-3.00pm). All pastoral concerns will be passed on to the relevant Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Personal data and GDPR**

The Venerable Bede CE Academy will continue to follow the guidance outlined in the data protection: toolkit for schools when managing personal data and will consider:

- taking care not to share contact details when emailing multiple people
- being careful when sharing usernames and other personal data for access to online resources
- providing access to school data systems safely

**This is an addendum to the academy's Child Protection Policy. It should therefore be read in conjunction with this policy. The addendum should also be read in conjunction with the academy's Remote Learning Policy.**