



COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLANNING SAFEGUARDING EMERGENCY GUIDANCE

General Principles

Whenever school is operational, wherever practical, a DSL should be available on site. However, if this situation changed then it is important there is a clear communication strategy available for staff to communicate with DSLs remotely e.g. –phone call. All communication of a sensitive nature should be exchanged via secure networks using **CPOMS** rather than email or unsecured networks. If all DSLs were poorly and unable to work then the most senior member of staff available should consult with the Local Authority and this could involve making the decision to close the setting and sign post to other services Early Help, school nurse, social services, MASH and appropriate DSLs should a hub of schools be created.

Similarly, within the skeleton staff arrangements, there should be provision for appropriate first aid and specialist expertise where required. If this is not practical or available, due to staff isolation, then the most senior person should risk assess the situation and communicate temporary arrangements to the relevant staff. If the arrangements agreed put anybody at risk or could result in adding additional pressure to essential services, e.g. NHS then this should be discussed with the LA and/or parents to agree whether it is suitable that school continues.

Contact with Vulnerable Pupils

It is important to maintain contact with all families/pupils who the school has defined as vulnerable (this includes CIN, CP & others where there have been recent concerns). The DSL should produce a RAG rated list of all vulnerable children. The risk category will determine the minimum levels of contact which should be adhered to:

RISK CATEGORY	LEVEL OF NEED	FREQUENCY & TYPE OF COMMUNICATION
RED	Most risk of harm or neglect and fewest protective factors. This would include those with a Child Protection Plan.	Contact should be made by a DSL x 2 per week . One of these contacts must be in person, e.g. doorstep checks but the other could be via telephone (unless high risk). Additional visits may also be made by other professionals, e.g. social workers and this should be by agreement with the DSL.
AMBER	Moderate risk of harm but with some protective factors. This would include those identified as a Child in Need and those with an allocated social worker.	Contact should be made by a DSL x 2 per week . However, depending on the needs of the child, both of these could be by telephone. Where there are concerns of abuse or neglect then a doorstep check should be made once each week.
GREEN	Some concerns escalating or unmet needs. This could include those who have been identified as red or amber but now need monitoring.	Contact should be made by a nominated person x 1 per week . This can be greater if the DSL feels it is appropriate. The contact should be made by telephone either by the DSL or another nominated member of staff, e.g. class teacher.

All contact by the safeguarding team with key families should be recorded on CPOMS – even if it is just updated notes stating no concerns.

DSLs should continue to act upon the information shared via CPOMS. This includes liaison with specialist services and social workers where concerns are raised. Where children have long-term or chronic health needs, regular contact should be made with specialist health teams via the SENCO. Any actions taken should be detailed on CPOMS as per normal safeguarding procedures.

Every D/DSL should ensure that they have access to an internet connected electronic device in the event that they were required to work remotely. If this is the case then appropriate procedures should be followed to ensure confidentiality of data and safeguarding of staff and children. This includes:

- Agreeing & arranging any home visits (not needed 26.3.2020) with another DSL to avoid the possibility of lone working.
- If using a personal telephone to make phone contact, withhold number so that this is not available to the parents/carers.
- Locking/logging out of electronic device after use and ensuring that CPOMS information is secure at all times (e.g. not visible to others).

In cases of self-isolation, DSLs should take precautions to protect themselves from risk of infection. This includes viewing home/children through a window, standing a metre back from the front door or liaising with a social worker or other professional involved who may be visiting (this limiting the need for DSLs to visit). In this case, the information from the professional who has visited should be shared and added to CPOMS.

In addition to the contact made proactively by the school the DSL **must**, at regular intervals, remind parents/carers of how they too can access services and report safeguarding concerns (even if out of hours). This includes sharing screen shots/weblinks via the school website.

Where a school receives an Operation Encompass (domestic violence) notification, the in-box should be checked and appropriate action taken and recorded on CPOMS. If the school closes completely then the LA will be informed and the notifications will be received on the first day returning to school.

The DSL is part of the Emergency Safeguarding Planning Team (EPST). Therefore, this team should be briefed at every weekly meeting with the RAG rated list reviewed and shared where appropriate. This should identify/delegate responsibility for contact within the team of DSLs and/or other appropriate staff.

All CPOMS notes should clearly indicate the following:

- The type of communication, e.g. in person, on the phone
- Details of parties involved, e.g. which staff visited
- Summary of conversation & any other points to note
- Any recommendations or signposting to services given to family
- Arising actions and next steps (or 'no further action' if just for monitoring)

The notes added should tick the category COVID-19 CLOSURE (under parental contact category) as well as any other relevant categories. This will help us monitor the impact of the current situation on our families.

Attendance

It is currently not statutory that children attend school, even for year groups that are open.

Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school).

Those children who are eligible to attend for emergency childcare or year groups that are open will need to be marked as present for the sessions they attend on the Southwark LA daily register which is uploaded on a Friday. If children are absent, on days the school is expecting them in, then contact should be made with the family to check they are safe and well. However, as long as they are accounted for no further action needs to be taken (as there is no requirement to attend).

During this period, no attendance ranking will be published and no sanctions will be processed (e.g. penalty notice or prosecutions). The priority is ensuring children are safe, well and accounted for.

The nominated SLT member in school each day should update the HT (Operations Manager) with attendance figures each day. These should also be supplied to the MAT daily who will pass onto the DfE daily and the LA as requested following their channels of communication.

Where there are concerns about the safeguarding or welfare of a child, regardless of whether or not they should be attending school, DSLs should follow their usual channels of communication to report these concerns.

Strategy Meetings/Communication with other Professionals

The school should, as much as is reasonably practical, continue to be involved in meetings related to the safeguarding and welfare of children in our care. However, before meeting in person, consideration should be given to strategies which minimise the risk of infection, e.g. submitting reports rather than attending, meeting via a conference call/phone call. In the event that a meeting has to take place, all members should wash their hands, avoid contact or sharing pens etc and the room should be organised so people can sit one metre apart.

Covid-19 Impact

The school recognises that the impact of the virus could be significant and vast for many of our families. This could include some of our vulnerable families facing financial hardship, demonstrating an increase in mental health issues or displaying increasing signs of stress or being unable to cope. DSLs and/or nominated staff should be aware of this and support families wherever they can. This may including signposting to other services via the school website:

<http://st-paulsprimaryschool.co.uk/> or referral to Early Help or other local organisations.

If a DSL and/or nominated person believes that a child is at increased risk of harm due to the associated impact of Covid-19 then this should be discussed with the DSL (even where there were no previous significant concerns) so that appropriate action could be taken. This could include prioritising the risk via the weekly RAG review of vulnerable children and increasing the contact made with the child/family.

Free School Meals

The school is working with Harrison's Catering to provide a hot meal for all children eligible for FSM (and possibly UIFM). Families will be invited to collect these daily from the school via the gate to the KS1 playground between 11am and 12 midday. During these contact opportunities, an 'informal' assessment of the vulnerability should be considered. Therefore, the DSL and another member of the school staff should be involved in these sessions if possible.