

**DRAFT**

# **Guidance for Safeguarding Vulnerable children during prolonged school closure**

Procedure Originator:	
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Date Approved:	
Review Interval:	
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Audience:	



## Introduction

The duty to safeguard all pupils is of course the responsibility of all of us across the Multi Academy Trust and we have systems in place to do so. This includes working alongside other agencies including as part of the new multi-agency partnerships in each local authority.

It is obvious that whilst many of our safeguard 'actions' take place during school hours and term time, there is a moral duty of care to at least be aware and possibly take some action on any issues that may occur at other times when school is not in session, whether this be in evenings, weekends and of course holiday periods. These 'actions' may usually be in the form of communication with children and families, local authority and other external agencies as well as possibly the police, but may require more face-to face 'actions, such as attending emergency meetings or even visiting a child's home.

There may be unique circumstances which dictate that a school needs to be closed for a prolonged period of time during what would have been term time. Where during evenings, weekends and holiday period, responsibility for the closer 'supervision' of children would lie with other adults, there may be a 'grey area' when we think about our most vulnerable children during these times and also during prolonged, maybe unforeseen, closures.

The planning for prolonged closures is more straightforward in regards to academic education, to an extent in regards to pupils carrying on with subject specific tasks, whether that be; by sending work home with children prior to closure, signposting online resources, making available via a school's VLE (or alternative) worksheets etc., and/or even recorded lessons which pupils can view and work through at home.

It would be assumed where a child has not been identified as 'vulnerable' that they are being adequately cared for by parents/carers or other systems in place. However, where a school has identified a pupil as being 'vulnerable', clearly there needs to be some extended support when not in school.

## Vulnerable children

At a time of prolonged closure practical issues come into play in regards to 'how many' children a safeguarding team can 'monitor'. It will be up to each school how they put together their list of vulnerable children but it is suggested the following **should** be included:

Child Protection / Child in Need / Looked After Children / Young Carers / Early Help Assessments plus any other significant recent referrals made, e.g. Channel, CAMHS, private fostering etc.

In addition, it is up to a school to determine its capacity to include other children, e.g. FSM / Persistent absentees / EHCP / Fixed excluded / Permanent excluded (within 15 days). However, it may well be that the first list includes some of these children and the degree of vulnerability must be assessed by DSL team in determining if checking on a child during a prolonged closure is needed.

## Actions to consider

The table below sets out some actions recommended to Safeguarding teams to undertake prior to and during prolonged school closure. This is guidance from a combination of other documents including Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and some school systems.

Action	Notes	Lead	Done
<b>Identify your vulnerable groups of children.</b>	Include priority list, i.e. whether a weekly or two-weekly check is needed and what kind of check it needs to be, e.g. phone call, email, visit and <b>by whom</b> . Allocate staff to each child (use DSL, pastoral team, form tutors, SLT etc. and as many as needed).		
<b>Home visits*</b>	On the very rare occasion you deem that a child <b>must be seen</b> , have a system of referral to social care and/or police ready for allocated staff. The HT/Principal <b>MUST</b> be informed of any visit. Only go in pairs. Risk assess as appropriate, e.g. if family/child is isolating because of coronavirus; context of family; time of visit; location of visit. Should you feel there is a risk to yourselves, or others, attend with the police.		
<b>DSL Meetings</b>	Make arrangements to touch base each week with all staff on any issue. If staff not in school, use emails, Skype etc. Decision on a case by case nature may need to be made. (see next box).		
<b>Record-keeping</b>	When staff check-in, use of My Concern / CPOMs (other) to record check been made and whether 'all is well' or concerns exist. DSL should then monitor system. If anything urgent, consider if police should be contacted.		
<b>Communication method for staff team.</b>	Set up clear addresses/numbers for email, online, phone calls (always use school mobiles if off site to contact families). If staff do not have a school phone they must ensure they withhold their number. There should be <b>no contacting children via social media</b> .		
<b>Inform Social Care for those in CP &amp; CIN.</b>	Inform all social workers that are involved with a child what your plan is on checking-in. If they are making regular checks maybe they can inform you.		
<b>CIN/CP Meetings</b>	Depends on reason for school closure. If advice is not to travel then do not attend and ask for alternative methods of communicating, e.g. online, or send in a report to relevant social worker.		
<b>Phone number/email for families to contact</b>	Communicate a relevant email address, phone number or other method where a family can contact DSL (or maybe allocated staff member) if there is an issue they need help with.		
<b>GDPR</b>	Just be aware when dealing with sensitive data outside school but remember that safeguarding the child is the priority. If in doubt about any aspect check with SET Operations team.		
<b>FSM</b>	Please liaise with Gavin Lawrie via email Gavin.Lawrie@shaw-education.org.uk		
<b>Communicate to all relevant adults and children above actions</b>	Dependent on action and child, communicate to school staff and parents what proposed actions will be prior to closure or asap if closure unexpected. Keep website updated.		

### **\*'Attend' advice for schools using their services**

If children are off school and parents are saying that they are self-isolating then staff do not need to visit and schools are to use the Y code.

If, schools are to be closed, we will continue to work.

Our offer to schools is to carry out Safe and Well checks on any children that have been identified as being particularly vulnerable eg. Safeguarding concerns.

If schools could identify these vulnerable pupils and inform us in the normal way.

### **Check-ins**

When contacting a family, useful to have a script ready such as...

"Hi, it's Mr X from X Academy. Just calling for my weekly check in with *pupil X*. Everything ok and anything I can do to help?" (Try to speak briefly with child if possible.)

### **Useful numbers:**

Use this section to put in contact details relevant to your local authority support such as:  
(not an exhaustive list, add as appropriate)

**LA first response number:**

**Local Education Safeguarding Partnership:**

**DSL email address and school mobile:**

**Police non-emergency number:**

**SET Safeguarding contact:** Brian Duffy [brian.duffy@shaw-education.org.uk](mailto:brian.duffy@shaw-education.org.uk)



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