**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Russell Lower School**



This Policy addendum is effective from 4th January 2021

**School Name: Russell Lower School**

**Policy owner: L. Bunney**

**Date: January 2021**

**Date shared with staff: 14TH January 2021**

1. **Context**

From 4th January 2021 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - ***who absolutely need to attend***.

Schools were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the Russell Lower School Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Russell Lower School is currently in a National Lockdown.

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**Key contacts**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact Number** | **Email** |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead | Louise Bunney | 01525 755664 | louisebunney@russell-lower.co.uk |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads  | Sarah KnightNicki Walker (Head) | As above | sarah.knight@russell-lower.co.ukn.walker@russell-lower.co.uk |
| Safeguarding Governor | Keith Redman-Henry |  | keith.redmanhenry@russell-lower.co.uk |
| Chair of Governors | Nicolette Ford |  | nicolette.ford@russell-lower.co.uk |

**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who:

* are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people 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;
* have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children’s social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
	+ children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s services
	+ adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
	+ those at risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’)
	+ those living in temporary accommodation
	+ those who are young carers
	+ those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
	+ care leavers
	+ others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

Russell Lower 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. The lead person for this will be: Louise Bunney.

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 Russell Lower School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Russell Lower School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Russell Lower School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school.

**Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

**Attendance monitoring**

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

All other pupils should receive remote education including clinically extremely vulnerable pupils and those who are self-isolating who would normally access the key worker provision.

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.

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

Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

To support the above, Russell Lower School will, when communicating with parents/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, Russell Lower School will notify their social worker and/or the Virtual School.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Russell Lower School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Louise Bunney. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Sarah Knight and Nicki Walker.

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 or online video - for example 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 systems 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.

Russell Lower School staff will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

**Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the processes outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, this includes completing ‘niggle’ forms which can be done remotely (electronic copies to be sent out to all staff with this policy).

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access the niggle form from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

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

Communication between schools and the LADO service remains the same. Chris Mannion (LADO) can be contacted through his direct line (TBC), the business support line (0300 300 8142) or the LADO inbox lado@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Nicolette Ford.

**Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited Russell Lower School will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children’s workforce setting to our school, we will 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of Russell Lower School’s child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

**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, Russell Lower 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 (2020) (KCSIE).

Russell Lower 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.

Russell Lower 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

As such, Russell Lower School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

**Online safety in schools and colleges**

Russell Lower School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers or iPads in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

**Children and online safety away from school**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, 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 still be made to children’s social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the Teachers’ Standards’.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

* Use school devices over personal devices wherever possible
* Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils – Google Classroom and school email accounts
* The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
* Staff must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
* Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be appropriate.
* Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

See the school’s remote learning policy for more detail.

**Supporting children not in school**

Russell lower School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child.

Details of this plan must be recorded within the ‘vulnerable children contact’ information, as should a record of contact made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Russell Lower School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) 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.

Russell Lower School recognises that school is a protective factor for children, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers at Russell Lower School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home.

**Supporting children in school**

Russell Lower School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Russell Lower School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Russell Lower School will refer to the 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 COVID19.

Russell Lower 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.

Where Russell Lower School has concerns about the impact of staff absence such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies or first aiders this will be discussed immediately with the LA.

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

Russell Lower 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 Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

**EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE**

**Aim:**

* All vulnerable families have additional contact and support with any concerns reported and recorded.
* Remote learning for all pupils where at home or in school (accessing the key worker provision) will be provided through the use of Google Classroom

**Current/future child protection concerns:**

* Phone contact once a week
* Offer of food support through school/charity referral
* Liaising with all necessary professionals as usual
* Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise
* Use of school’s systems to record and report

**Vulnerable families:**

* Phone/email contact once a week
* Offer of food support through school/charity referral
* Use of school’s systems to record and report

**Financial difficulties:**

* Phone/email contact once per week
* Offer of food support through school/charity referral

**Teachers:**

* No personal information of pupils to be taken from the premises (paper copies etc.)
* Any cause for concerns to be recorded and reported through the school’s systems unless there is an immediate danger/safety then call Louise Bunney or Nicki Walker.

**Logistics**

* Food vouchers will be provided, hopefully, allowing families to have basic food items and reduce the financial pressure. This to prevent large group gatherings and increased risk of exposure.
* Clear recording of families supported.

**It is essential that there is maintained contact between staff, always seek advice if concerns raised.**

**Personal numbers MUST NOT be shared with parent/carers.**

**Contact details below if immediate safeguarding concerns:**

* **Louise Bunney – 07886719371**
* **Nicki Walker - 07903464621**