



**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for  
Safeguarding Policy**

## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 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 and all childcare providers 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 West Moors Middle School's Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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### Key contacts

If you have any concerns about the safeguarding of a child, then please contact the following numbers:

East District Team	01202 877445
LAC 13-25 Team	01305 225809
LAC 0-12 Team	01305 225808
Children Who Are Disabled East	01929 553456
Children's Advice and Duty Service	01305 228558

If you require advice or help from the NHS then please contact 111 or 999 in an emergency.

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Dr Deborah Craddock	01202 872474	<a href="mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk">office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Kathryn Beavan	01202 872474	<a href="mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk">office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Deborah East	01202 872474	<a href="mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk">office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk</a>

### Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

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

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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.

West Moors Middle 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: **Mrs Kathryn Beavan.**

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 West Moors Middle will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, West Moors Middle or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England (PHE).

West Moors Middle will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Dorset Council support LAC pupils remaining at home or in residential care where it is safe for them to do so.

### **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.

West Moors Middle and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – West Moors Middle will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend who does not. West Moors Middle will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child and they subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, West Moors Middle will, when communicating with parents/carers 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, West Moors Middle will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

West Moors Middle School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Dr Deborah Craddock and two Deputy DSLs:

Deputy DSL. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Kathryn Beavan**

Deputy DSL. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Deborah East**

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/someone from the leadership team will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, My Concern 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 or college.

It is important that all West Moors Middle School's staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On 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.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via My Concern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their My Concern from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Kathryn Beavan. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff have been 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 report the concern to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mr Derek Brooks.

### **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 miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If staff are deployed to another education or children's workforce setting, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will confirm to the employer of that setting in writing that:-

- Staff have been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about staffs' suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to any individual

For movement within the cluster of schools in the area, schools should seek assurance from the Headteacher that the members of staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Upon arrival, they will adhere to local processes and 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, West Moors Middle 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.

West Moors Middle 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.

West Moors Middle 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](mailto: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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, West Moors Middle 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**

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

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

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 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 school code of conduct. Staff should not communicate via personal emails and personal mobile phones, in line with the school's code of conduct. If calls are made from home, 141 should be dialled first to protect caller ID.

West Moors Middle 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 as school prepared to deliver virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- 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; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by West Moors Middle School to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

## **Supporting children not in school**

West Moors Middle School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

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 or young person.

Communication must be recorded on My Concern, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact and phone contact. Other individualised contact methods may be considered and recorded.

West Moors Middle School and its DSLs 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.

West Moors Middle 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/carers. Teachers at West Moors Middle School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

West Moors Middle 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 may recorded on My Concern.

## **Supporting children in school**

West Moors Middle School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. West Moors Middle School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

West Moors Middle 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.

West Moors Middle 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 on My Concern.

Where West Moors Middle School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Cluster Lead in Ferndown, informing Dorset Council.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

West Moors Middle 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 of 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 on My Concern and appropriate referrals made.

### **Support from Dorset Council**

The Safeguarding advisors for schools team in Dorset Council will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.