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**TEMPORARY POLICY ADDENDUM:**

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Rockwood Academy

This Policy addendum is effective from   
4th January 2020

School Name: Rockwood Academy

Policy Owner: Greg Williams

Date: Reviewed: January 2022

Date shared with staff: January: 2022

**Context**

To support public health efforts during the return to school in January 2021 and subsequent school closures, secondary schools when directed will invoke a phased return to face-to-face provision.

From 4th January 2020, secondary-age students’ parents and carers 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. There may be times in the future where Rockwood Academy does have to close or invoke a partial closure for year groups due to a significant rise in cases linked to Covid within the student or staff body. At each point, the above arrangements for vulnerable students will be in place.

This addendum of the Rockwood Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the case of lockdown or partial closure.

**Content Table**

Context…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Vulnerable Children………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Critical Workers………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Attendance Monitoring……………………………………………………………………………………………

Designated Safeguarding Lead…………………………………………………………………………………

Reporting a Concern………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Safeguarding Training and Induction……………………………………………………………………….

Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff……………………………………………..

Online Safety in Schools and Colleges……………………………………………………………………….

Children and Online Safety Away from School and College………………………………………..

Supporting Children not in School…………………………………………………………………………….

Supporting Children in School…………………………………………………………………………………..

Peer on Peer Abuse………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Support from the Multi-Academy Trust……………………………………………………………………

**Key contacts**

Remain as per the Academy’s Safeguarding Policy.

**Vulnerable Children**

Vulnerable children and young people 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 lock 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 in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior Leaders, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy), know who Rockwood Academy’s most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

Rockwood Academy 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(s) for this will be David Cooke (Lead DSL) and Selina Walker (Deputy DSL)

There is and 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 increased risk. In circumstances where a parent / carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, social workers, other professionals and Rockwood Academy will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent / carer.

Where parents / carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Rockwood Academy, a social worker or other professional will talk through these anxieties with the parent / carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Rockwood Academy will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

**Critical Workers**

Parents / carers 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**

In mainstream schools, all secondary-age students who are not expected to be in school during the weeks commencing 4 and 11 January (2020), should be recoded as ‘code X’. In subsequent sessions of missed education due to a partial closure or year group closures, the LA will be contacted so that the school can gain advice on attendance coding.

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

In 2020 - Shielding advice was in place in tier 4 areas (but always under review from the DfE), and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable were advised not to attend school during lockdown or school closure. Advice in such matters is regularly reviewed and updated by the DfE – Rockwood Academy will always remain up to date with guidelines issued by the DfE and share with parents / carers as and when appropriate.

Rockwood Academy and social workers, or other professionals, will agree with parents / carers whether children in need should be attending school – Rockwood Academy will then follow up on any students that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Rockwood Academy will also 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, Rockwood Academy 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, Rockwood Academy will notify a social worker or other professional.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Rockwood Academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Academy also has a DSL in each year group who can support all our students.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is**: David Cooke

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is**: Selina 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. The Academy also has a welfare email address that all parents can communicate with the Lead DSL when required.

Where a trained DSL (or Deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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.

Rockwood Academy staff and volunteers 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 process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy; this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely. This must be logged by 4.00pm on the day the concern is raised, or sooner.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on CPOMS and alert the Trust Safeguarding Lead using the contacts outlined in the

school safeguarding policy. If a response is not received, you must continue to exhaust all contacts in the key contact section of the school child protection policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher / Senior Headteacher and the Trust Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure that the concern is received and acted upon. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff or visitors are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should use a **safeguarding form** to report the concern to the Headteacher. These can be found in Reception.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher / Senior Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with email to the Headteacher / Senior Headteacher to confirm the discussion. The Trust Safeguarding Lead must be included in this email.

Concerns around the Headteacher / Senior Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

CORE Education Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

**Safeguarding Training and Induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020 & 2021). 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, or new volunteers enter Rockwood Academy, they 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 consider the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children

during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept probability if the current employer confirms in writing:

* the individual has been subject to 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should see assurance from the CORE Education Trust (MAT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting’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, Rockwood Academy 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 (KCSIE) 2021.

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

Where Rockwood Academy are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE 2021. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Rockwood Academy 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 in KCSIE 2021 and will be adhered to by the Academy.

Rockwood Academy will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as detailed in the KCSIE 2021 Policy 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/volunteers will be in the school or college and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

As such, Rockwood Academy will continue to keep the single central records (SCR) up to date and regularly reviewed by the Headteacher / Senior Headteacher / DSL.

**Volunteers**

Rockwood Academy may continue to use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people. This process could be utilised if any further lockdown periods are enforced by the government.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis in Rockwood Academy, will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administrating a COVID-19 test whilst unsupervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be rechecked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

* by a person who is in regulated activity
* regular and day-to-day
* reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.

**Online Safety in Schools and Colleges**

Rockwood Academy 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 MAT code of conduct.

Rockwood Academy 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 IF there are 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 specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils
* staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

**Supporting Children not in School**

Rockwood Academy 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.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, doorstep visits. Other individual contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Rockwood Academy and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referral as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Rockwood Academy 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 Rockwood Academy need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students’ work where they are at home.

**Supporting Children in School**

Rockwood Academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Rockwood Academy will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher / Senior Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

Rockwood Academy 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 COVID-19 (when appropriate).

Rockwood Academy 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 tailored to meet the needs of each child.

Where Rockwood Academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lear of First Aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Trust.

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

Rockwood Academy recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school received a report of peer-on-peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in KCSIE 2021 and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

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

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

**Support from CORE Education Trust**

The CORE Education Trust’s Safeguarding Lead will provide support and guidance as apricate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

CORE Education Trust will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.

With the frequent changes to the process of managing COVID 19 in schools any changes to the education we offer will be communicated to parents and students when required.

Reviewed by Senior Headteacher and Lead DSL – January 2022.