

## **COVID-19 annex to the Child Protection Policy at Wilberforce Sixth Form College**

### **Response to COVID-19**

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the College's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ben Wallis [bw@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:bw@wilberforce.ac.uk)) or the Lead Person for Child Protection (Jo Brownlee [jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk)) in line with our established safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the College and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

The College provides non-compulsory education for students aged 16-19. All of which have chosen, for the time being, to self-isolate at home. The College has contacted all students, and where necessary the parents and guardians of students who come under the 'vulnerable' category and no request for care has been made. The College remains in regular contact with these students. The College is in a position to make the necessary changes if a request for care was to be forthcoming.

Parents/guardians should contact [enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk) if such a request for care of their son/daughter is required.

The College continues to teach remotely, with staff in regular contact with students. Students were asked prior to the lockdown to inform Student Services if they do not have access to the necessary IT resources to enable remote learning, with the necessary equipment being provided. The College continues to respond to requests for such IT support through our main phone line (voice mail) and also through [enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk).

Attendance is monitored through the Student Action Board and also by the College's Attendance Officer, Corrina Bateman, who can be contacted on [cba@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:cba@wilberforce.ac.uk).

### **Context**

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools and colleges to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response who absolutely need to attend.

Schools, colleges 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 the College's Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

## **Key contacts**

Wilberforce College Child Protection Officers

- Ben Wallis: Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding [bw@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:bw@wilberforce.ac.uk)
- Jo Brownlee: Lead person for Child Protection [Jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:Jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk)
- Helen Robinson: Student Support Officer [hmr@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:hmr@wilberforce.ac.uk)
- Donna Moverley: Student Support Officer [dam@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:dam@wilberforce.ac.uk)
- Corrina Bateman: Attendance Officer [cba@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:cba@wilberforce.ac.uk)

## **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 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. The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding and the Lead Person for Child Protection know who are our most vulnerable children and students. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We 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 the Lead Person for Child Protection (Jo Brownlee).

## **Attendance monitoring**

The College continues to monitor student attendance and engagement to remote learning and, if necessary or appropriate, the Attendance Officer will contact students, parents and guardians.

If a request to offer care at the College is forthcoming, the College will, when communicating with parents/guardians and carers, to 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 college, or discontinues, the College will notify their social worker.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

If a request for care is forthcoming, the optimal scenario is to have the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding or the Lead Person for Child Protection available on site. Where this is not the case, they will be available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example when working from home. Details of their contact numbers are located under the staying safe section of the College's website. Alternatively, they can be contacted via their email address (as above).

Where a Safeguarding or Child Protection Lead person is unavailable or not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site and liaising with Children's Social Care, if required.

All Wilberforce College staff and volunteers have access to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding and the Lead Person for Child Protection and can contact them via their contact details posted on the College website. If a student requires care on the College site, on each day staff on site will be made aware of how to speak to them. The Lead Person for Child Protection 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 student, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding who will then inform the Chair of Governors.

## **Safeguarding training and induction**

Safeguarding and Child Protection training for staff is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. However, the College is providing online safeguarding training for staff.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding or the Lead Person for Child Protection, who have been trained, will continue to be classed as trained even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The College staff will be updated regarding 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 the College, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our College, 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 the College Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and any other relevant documents in line with the College's induction protocols.

### **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, the College will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (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.

The College 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.

The College will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per the guidance within 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)

At any given time during this lockdown, the College may partially re-open to students and it is essential, from a safeguarding perspective, that the College is aware, on any given day, which staff will be on-site, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the College will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

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

### **Children and online safety away from 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 College's Staff Code of Conduct Policy and the additional guidance sent out to staff.

The College will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

## **Supporting children not in College**

Wilberforce College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Where a student has been identified to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support, the College will ensure that relevant support is in place for that student and communicated with relevant and appropriate people.

The College will share safeguarding messages, when appropriate to do so, on its website and social media pages. Safeguarding updates will be shared with all staff.

We recognise that College is a protective factor for our students and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

## **Supporting children in College**

The College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

If the College partially re-opens, it will continue to be a safe space for all students to attend. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The College 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.

The College will ensure that where we care for students of critical workers and vulnerable students on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

## **Peer on peer abuse**

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

Where the College receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part five of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy.

The College 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 in line with guidance set out in the College's Child Protection Policy and appropriate referrals made.