

COVID-19 school closure and reopening arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Exeter Mathematics School

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Definitions

- 1.1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 1.2. Child Protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.
- 1.3. Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the School, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.
- 1.4. The term "Students" includes all on role at EMS. It also includes those enrolled on outreach programme.
- 1.5. Child includes everyone under the age of 18.
- 1.6. Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.
- 1.7. Vulnerable Adult refers to someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability. Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- 1.8. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the first point of contact for any member of the School staff in the absence of the DSL to avoid any unnecessary delays in responding to a child/young person's/vulnerable adult's needs.
- 1.9. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). The deputies are the first point of contact for any staff member who has a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- 1.10. Prevent Single Point of Contact is the person identified in the School as the point of contact for all prevent related incidents and concerns
- 1.11. Safeguarding Team refers to the team of Level 3 Child Protection trained staff who support the DSL and DDSLs in safeguarding and child protection across the whole School and those at Exeter College.

1. Context

This appendix has been developed in response to and aligned to DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers> first published 27th March 2020. And updated 20/5/20

This appendix to the Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during the event of a school closure, or partial closure, due to CO19. This will be reviewed at least termly whilst the pandemic is ongoing and when new advice is released by the LA or DfE. This appendix to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will also be reviewed should school play 'host' to a collapsed provision or direct pupils/staff to a 'cluster' school. The review will then consider any information about 'hub' working issued by the DfE, and consideration will be made for example on, the sharing of vulnerable pupil information, the reporting of concerns and updating of safeguarding files.

It remains the case that **safeguarding is everybody's responsibility**, therefore this additional information needs to be shared with all staff and volunteers who in turn must read, digest and seek support from their DSL team or school leaders if further clarification is required. All staff should continue to have access to the Child Protection policy, Staff Code of Conduct and [KCSiE 2020](#) where further details and information can be found.

The schools' safeguarding team (DSL, Safeguarding Governor etc) and their contact details can be found in the main body of the Schools Safeguarding Policy. Changes to the DSL and DDSL during these exceptional circumstances can be found in para 3 of this appendix. Any changes will be shared with all staff and volunteers of the school.

2. Vulnerable students

Vulnerable students are defined to include those who have a social worker (including children in care) and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). A student may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed (by the school, or other professional) 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 SENDCO, 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 and available, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many students with EHC plans can safely remain at home including all of those currently attending EMS.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable students are. SLT are able to identify those students who are vulnerable despite not being under the services of children's social care, or being identified by the DfE as vulnerable. In the event of partial opening, school leaders must also consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and all other students attending the setting in addition to those who continue to work and learn from home. If a student is unwell, or showing the symptoms of Covid-19 (as defined by current government guidelines) they will expect the student to remain at home and the school will offer provision and support remotely informing relevant partner agencies. This will include establishing regular contact with the family until such time as they have adhered to guidelines enabling the now well or symptom free student to return to school.

If the school has information that parents are not following current government guidelines SLT will use their professional discretion, working with any partner agencies and LA officers to agree appropriate action. This will firstly consider the student's safety however where other exceptional circumstances exist whereby a student compromises the health, wellbeing or safety of staff or other students, then appropriate action will be agreed by the school together with the social worker/LA.

Exeter Mathematics School will continue to work with and support student's social workers to help protect vulnerable students. This includes working with and supporting student's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after students. There are no current students in this category however we remain prepared to support plans or adjustments for these pupils - the school will continue to provide for all students as best as possible in conjunction with the relevant agencies. The lead person for this will be Joe Rowing, Kerry Burnham will deputise in the absence of JR.

There is an expectation that vulnerable students who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them or others at risk. In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Exeter Mathematics School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage our vulnerable students and young people to attend school remotely.

2.1 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. Key staff and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether students in need and those on child protection plans should be attending school – we will then follow up (**Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19**) on any student who we were expecting to attend, who does not.

During any period of complete school closure, Exeter Mathematics School will not be opening the site as we currently have no students for whom it is unsafe to stay at home or who are unable to be safe in the home if left during the day. This is subject to change and we will be sensitive to any change in circumstances or new admissions

On re-opening, if current regulations are still in force, EMS will complete a return online so the DfE can monitor who is in school and who isn't by midday everyday: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-complete-the-educational-setting-status-form>

How will this look in our school?

To support the above, Exeter Mathematics School will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In the case of a partial opening, the Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, as required, to maximise safety. Exeter Mathematics School will continually refer to the most recent 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. Where staff have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they discuss them immediately with senior leaders. All aspects are covered in the school's dedicated risk assessment.

2.1. Vulnerable students not attending school

As the school is closed, all students will be contacted on a regular basis so that school are satisfied that they are safe. School will follow the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart** along with that from other agencies working with the pupil and family. The DSL or Deputy DSL will review their RAG ratings for the students weekly, taking into account any reported concerns from school contact or any information from partner agencies such as ViST reports. Any changes will be recorded on the schools central vulnerable group spreadsheet and shared with the Headteacher if not DSL. **Any changes in the RAG rating will be sent to the LA on this link so the master records can be updated. schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk**

On reopening the school staff should be aware of the potential impact of isolation and lockdown on all students.

2.2. Particular issues during periods of partial opening

- Staff should be particularly aware of the need to identify new safeguarding concerns that may have arisen for students as they see them in person following partial school closures.
- Mental health and wellbeing of students is of particular concern in the present situation and to assist in supporting students, every student will be offered a pastoral interview on first returning to EMS after extended absence
- The DSLs will have more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more students return – the DSL teaching load is reduced this year and further staff have been trained at Level 3 to assist and support the DSL/DDSL.
- Parents and carers are asked to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a student returns.
- Given the isolated nature of lockdown we should be alert to peer on peer abuse.
- Staff should be aware of the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children’s social workers, the local authority virtual school head for looked-after and previously looked-after children and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners – EMS does not currently have any looked after children however we are prepared should any student become looked after in this time.
- The DSL will be responsible for continuing to ensure that support is provided to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should try and speak directly to students to help identify any concerns. This will be achieved through tutors. Staff should be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school or college site via school or college phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number.

2.3. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the wellbeing and mental health of our students is very important in this disrupted and difficult time. We should expect higher levels of anxiety from our learners who already have a history of ASD, Anxiety and other difficulties.

We will support students not attending for an extended period through fortnightly contact from tutors and weekly (at least) contact from the pastoral team for those of higher demand. In addition, we have a weekly section with a pastoral theme and have instigated some social channels in Teams in order to establish low-threat ways of keeping contact and low-level channels through which students might express difficulties. Staff will be alert to signs of difficulty on re-opening and the pastoral team will be meeting with all students to review their wellbeing.

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Exeter Mathematics School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs. All referrals should be made through the CPOMS tool however Their contact details are also as follows:

Role	Name	Contact Number 1	Contact Number 2	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Joe Rowing	07950504737		joerowing@exeterms.ac.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Grace Strachan			gracestrachan@exeterms.ac.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Shirin Monks			shirinmonks@exeterms.ac.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kerry Burnham	07483 133 420	01803 295 445	kerryburnham@exeterms.ac.uk
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3.1 DSL cover in school

The DSL or a deputy DSL will be in school at all times during the opening of the main school building. The DSL or a deputy DSL will be on-call during all times that the boarding provision is operational. In the extraordinary event that neither the DSL or Deputy were available then a nominated senior member of staff will be available.

3.2 Informing and updating staff

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy), or the named school leader, Exeter Mathematics School will inform and update all staff and volunteers of changes to the details above. Appropriate training will be given where required.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or seek support and liaise with Early Help professionals.

Any changes to the Safeguarding team details will also be shared with Babcock LDP and Devon County Council.

4.0 Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a student, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy of reporting through CPOMS. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access any electronic system from home, they should telephone the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher or a nominated safeguarding contact. This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. All staff should follow the escalation process as laid out in [Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart](#).

4.1 Reporting a concern about a member of staff, the HT, or any other person

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with students in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher immediately.

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

Anne Oxborough (anne.oxborough@exeterms.ac.uk)

5.0 Safeguarding training and induction

Face to face DSL training is **very unlikely** to take place during a shutdown of EMS building. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, any required training will be delivered remotely by the DSL. All existing school staff who have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020), are likely to not receive whole staff training during this time. DSLs should therefore communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a student. This should be achieved through emails and similar electronic means.

Where new staff or volunteers are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction (as identified in our safer recruitment policy) and will complete online safeguarding training.

Where changes are made to safeguarding policy and practice, staff will be informed and trained accordingly as required.

6.0 Safer recruitment/volunteers and of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, are not allowed to enter the student's workforce or gain access to students. When recruiting new staff, Exeter Mathematics 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. Exeter Mathematics School are not utilising volunteers at this time. If this changes, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under **no circumstances** will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Exeter Mathematics 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, young person or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE. Exeter Mathematics 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 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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Exeter Mathematics School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE. Note that there is no requirement for staff who have been working remotely to complete a new DBS before returning to school.

Where staff are required to work in schools that are not their normal place of work, senior leaders 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

There is no requirement to list such individuals in the schools SCR, unless leaders choose to do so as long as such written confirmation is received. Schools will retain this evidence until such time as the current restrictions on schools are lifted and in line with our current data and information retention policies.

Upon arrival, they must have access to a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements and contact details.

7.0 Online safety in schools and colleges

Exeter Mathematics School recognises the growth in online abuse and 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.

7.1 Students and online safety away from school and college

It is important that all staff who interact with students, including online, continue to look out for signs a student may be at risk or suffering abuse. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy (and where appropriate the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart**) . Referrals should still be made to MASH/social worker and as required, to the police. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the staff and student code of conduct.

Exeter Mathematics 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:

- No 1:1 video, groups only, unless recorded as a per risk assessments confirmed with the Headteacher.
- Staff and students must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, or with appropriate backdrops.
- The live classes 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.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by school leaders

7.2 Online safety at home

The School will continue to support parents, sharing online safety information, websites and resources for them to utilise on the school website and in school communications and updates. e.g. links to CEOPs, ThinkUKnow, etc.

8.0 Supporting students not in school

Exeter Mathematics School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Where the DSL has identified potential concerns relating to the possible need for social care or pastoral-type support for a student in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that student. Details of this plan must be recorded, as should a record of contacts that have been made. The communication plans can include; remote contact by email or teams, phone contact. The plans put in place will as a minimum reflect the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart**). Other individualised contact methods should be carefully considered, ideally working with families, and recorded.

Exeter Mathematics School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. Any such plan must be reviewed at least weekly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. Exeter Mathematics School recognises that school is a protective factor for students and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents and carers

All staff at Exeter Mathematics School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Exeter Mathematics School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. We will continue to be a safe space for all students to attend and flourish.

9.0 Peer on Peer Abuse

Exeter Mathematics 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, or has a perceived concern, 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 student, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that student. Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

10.0 Review

The situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rapidly evolve – It is not unlikely that we will need to adjust our way of working for the foreseeable future and may be subject to further lockdowns, either locally or nationally. There is possibility that the boundaries of any local lockdown span only part of our school catchment. This appendix will be reviewed regularly in line with changes to statutory guidance, changes to school health and safety risk assessments and any changes to the COVID-19 situation.

Current CO-19 guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>