

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection at
Portway Junior School**

1. Context

From 20th 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 the Portway Junior School Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Headteacher	Tim Deery	01264 352060	t.deery@portway-jun.hants.sch.yk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputy Headteacher	Vicky Windross	01264 352060	v.windross@portway-jun.hants.sch.uk
Designated safeguarding Lead Inclusion Manager	Evelyn Smith	01264 352060	e.smith@portway-jun.hants.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Esnay Burns	01264 352060	Contact via adminoffice@portway-jun.hants.sch.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 school 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 and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Leads (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.

Portway Junior 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.

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 Portway Junior School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Portway Junior School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

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.

Portway Junior School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – The school will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

HOW THIS WILL LOOK IN OUR SCHOOL?

To support the above, Portway Junior School, when communicating with parents/carers will 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, we will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Portway Junior School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Tim Deery (Headteacher)

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Vicky Windross (Deputy Headteacher) and Evelyn Smith (Inclusion Manager).

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, the most senior member of staff will assume responsibility for co-ordinating 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.

Staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) on each day staff and children are on site and will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them via the local arrangements emailed to staff and included on the daily rota.

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 Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should telephone the Designated safeguarding Lead and / or send an email to ensure that the concern has been received.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children 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.

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

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

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.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter Portway Junior School, 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 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 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, Portway Junior 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.

In the unlikely scenario that Portway Junior School would need to utilise volunteers, 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.

Portway Junior 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.

Portway Junior 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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Portway Junior 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

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

Where pupils are using computers 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, 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.

School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements and any emails sent to parents at this time, comply with the 'Guidance for New Class Emails' guidance agreed for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Emails and communications should be professional and refer only to learning, ensuring that personal information is not shared.
- Staff do not have to reply to emails from parents over the holidays, during the weekend or outside of normal working hours.
- Teachers will only use designated school class email accounts to interact with families.
- All staff will avoid sharing personal information, remembering that a professional relationship is still needed after this crisis.
- Emails concerning parenting issues should be forwarded to one of the Inclusion Team via the SENDCO and/or Inclusion Manager
- Safeguarding concerns should be forwarded to the DSLs immediately and staff should follow up with a phone call to DSLs if they are worried.
- Any emails that are concerning, should be forwarded to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and further communication with that teacher will be stopped until the emails have been reviewed.
- All staff will adhere to the school code of conduct and 'Acceptable use of Technology policy.'

Supporting children not in school

Portway Junior 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.

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

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

Portway Junior School and its DSLs and Inclusion Team 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.

Portway Junior 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 Portway Junior School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Portway Junior 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 CPOMS.

Supporting children in school

Portway Junior School

- is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 CPOMS.

Supporting children on the return to school (from 1st June 2020)

- As staff and volunteers interact with individual children they may identify *new* safeguarding concerns.
- The procedure for reporting any *new* concerns will follow the school's safeguarding policy; staff will report concerns to DSLs and these will be recorded on CPOMS with the appropriate actions taken. This ensures that all records for all children are accurate and up to date.
- A DSL is always available when the school is open and can be contacted via email or telephone.
- A DSL continues to virtually attend relevant meetings with Children's Services Department.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Portway Junior School recognises that during the closure and the recovery of school 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 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.