



**NORTHGATE**  
*High School*

# COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

**Review by:** J Tunaley

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# COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding

## 1. Context

- 1.1 From 5th January 2021 parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable students and those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 This addendum of the Northgate Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number
Designated Safeguarding Lead	J Tunaley	01473 210123
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	S Asher R Grainger A Hope L Harvey	01473 210123
Headteacher	R Mackie	01473 210123
Chair of Governors	J Sheat	01473 210123

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## 2. Vulnerable children

- 2.1** 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.
- 2.2** 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.
- 2.3** 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.
- 2.4** Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.
- 2.5** Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (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.
- 2.6** Northgate 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: Mr Tunaley and Mrs Asher.
- 2.7** 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 Northgate will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.
- 2.8** Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Northgate or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.
- 2.9** Northgate will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## 3. Attendance monitoring

- 3.1** Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.
- 3.2** Northgate and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – we will then follow up on any student that we were expecting to attend, who does not. We 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.
- 3.3** To support the above, we 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.
- 3.4** In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Northgate will notify their social worker.

## 4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr J Tunaley**

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mrs S Asher, Mr R Grainger, Mrs Harvey and Mrs A Hope**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 It is important that all Northgate staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them.
- 4.5 The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## 5. Reporting a concern

- 5.1 Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes reporting any minor concerns via email to the DSL and Deputy DSL team. For concerns about the immediate safety of a student staff can call the safeguarding mobile 07540 672448. In the event that call is not answered staff should call the police.
- 5.2 Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.
- 5.3 Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should communicate the concern directly 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.
- 5.4 Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mrs J Sheat.

## 6. Safeguarding Training and induction

- 6.1 DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.
- 6.4 Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter Northgate they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.
- 6.5 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
- 6.6 Upon arrival they will be given a copy of Northgate's Safeguarding Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## 7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

- 7.1** 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, Northgate 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 (2020) (KCSIE).
- 7.2** 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.
- 7.3** Where Northgate are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE (2020). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- 7.4** Northgate 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 (2020).
- 7.5** Northgate will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE (2020) and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.
- 7.6** During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing **Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk**
- 7.7** 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, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE (2020).

## 8. Online safety in schools and colleges

- 8.1** Northgate will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.
- 8.2** Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## 9. Children and online safety away from school and college

- 9.1** 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 Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police. Northgate will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Staff have received clear guidance around maintaining professional communication channels during this period of closure.
- 9.2** Staff must be familiar with the expectations around IT use set out in the IT Acceptable Use Policy.

## 10. Guidance for staff around safeguarding students and staff whilst using online learning

- 10.1** During the school closure there is a greater reliance upon the use of electronic media to help keep our community functioning. The ICT Acceptable Use Policy is a good starting point for making sure that you are protecting yourself, students and the image of Northgate in the wider community. Please take a moment to remind yourself of what the policy sets out.
- 10.2** As a school we have an ever growing presence on social media and actively use this to help develop a sense of community and celebration. Examples of how we use social media to develop our school community during lockdown include:
- Year group assemblies that include challenges for students to carry out and send in photos of the work they produce.
  - Departments sharing examples of wonderful student work.
  - Links to supportive organisations for parents and carers.
- 10.3** All social media posts must be sent to our social media team on **socialmedia@northgate.suffolk.sch.uk** who will then post on our approved social media platforms including, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Vimeo. We will always check that students have the necessary social media permission before sharing videos or photos on social media.
- 10.4** As a school we use a blended learning approach to ensure that students receive a challenging and rewarding online

learning experience. This includes using a mixture of live lessons delivered on Teams, screencasts produced by teachers and independent study tasks that build upon what has been covered in the live lessons and screencasts.

**10.5** When setting up live lessons staff must ensure:

- Suitable clothing must be worn by all parties.
- Students accessing the online lessons must be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms and backgrounds should be blurred.
- All online lessons should be recorded.
- Language must be professional and appropriate.
- Northgate use Teams for the delivery of all online lessons, tutor time and mentoring meetings.
- That security settings on the Teams meeting room are set to avoid any opportunity for unauthorised users to access them.
- All live lessons, small group or one to one sessions must be organised between 9am and 4:30pm

**10.6** When producing screencasts staff must ensure:

- Suitable clothing is worn.
- Screencasts are created with an appropriate background.
- All recordings are kept to an appropriate length.
- Professional language is used at all times.

**10.7** If staff experience any issues with regard to behaviour these issues will be addressed via the department in the first instance and via the pastoral team for more persistent breaches of the schools behaviour policy. Any issues pertaining to safeguarding and student welfare will be raised with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

## **11. Supporting children not in school**

**11.1** Northgate is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

**11.2** 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.

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

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

**11.5** We will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

**11.6** This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

**11.8** We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at Northgate need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

## **12. Supporting children in school**

**12.1** Northgate is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

**12.2** Northgate 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 student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

**12.3** Northgate 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.

**12.4** Northgate 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 young person.

**12.5** Where Northgate has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Local Authority

## **13. Peer on Peer Abuse**

- 13.1** Northgate recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.
- 13.2** Where a school receives a report of child on child abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE (2020) and of those outlined within of the Safeguarding Policy.
- 13.3** 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.
- 13.4** Concerns and actions must be recorded and passed on via email to DSL and Deputy DSL team.