



**Epsom Playhouse** Pre-School

# COVID-19 arrangements for safeguarding and child protection

**Early Years Educational Effectiveness**  
June 2020

This is also in line with 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>

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## **1. Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> 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 who have a parent that is critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

As far as is reasonably possible ..... will take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow us to satisfy ourselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

This addendum of the current Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

## 2. Key contacts

	<b>Setting name: Epsom Playhouse Pre-school</b>
<b>Chair of committee</b>	Amiee Tuck
<b>DSL</b>	Abby Stockwell
<b>DDSL</b>	Michele O'Sullivan
<b>Setting manager contact details</b>	Abby Stockwell- 07759980937

## 2. 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 are subject to a Child Protection Plan, a Child in Need Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority.

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 pre-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.

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 for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Abby Stockwell.

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 and/or there is a formal agreement with the Social Worker. 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 senior leaders will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. We as a school will ensure that all professionals involved with these vulnerable children, (e.g. social workers, SEND case workers, Early Help worker etc) are fully informed around the current attendance of the child (attending pre-school or not) and if not attending school the arrangements that we have put in place around safeguarding this child.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the DSL 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 children to attend the setting.

### **3. Attendance**

Attendance will of children will be monitored and the setting will follow their usual policy regarding nonattendance. Any exception to this are outlined below.

#### **Expectations of Education settings**

To ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe and protected we will report all non-attendance of vulnerable children to the local authority using their new tracking system.

Education settings must act by notifying the local authority on the first day of non-attendance and any day following, when a vulnerable child, that is expected to attend an education setting is absent, by using the following link to the Automated Tracking Mechanism:

<https://www4.surreycc.gov.uk/social/child/absence-submission-portal/>

Education settings must continue to take action as soon as they are aware of non-attendance using first day calling and other internal tracking and follow up procedures. Education settings must continue to inform relevant agencies (including Social Work Teams) and professionals of any concerns that require a response.

#### **Expectations of the Social Work Team response to non-attendance**

The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, immediately alerts the Social Work Team to act in response to the child's non-attendance at the education setting. Surrey Virtual School will be informed if the child is looked after.

On receipt of an alert the social work team must act to contact the family to find out why the child hasn't attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

The social work team must act to contact the education setting to further inform their assessment of the risk to the child of non-attendance.

If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the social worker contact the education setting and any relevant partner (including Surrey Virtual School), to action arrangements for maintaining contact with the child and agree who will contact the child and how.

It may be necessary for a Social Worker to take action by visiting the child in person to establish their wellbeing.

Keeping in touch with the child and the family during any isolation period is the responsibility of the team around that child. A clear plan for visiting (virtual or in person) must be made and acted upon by all partners. The team around the child partners must communicate to the Social Worker findings from each visit they undertake.

Due to the number of notifications it is not possible for social care to guarantee a response time, each response time will be based on the Social Work Team's analysis of risk.

If an education setting has significant concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing the education setting should ring the child's Social Worker for an urgent discussion. If the child's social worker is not available a discussion should be held with the Social Work Team Manager. If neither are available contact must be made with the Social Work Service Manager. If you are not satisfied with the response you get from the Social Work Team education settings must follow the SSCP Inter-Agency Escalation Policy and Procedures.

Where any professional continues to have concerns about the safety of a child they should email a Children's Services Request for Support Form to [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk) or contact the C-SPA on 0300 470 9100.

## 5. Designated Safeguarding Leads

We have Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Deputy DSLs (DDSLs).

At Epsom Playhouse Pre-school:-  
The DSL is: Abby Stockwell  
The DDSL is: Michele O'Sullivan

A member of the DSL team will always be available during pre-school hours. Where a DSL is not onsite, 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, a designated senior member of staff will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site and will liaise with the DSL as appropriate.

It is important that all our staff have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Refer to [guidance Changes to Child Protection Conferences](#)

## 6. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the pre-school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via C-SPA.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should continue to follow our normal procedures and alert the manager immediately.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff or volunteer to the Manager immediately.
- If an allegation is made against the Manager, the concerns need to be raised with the Chairperson as soon as possible. If the Chairperson is not available, then the LADO should be contacted directly.

- There may be situations when the Manager or Chairperson will want to involve the police immediately if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.
- Once an allegation has been received by the DSL or Manager they will contact the LADO on 0300123 1650 option 3 LADO Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk immediately and before taking any action or investigation.
- Following consultation and advice from the LADO inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to
- In liaison with the LADO, the setting will determine how to proceed and if necessary, the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the setting to seek guidance from local authority colleagues in following procedures set out in part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2019) and the SSCP procedures.

## **7. Safeguarding Training and induction**

All DSL training has been suspended by Surrey County Council Education Safeguarding Team and it 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 pre-school staff have had safeguarding training. 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 our pre-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 setting, 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.

## **8. 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, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting.

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.

Where our pre-school are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We 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 in line with advice from the LADO where appropriate.

## **9. Online safety**

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of appropriate filters and online monitoring systems.

## **10. Children and online safety away from setting**

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.

We will ensure any use of online tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when using virtual media, especially where webcams are involved:

- 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.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided approved by the Manager and committee to communicate
- No meetings should be recorded without permission of all parties involved and the reasons for recording known

All staff will be reminded of the following policies:

- Staff handbook
- Online Safety
- Mobile phone and social media

## **11. Supporting children not in the setting**

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children.

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 the setting, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child.

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

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

We recognise that the setting is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents/carers.

Staff at our setting need to be aware of this in setting expectations of parents and children where they are at home.

We 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.

## **12. Supporting children in the setting**

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The manager will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to children ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We 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.

We 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.

## **13. Supervision and support for staff during lockdown**

Safeguarding of children and our staff is of the highest importance during this time. We are aware that the staff team are working in isolation and will be vulnerable to high levels of anxiety and concern about the families they work with as well as their own health and that of those they live with. They will also be able to call the Manager on any working day to discuss issues. Team meetings and peer will continue every half term via video calls.

Pre-school staff will keep in contact with managers and meetings, phone calls will be held where appropriate. Families will remain in contact with setting staff using telephone and email. All families will be monitored, and where there is no regular contact, families will be phoned to ensure they are safe.