



## **COVID-19 college closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

## **1. Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents/carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools/colleges to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who were not safe to work from home.

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.

The college opened for these young people between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, however, the college then closed fully at 3pm on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as no students felt they needed to attend. The college continues regular contact with vulnerable students to ensure they continue to be able to learn safely at home. This situation remains under constant review to ensure we meet vulnerable students' needs.

This addendum of the Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## 2. Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Gail Yeadon (Deputy Principal)	<a href="mailto:gail.yeadon@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk">gail.yeadon@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Tim Craven (College Lead for Safeguarding & Behaviour)	<a href="mailto:tim.craven@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk">tim.craven@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk</a>
	Tom Holland (Deputy Lead for Safeguarding & Behaviour)	<a href="mailto:tom.holland@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk">tom.holland@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk</a>
	Stuart Ormson (Head of Student Support)	<a href="mailto:stuart.ormson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk">stuart.ormson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk</a>
	Victoria Jackson (Deputy Head of Student Services)	<a href="mailto:victoria.jackson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk">victoria.jackson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk</a>
Nominated Director	Jeremy Mannino	<a href="mailto:jeremy.mannino@blackpool.gov.uk">jeremy.mannino@blackpool.gov.uk</a>

## 3. Vulnerable children

Blackpool Sixth will continue to work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Vulnerable children include children/young people who:

- have a social worker (this includes those on child protection and child in need plans and those looked after by the local authority)
- have a education, health and care (EHC) plan
- if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989

Students who fall into the above criteria will be risk-assessed, where necessary in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers, to decide whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people who fall into the criteria above can safely remain at home. If, following risk assessment, this is not the case, a plan for their care during college closure will be agreed with the local authority and parents/carers accordingly. The risk assessment and outcome will be recorded on MyConcern.

#### **4. Engagement monitoring**

Following full closure of the college campus on Wednesday 25th March 2020, no students will attend the college campus during the closure.

During this time, Blackpool Sixth will monitor student engagement with remote learning and non-engagement will be followed up accordingly. For any required follow-up, the first focus for all staff will be to ascertain if there are any underlying welfare issues and to take into consideration a student's home situation.

Initial follow up will usually be by subject teachers who can also refer to the pastoral team for further support. In the first instance, follow up communication will usually be to the student themselves. However, staff may choose to communicate with parents/carers as appropriate.

For instances where the communication and interventions above do not resolve the concern, this can be passed on to a relevant Head of Department or Pastoral Lead for further intervention.

Throughout any follow-up, all staff should be mindful if the student is 'vulnerable' and if there is a safeguarding concern. If so, staff should follow the process outlined in the college Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and this addendum. This includes making a report via MyConcern, which can be done remotely. If a vulnerable child/young person (as defined in section 3) does not engage with remote learning, a member of the safeguarding team may choose to notify their social worker.

#### **5. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Deputy DSLs and their primary contact details are detailed in the 'Key Contacts' section.

During working hours (8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time), it will be possible to contact the DSL or a Deputy DSL. This should be via email in the first instance. However, all members of the safeguarding team will have a college mobile during the college closure. As a result, it will be possible to arrange a phone

call where needed. (Should the college be open for vulnerable students at any point, a DSL or Deputy DSL will be on site.)

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

## **6. Reporting a concern**

For concerns where a student may be at immediate risk of harm, staff are expected to make contact themselves with the police and/or social care.

For all other safeguarding concerns, staff will advise students regarding external sources of support as described on the college website (link below). This advice has also been communicated to students and parents/carers via email.

<https://www.blackpoolsixth.ac.uk/coronavirus/safeguarding/>

After following the guidance above, staff will record both the concern and action they have taken so far on MyConcern. MyConcern is being monitored during the college closure, therefore, case owners will be assigned and there will be the usual follow-up from a member of the safeguarding team.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their MyConcern from home, they should make a record on a Word or Google document on their work computer and add it to MyConcern when it becomes available.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with our students, they should follow the process outlined in the college Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; this includes making a report directly to the DSL, which can be done via email.

## **7. 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 college 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 they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

## **8. Safer recruitment**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children and young people. When recruiting new staff, Blackpool Sixth 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.

Blackpool Sixth 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.

Blackpool Sixth 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the college is aware, which staff are continuing to engage with students and that appropriate checks have been carried out. As such, Blackpool Sixth will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up-to-date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **9. Online safety**

Blackpool Sixth will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. However, it should be recognised that the college has no direct control of student and staff personal devices and normal filtering and monitoring of network traffic cannot be applied while such devices are not connected to its network.

It is important that all staff who interact with students online continue to look out for signs that a student may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and this addendum, and where appropriate referrals should still be made to social care and, as required, the police.

Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. Staff and students should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours when working remotely. To support this, the college will share safeguarding messages and online safety advice with all stakeholders via the college website, social media pages, student notices and pastoral mentors. This advice will include information on clear reporting routes so students and parents/carers can raise any concerns whilst online.

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web-based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries.

This means that staff should:

- not request or respond to any personal information from children or young people other than that which may be necessary for their professional role;
- ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as '[grooming behaviour](#)';
- not give their personal contact details to students or their parents/carers, for example, personal email address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If students locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the member of staff should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager;
- wherever possible, contact students and parents/carers using equipment provided by the college (e.g. college email, college phones, college mobiles or computer softphone which dials from the college number). It is strongly advised that staff don't use their personal mobile phone to contact students or parents/carers but where this is absolutely essential, staff MUST dial 141 (or use another secure method of ensuring your caller ID is not shown) before they dial the number so their personal contact details are not visible;
- use only the equipment and internet services provided/recommended by the college unless agreed with their line manager. The Google suite of apps should be used rather than other platforms such as WhatsApp or Zoom;
- follow the college's acceptable use of computers policy;
- ensure that their use of technologies (including social media) could not bring the college into disrepute

## **10. Supporting students during college closure**

Blackpool Sixth is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. It is recognised that college is a protective factor for young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at Blackpool Sixth need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

The college will share safeguarding messages with students via the college website, social media pages, student notices and pastoral mentors. This advice will include information on clear reporting routes so students can raise any concerns. All students will receive weekly contact from their Pastoral Mentor. This communication will focus on their wellbeing, home situation and progress with online learning.

Where a student meets the following criteria, an additional communication plan will be put in place for that young person. This communication will be recorded on EMRIS or MyConcern as appropriate and will be managed by a member of the safeguarding or additional learning support team.

- A student meets the criteria of a vulnerable child (see section 3)
- A student is identified by the DSL (or a deputy) to be on the edge of social care support
- A student would normally receive support beyond that of typical pastoral-type support in college

The communication plans will typically include email contact or phone contact with the student, at least once a fortnight. However, parents/carers will be contacted when needed. Other individualised contact methods may be considered and recorded, but this must be agreed with a DSL or Deputy DSL.

Blackpool Sixth will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

Where concerns arise, staff should follow the process outlined in the college Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and this addendum. This includes making a report via MyConcern, which can be done remotely.

## **11. Peer on peer abuse**

Blackpool Sixth 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 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.



The college will listen to 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 MyConcern and appropriate referrals made.