

COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection – Rokeby School

Updated 18th August 2021

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Context

At various stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, parents have 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.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Dan Robinson	0208 329 0424/07827 441448	d.robinson@rokeby.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Fleur Tattersall	07866 525162	f.tattersall@rokeby.org.uk
	Lucia Sanderson	07747 896558	l.sanderson@rokeby.org.uk
	Gemma Anderson	07786 371306	g.anderson@rokeby.org.uk
Head	Jason Peck	07557 271989	j.peck@rokeby.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Deirdre Davidson	07773 312942	d.davidson@rokeby.org.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Coco Stevenson	07989 542 669	c.stevenson@rokeby.org.uk
AfC Education Safeguarding Adviser	Linda Sheehan	07774686362	linda.sheehan@achievingforchildren.org.uk
AfC Adviser for Online Services and Safety	Peter Cowley	07595173975	peter.cowley@achievingforchildren.org.uk
AfC Virtual School Head	Suzanne Parrott	07827895894	suzanne.parrott@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Kingston SPA: 020 8547 5008 **Out of Hours:** 020 8770 5000

LADO: 020 8891 7370
07774332675
lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Other relevant contact numbers appear in the main Safeguarding Policy – available via the school’s website

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 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.

Senior leaders, especially the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) 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.**

Rokeby School will continue to work with and support children’s social workers where applicable to help protect vulnerable 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.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, they should familiarise themselves with the school’s Risk Assessment (available on the school website) and if they have any further concerns, speak to a member of school staff.

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.

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

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

Rokeby School will complete the Government's [daily online attendance form](#) and supply any information regarding attendance requested by Achieving for Children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rokeby School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and three Deputy DSLs.

A trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home at all times when the school is open for KW/vulnerable children.

It is important that all school name staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff should be able to contact the DSL/DDSLs.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, when applicable and attend any 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. 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 report the concern to the Head. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head.

Concerns regarding the Head should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Deirdre Davidson

Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID19 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 will 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 Rokeby 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 Rokeby's Safeguarding and 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, Rokeby School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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 Rokeby School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Rokeby 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Rokeby School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) 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, Rokeby School will continue to ensure that all staff, volunteers and essential visitors sign in and out of the premises and will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Online safety

Rokeby School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place when used on site, to protect pupils when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

The school will communicate with parents and remind them to ensure that appropriate filters and other safety mechanisms are in place within their home setting. Equally advice will be issued regarding what to do in the event of any cyberbullying incidents. All this advice is on Firefly and parents will be signposted to it.

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 in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Rokeby 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:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, ideally not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred if possible.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

This is general guidance, although further detailed instructions to staff will be issued as required.

Supporting children not in school

Rokeby School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Pupils and parents have access via Firefly Wellbeing page to key staff email addresses and direct telephone number for the DSL.

Realistically this is more the case for older boys (Y4-8). Parents of younger children have full access to the information.

Where the DSL has identified a pupil to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that pupil. All contacts with the pupil must be recorded.

The communication plans can include: remote contact; email contact; phone contact. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Rokeby School and its DSL 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 any communications to families.

Rokeby 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 Rokeby School will take this into consideration when setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

Rokeby School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. Rokeby School will continue to be a safe space for all children to flourish.

The school will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Rokeby School 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.

Rokeby 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 pupil.

Children moving schools

If any pupils are temporarily attending other schools or transfer to another school, Rokeby School will ensure that they provide the receiving school with all relevant welfare and child protection information.

Rokeby School continues to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR and are aware that they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Mental health

Rokeby School is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events such as the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents.

Rokeby School will ensure that appropriate support is in place for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children whilst on site. This is in the form of trained teaching staff.

Rokeby School will continue to offer support to pupils who are not on site, this will be done remotely or by phone, as appropriate. Plentiful materials are also on the school's VLE Wellbeing page. Form tutors will keep in close touch with their tutees.

Rokeby School will ensure that all pupils have contact details for appropriate support services such as Childline and Kooth

Peer on peer abuse

Rokeby School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Rokeby School will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded using the school's procedure and appropriate referrals made.