

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection**



The Management Committee of

*Herons Dale Primary
School*

have adopted the following policy:

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Reviewed by:	DSL Team
Date:	30/3/2020
Ratified by Managements Committee:	6/4/2020
Review Date:	April 2021

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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 policy sets out how Herons Dale will continue to carry out its safeguarding duties, during this period. However, if the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers are not available for work at all (*including remote working*) at the same time it would then be necessary to seek assistance from either one of the Local Authority Special schools or Locality Mainstream schools through the redeployment of their DSLs (Link Advisor would support with the organisation of this). If this were not possible then the school would have to close for this period.

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

1. Context
2. Vulnerable children
3. Attendance monitoring
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Reporting a concern
6. Safeguarding Training and induction
7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
8. Online safety in schools and colleges
9. Children and online safety away from school and college
10. Supporting children not in school
11. Supporting children in school
12. Peer on Peer Abuse

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Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Teresa O'Connell	07795250860	Teresa.OConnell@heronsdale.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Anastasia O'Donoghue	07453025787	Anastasia.ODonoghue@heronsdale.co.uk
Headteacher & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Isabel Robson	07904719442	Isabel.robson@heronsdale.co.uk
Designated Person for Looked After Children	Teresa O'Connell	As above	As above
Chair of Management Committee	Rebecca Dunne	07518318624	psg@heronsdale.co.uk
	Joe Lightbody	07796684108	Joe.Lightbody@heronsdale.co.uk
Safeguarding Lead for Management Committee	Rebecca Dunne	As above	As above
Chair of Federation Governing Body	Geoff Palmer		gpalmer@cornfieldschool.org.uk

DSL contact email – dsl@heronsdale.co.uk

DfE coronavirus helpline

Email DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone 0800 046 8687

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This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) so they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe.

The way Herons Dale School is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. 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. Social Workers of all pupils who remain at home will be contacted.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

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.

Herons Dale 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: [Teresa O'Connell](#)

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend

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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 Herons Dale will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

In addition, these children can only attend if the school have appropriate staff in place to maintain a safe placement. If we do not, we will work with federation schools and social care to look at alternative arrangements.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Herons Dale or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. Herons Dale will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend 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.

Herons Dale and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Herons Dale will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Herons Dale will follow up with all parents/carers who have arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

Herons Dale is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#), who have introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

To support the above, Herons Dale 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.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Herons Dale will notify their social worker.

Weekly welfare calls will be made to all families by the staff team and feedback recorded and shared with the DSL.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Herons Dale school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: [Teresa O'Connell](#)

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: [Anastasia O'Donoghue](#) and [Isabel Robson](#)

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home with access to CPOMs.

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Where a trained DSL is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader 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 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.

It is important that all Herons Dale staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL. On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

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 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 email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy safeguarding leads and School Business Manager. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 Designated safeguarding lead or deputy DSL / Head teacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head teacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head teacher. Concerns around the Head teacher should be directed to

Management Committee Chair persons: [Rebecca Dunne](#) or [Joe Lightbody](#)

and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- The LADO for West Sussex is [Jenny Coker](#)
- Consultation Contact Number: 0330 222 6450 (Available 09.00 – 17.00)
- LADO Service Contact Number: (Available through the MASH) 01403 229900
- LADO Service email address: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk

The school and Thrive federation 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

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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 Herons Dale, 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

In the absence of the lending school's headteacher, the LADO will be contacted to determine whether any on-going disciplinary investigation applies to members of staff.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of Herons Dale'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, Herons Dale will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our 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.

Where Herons Dale are utilising 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.

Herons Dale 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.

Herons Dale 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

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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, Herons Dale will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Children moving schools

When children move school the receiving school needs to be aware of any arrangements in place to support them. They will need to transition with their EHCP, Child in need plan, Child Protection Plan, or PEP. Information regarding the Child's social worker will be shared. These exchanges of information will need to happen at a DSL or Deputy level.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home and offer support where needed. All children at home have been provided with Now and Next Boards and these resources will be added to over time.

Mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances will include regular check ins and bubble time, Play therapy and Music Therapy, social stories, zone of regulation and regulating activities such as yoga, mindfulness and physical exercise (Music therapy may be delivered over the phone for pupils in isolation).

Online safety in schools and colleges

Herons Dale will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school and college

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.

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

Herons Dale will share with parents/carers information on keeping children safe online.

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Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only (unless previously agreed with the counselling service, SLT, students and families, for those accessing specific counselling services – and risk assessment completed.)
- 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; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by Stowe Valley MAT to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

Hérons Dale 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.

Hérons Dale have risk assessed all pupils: - Red will be prioritised for places in school, Amber will be kept in school if at all possible, Green would be asked to stay at home in the event of a partial closure due to lack of staff. Weekly welfare calls will be carried out by teams and shared with DSL. These will be recorded on the school server.

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

Hérons Dale 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 social media pages.

Hérons Dale 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 Herons Dale need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Hérons Dale 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.

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Supporting children in school

Hérons Dale is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Hérons Dale 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.

Hérons Dale 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.

Hérons Dale 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.

Where Herons Dale has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately SLT and the management committee.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Hérons Dale recognises that during the closure 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 multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.