



## COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Medina House School

### Context

From 20 March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for Medina House School to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

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

- Context
- Vulnerable children
- Attendance monitoring
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Reporting a concern
- Safeguarding Training and induction
- Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
- Online safety in Medina House School
- Children and online safety away from Medina House School
- Supporting children not in Medina House School
- Supporting children in Medina House School
- Peer on Peer Abuse

Role	Name	Email
DSL	Julie Stewart	juliestewart@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Rachel Hayden	rhayden@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk
Headteacher	Julie Stewart	juliestewart@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Matt Atkins	mattatkins@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk
Safeguarding governor	Matt Atkins	mattatkins@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk

### Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children 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 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



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whether they need to continue to be offered a Medina House 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.

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) in itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead team 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.

Medina House 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.

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 DSL/Deputy DSL will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent and the social worker if necessary.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the DSL/Deputy DSL or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. The DSL/Deputy DSL will encourage our most vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed – particularly where medical vulnerabilities overshadow social vulnerability eg where a child has been advised to shield.

### **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. H/T / AHT and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending Medina House School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Medina House DSLs will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child and the child subsequently does not attend. The relevant social workers will also be informed – particularly if the parent cannot be contacted.

To support the above, Medina House staff will, when communicating with parents/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 Medina House, or discontinues, DSL/Deputy DSL will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead Team**

Medina House has one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Julie Stewart

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Rachel Hayden



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At Medina House every effort will be made to always have a member of the DSL team available on site. Where this is not the case, a member of the DSL team will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

It is important that all Medina House staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or the Deputy). Staff at Medina House are all aware who the DSL team are and will know who and how to contact them.

The DSL team 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 Medina House Safeguarding Policy; this includes completing a concern sheet, which should be done in school but could be done remotely eg if they have a concern about a child due to something they see in the community. 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 Medina House, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from Medina House, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Matt Atkins. The LADO 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 Medina House staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSLs 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 Medina House 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 the Medina House Safeguarding/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, Medina House 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.

Where Medina House 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.

Medina House 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.

Medina House 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

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the Head teacher/ AHT is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in Medina House, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the SBM will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in Medina House**

Medina House will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers in Medina House appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **Children and online safety away from Medina House**

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.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the staff code of conduct and handbook. The IT systems manager will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.



### **Supporting children not in Medina House**

Medina House is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people. Where a DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral type support in Medina House, 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, as should a record of contact made. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, doorstep visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Medina House DSL and deputy 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. Medina House will share safeguarding messages on its website and in its' regular newsletters and/or emails. Medina House 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 Medina House need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work whilst they are at home.

### **Supporting children in Medina House School**

The H/T and AHT 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 child and recorded on CPOMS if necessary. The governing body is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. Medina House 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.

Medina House 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.

Where the H/T has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – this will be discussed with the LLP and /or SIM.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Medina House School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a DSL receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE (2019) and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy. 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. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.