

**COVID-19 Addendum**

**Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Context**

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home wherever possible and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

This addendum applies from the start of the Autumn term 2020. It reflects updated advice from DENI and interim measures the school put in place during lockdown. It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change in response to any new or updated guidance and will be kept under review.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding leaders immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. Children’s services may be affected by the impact of the virus on their staff as well as an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm the school will be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for raising a concern are:

Education Authority – Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) 028 95985590

Social Services Gateway Team (Belfast Trust) 028 90507000

Gateway (out of hours) 028 90565444

**Core Safeguarding Principles**

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance – and will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles.

* The safety and best interests of the pupils is paramount
* If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they must act on it immediately.
* The designated child protection offer or deputy should be available at all times.

**Reporting Concerns**

All staff must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children at school and those at home.

During any periods of lockdown staff and parents will be supplied with contact details of Child Protection Officer

 Deputy Child Protection Officer

 Governor with Special responsibility for Child Protection

who will act on any concerns accordingly.

All staff will continue to work with Gateway and children’s’ named social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

**CPO and Deputy Arrangements**

We aim to have the Child Protection Officer or Deputy Child Protection Officer on site. Details of all important contacts are listed at the start of this addendum. Our CPO or deputy can also be contacted remotely via

holycrossnurseryschool@outlook.com

If the occasion arises where either the CPO or deputy are not available to undertake their duties the Chair of the Board of Governors will liaise with the DE and EA to assess if the school can remain operational and activate necessary protocols.

**Working with Other Agencies**

We will continue to work with Gateway and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners to help keep our children safe.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary.

**Monitoring Attendance**

All pupils on roll will be expected to attend Holy Cross Nursery School unless one of the following reasons apply

* Is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health
* Is unable to attend because of sickness
* Is granted a leave of absence pre agreed with parent/carer

Where any child we expect to attend school is absent or stops attending we will

* Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers using existing systems in place
* Notify their social worker if they have one

We will ensure we have up to date emergency parent and carers contact details (tested on a monthly basis) and additional contact details where possible.

**Contact Plans**

Contact plans will be drawn up for children with a social worker and other children who we have safeguarding concerns about for circumstances where the child is at home.

This plan will detail

* How often the school will make contact
* Which member of staff will make contact
* How contact will be made
* As well as any other relevant information

These plans will be agreed with children’s parents/carers and social care where relevant.

If we cannot make contact we will contact Gateway and the Police.

**Safeguarding All Children**

Staff are aware that this difficult time may potentially put children at greater risk. Staff continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils’ mental health that are also safeguarding concerns and act on concerns immediately in line with our agreed procedures.

**Children returning to school**

The CPO (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of prior to a child’s return.

Staff will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

**Children at home**

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. As during the March 2020 lockdown work/activities/resources will be shared with families on a regular basis via Seesaw and Facebook as well as available on the school website. Contact with parents/carers will be made via telephone, Seesaw, email and Facebook.

Teachers can be contacted throughout school hours via the Seesaw app.

Teachers will provide online learning/daily challenges in the Seesaw app and nursery website should the school be closed during term time or your child is isolating.

**Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. Staff will consider these issues when sending learning activities for home learning through Seesaw. Any concerns should be reported to the DT.

**Online Safety**

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication or sharing any videos or messages.

Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the arranged session.

Parental consent will be sought before their child participates in any online communication. (Parents will sign to give agreement at the beginning of the year)

A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.

Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

**If there is a breach to any of these procedures the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.**

**Mental Health**

**Children returning to school**

Staff are aware of the possible effects that this period and subsequent periods may have had on pupil’s mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive or extremely clingy to help identify where support may be needed.

Mindful of emerging from lockdown the school will be prioritising strategies/support to promote good mental health.

Our Home School Support Worker will signpost parents/carers to a range of services/resources to assist at this time. She will also offer one to one support and activities/courses/classes to minimise the potential impact of the current situation on both children’s and adult’s mental health.

**How a parent can raise an issue or concern**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child’s well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

**Safeguarding**

We will ensure all staff and parents are aware of changes to our procedures.

Other Agencies the school and parents can contact for support

* NSPCC Childline
* CEOP
* Safer School s App
* Parentni
* Family supportni

**SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**:-

* <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
* <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
* <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
* <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
* <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

**Monitoring Arrangements**

The policy will be reviewed as guidance from DE is updated. At every review it will be approved by Board of Governors.

**Links with other Policies**

Child Protection Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Health & Safety Policy



**If a parent has a concern about his or her child or another child’s safety, they may take the following action:**

I have a concern about my child or another child’s safety



I can talk to the CLASS TEACHER



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the designated teacher

for Child Protection, Mrs C Mallon



Or

The deputy designated teacher Mrs A Murphy





If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Fr Eugene McCarthy or the Governor Child Protection Officer, Mrs Claire LeMahieu on 90301684



At any time, I can talk to Susan Sullivan, CCMS Tel: 02890327975

or the Gateway Team EA Belfast Region CPSS Tel: 02895985590

Social Services Gateway Team Tel: 02890507000

Gateway out of hours Tel: 02890565444

Please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery if you have a concern or complaint. We all have a duty of care to protect children and their welfare must be paramount.



**Important Contacts**

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| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact Details** |
| Designated Child Protection Officer | Mrs Cushla Mallon | holycrossnurseryschool@outlook.comTel: 028 90745672 |
| Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer | Mrs Arlene Murphy | holycrossnurseryschool@outlook.comTel: 028 90745672 |
| Chair of Governors | Fr Eugene McCarthy | passionistshc@ukgateway.netTel: 90748231 |
| Governor with responsibility for Child Protection | Mrs Claire LaMahieu | goodshepherdns@yahoo.co.ukTel: 90301684 |
| Social services Gateway Team | Duty Social Worker | Tel: 028 90 507000Out of hours Emergency ServiceTel: 028 90565444 |
| Education Authority | Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) | Tel: 028 95985590 |
| PSNI | Duty Sergeant | 101 |