

# Supporting Vulnerable Students @BPC during COVID-19 Outbreak

## Annexe to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

There have been significant changes within our college in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. Students and staff are now working remotely at home and staff are likely to be affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the college Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: children and young people always come first and staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the safeguarding team in line with our established safeguarding procedures.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with changed arrangements in the college and following advice from government and local agencies.

- Safeguarding - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance on safeguarding](#)
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) )
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019](#)

### 1. Raising and responding to concerns

Staff will continue to follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding team immediately about concerns they have about any student ([Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)).

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority.

Should a student, in the college's view, be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the college safeguarding team will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure.

### 2. Accessing safeguarding support during site closure

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Officer team members are available remotely during college opening hours, including college holidays, while college sites are closed. Homestay emergency 24 hour cover, including safeguarding of Homestay students, continues to function as usual.

A list of external support agencies available to students and their parents/carers is located on the college website <https://www.thecollege.co.uk/student-support>

### 3. Identifying Vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable young people at our college.

All students known to be vulnerable have a communication plan and risk assessment in place to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to support them.

Key workers are assigned to each student and these members of staff are responsible for maintaining agreed contact levels with their assigned cohort of vulnerable students, for recording each contact and for escalating concerns through the college safeguarding and Learning Support referral processes when required.

Full contact is being maintained with Local Authorities and other external agencies regarding these vulnerable students.

- a. **Students with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)** – Risk assessments have been completed to ensure that needs are being met. Contact levels have been implemented on a case by case basis. Any student with an EHCP who is also identified with safeguarding concerns is a high priority and multi-agency work will continue through the normal referral routes.
  - i. **Foundations** – The Foundations team are the assigned key workers
  - ii. **All college** – The Learning Support Team are the assigned key workers and will work closely with Personal Development Tutors (PDTs) and teachers for the area in which the students are based
- b. **Looked After Children (LAC)** – Key workers from the Student Support team will make contact twice weekly during term time until college learning resumes on-site, once weekly during college holidays. They will assess and monitor engagement with learning and home situation, liaising with social workers as required. Where safeguarding issues arise the level and nature of support required will be reviewed.
- c. **Child Protection Plans** – The safeguarding team will contact all students with Child Protection plans daily. They will assess and monitor engagement with learning and home situation, liaising with social workers as required.
- d. **Child in Need Plans** – The safeguarding team will contact all students with Child in Need plans daily. They will assess and monitor engagement with learning and home situation, liaising with social workers as required
- e. **Students at high risk from poor mental health** – Contact will be maintained according to the level of concern and risk, which will be re-assessed at each contact point to ensure that support remains appropriate. Referrals to other agencies will continue in line with external thresholds.
- f. **Students at risk of domestic violence** – It is possible that the current ‘lockdown’ situation may exacerbate the situation for some students. College staff will be aware of this possibility when talking with students and will support and make appropriate referrals when needed. Those known to be specifically at risk are being contacted discretely by the Wellbeing Team.
- g. **Students receiving counselling** - Counselling is taking place remotely. New referrals, and any students who have had external counselling sessions cancelled, will be supported by College Mental Health Coaches and referred to College Counsellors. Students also have the option of anonymously contacting Kooth, the external on-line counselling service (<https://www.kooth.com>).

- h. **Students eligible for free college meals** – All eligible students have been contacted and offered payments weekly by bank transfer during term time until learning resumes on-site. Personal Development Tutors will maintain regular contact.
- i. **Students in receipt of vulnerable bursary** – These payments will take place as normal, students will be contacted bi-weekly by Student Welfare Officers.
- j. **County Lines** – The Wellbeing team is focussing closely on students known to be at risk and continues to liaise with social workers. Students in this category will be contacted in partnership with assigned social workers on a case by case basis. MACE and MAPPA meetings with the Local Authority and other agencies are continuing remotely.

#### **4. Peer on Peer Abuse**

- a. Students at risk of, experiencing or involved in peer on peer abuse will be supported by their teachers and the Wellbeing team
- b. Any reports of peer on peer abuse will be addressed robustly through the college's Managing Student Behaviour policy
- c. A list of external agencies who can support students and their parents is located on the college website (<https://www.thecollege.co.uk/student-support>)

#### **5. Allegations or Concerns About Staff**

With such different arrangements in place young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our college will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned. Arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged

If necessary, the college will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

#### **6. New staff and volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning. They must read the college Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, the Managing Student Behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the staff code of conduct and complete the mandatory on-line training. We will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a student and ensure the new starters are familiar with the safeguarding procedure.

If, in future, staff or volunteers are transferred in from other registered education settings for a temporary period to support the care of students, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- a. the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- b. they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and

- c. where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures remain in place:

- a. New staff and volunteers may not be left unsupervised with students until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising new staff and volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the student
- b. The college will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance. When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to initially check these documents online through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- c. The College will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the college including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS.

## **7. On-line safety**

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The college is also using online approaches to deliver training and support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and will apply the same student-centred safeguarding practices as when students were learning on college sites.

Guidance on how our college teams are to conduct on-line learning and support safely has been shared with all staff.

We have considered the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and Staff have been reminded of the college code of conduct and importance of using college systems to communicate with students and their families.

Students accessing remote learning have received guidance on keeping safe online and digital citizenship through their tutorial programme and know how to raise concerns. These resources are available through Moodle.