

Sandbrook Nursery School  
Annex to Child Protection Policy  
COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

### **Response to COVID-19**

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak and the uncertainty of Education Restart

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

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

### **Reporting arrangements remain unchanged**

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher (DT) is: Mrs Cromie

The Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) are: Mrs Campbell and Mrs Gorman

The school's approach ensures the DT or a deputy is always on site while the school is open.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

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. The arrangements for contacting gateway are:

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

## **Identifying vulnerability**

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/new-vulnerable-children-guidance-published-schools-and-parents>

During Lockdown many families were assisted by the school or local community and this will continue for as long as required.

## **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. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning - see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DT about any concerns.

## **Risk online**

Families will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Families accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school.
- Parents and carers will receive information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. Parents will be offered the following links:
  - Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
  - Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

- Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

With such different arrangements children and 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, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DT or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, and the code of conduct. The DT or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

### **New children at the school**

The DT will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on \_\_\_\_\_ and is available on the school website