

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and
Child Protection at
Westhoughton High School**



Policy Created by C Unsworth

Updated January 2021

**To be reviewed as required with updates from government
guidance**

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

Context

This addendum will be used as a reference during times when the normal operation of school opening is unable to take place i.e. during partial or full school closure and reliance on virtual school teaching. This addendum to the full policy is responsive to government guidance and therefore will be regularly reviewed and amended. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Key Safeguarding Contacts for Westhoughton High School

Name	Role	E-mail	Phone
Caroline Unsworth	Deputy Headteacher Designated Safeguarding Lead	CUnsworth@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122 07595 119872
Jane Torrance	Assistant Headteacher Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead SENCO CLA designated teacher	JTorrance@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122 07497 187942
Debbie Arstall	Integrated Support Worker Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	DArstall@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122 07497 332509
Rebecca Beattie	Behaviour Support Manager Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	RBeattie@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122 07497 332518
Jen Taylor	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	JTaylor@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122
Patrick Ottley O'Connor	Headteacher	POttley-oconnor@westhoughton-high.org	01942 814122
Joanne Murphy	Chair of Governors		09142 814122

***Note mobile numbers are for use in urgent/emergency situations only. Where possible please use the main school number as calls will be directed to the duty/most appropriate member of staff.**

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children, as defined by government guidance, 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 or college 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 in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Pastoral leaders, including the Designated Safeguarding Leads, know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer extended school support at this time to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Westhoughton High School 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 at Westhoughton High School will be Jane Torrance.

Vulnerable children who have a social worker will have the option to 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 social worker and Westhoughton High School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Attendance monitoring

At the time of this update the current situation is a national lockdown and closure of secondary schools to all except vulnerable children and those of critical workers. This arrangement is expected to be in place until at least February half term 2021.

Westhoughton High School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school; Westhoughton High School will then follow up on any student that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Westhoughton High School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues attendance, Westhoughton High School will notify their social worker/virtual school contact.

This arrangement will remain in place until schools are instructed to reopen more fully.

Student attendance will be recorded for those students who are expected to attend provision in school including those vulnerable children who have been offered a place but who have declined to attend. All other students who are not expected to attend will be coded as X on the school attendance record.

Student engagement with the virtual school offer will be closely monitored on a daily basis. Students with poor engagement will receive support from their pastoral team to try to resolve any issue with technology or home circumstances.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Westhoughton High school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and 4 Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Caroline Unsworth (Deputy Headteacher)

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Jane Torrance, Debbie Arstall, Rebecca Beattie and Jen Taylor.

At all times during school opening hours there will either be a trained DSL on site or one of the DSL team contactable by phone as they are working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. There will always be a member of the Senior team (Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher) on site.

It is important that all Westhoughton staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). 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/contribute to all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Student safeguarding records will continue to be accessed and updated as required via the CPOMS system. This system is web-based and therefore can be accessed remotely if required during times of school closure. School staff will adhere at all times to GDPR guidance regarding dealing with sensitive information whilst working remotely.

Support can be accessed if needed from the Safeguarding In Education Team on 01204 331314/7472 or email SET@bolton.gov.uk

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. In the event of school closure all Westhoughton High School staff will receive a reminder briefing outlining the reporting procedures below in the event of school closure/working from home arrangements:

Whilst away from school there may still be occasions where you have concerns about a student. This may be because of knowledge from seeing them in the local community or from communication/work submitted to you online whilst working remotely. You always have a responsibility to report a concern about a child. Do not presume that someone else is aware. You are still able to follow our school procedures for safeguarding concerns during times of school closure/partial closure.

You can e-mail one/all of the DSLs directly

CUnsworth@westhoughton-high.org Caroline Unsworth

DArstell@westhoughton-high.org Debbie Arstell

JTorrance@westhoughton-high.org Jane Torrance

RBeattie@westhoughton-high.org Becky Beattie

JTaylor@westhoughton-high.org Jen Taylor

Please be mindful that although email will be checked regularly it may not be checked straight away. **If your concern is urgent, you should use other methods of making it known to appropriate professionals. If the school is open, the phone line will be monitored and calls will be directed to a DSL as quickly as possible. The school contact number is 01942 814122.**

If necessary, you can make a referral directly to Bolton Multi Agency Screening and Safeguarding Service 01204 331500 (9-5pm) or 01204 337777 out of hours emergencies. Please still e-mail the DSL team from school to inform them of your concerns.

Advice on concerns can also be gained from the NSPCC
Freephone 0808 800 5000
Email help@nspcc.org.uk
Text 88858

If your concern is serious and a child is in immediate danger you should call 999

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school the reporting procedures remain as those outlined in the main school policy. Procedures for contacting the DSL/Headteacher/Chair of Governors are as outlined above.

Safeguarding Training and induction

All DSLs have accessed training to refresh their DSL status. Should additional training be required during the current period of restrictions online training options will be utilised.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). Pastoral staff will be able to access school sourced online CPD in relation to specific safeguarding areas of focus during periods of homeworking.

The DSL will 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 Westhoughton High School, 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 Westhoughton High School'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, Westhoughton High School 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 (2020) (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 Westhoughton High School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE 2020. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Westhoughton High School 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.

Westhoughton High School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per 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 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, Westhoughton High School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date.

Online safety in schools and colleges

Westhoughton High School will continue to provide a safe environment for learning, 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 Safeguarding and 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. Communication between staff and students/parents should be made through official channels only; private staff accounts, including social media, should not be used.

Westhoughton High School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Staff must only use platforms provided by Westhoughton High School to communicate with students.

Westhoughton High School is using Microsoft Teams as the platform for delivering lessons via virtual school. All staff and students have a school account to access this platform. Staff and students may communicate via the chat function, may access work saved in the shared area or may interact directly in live teaching sessions.

When staff are using Microsoft Teams to deliver virtual lessons this must only take place in line with guidance issued. The following must be observed at all times:

- Staff should ensure that lessons are scheduled and have appropriate security settings to ensure that students cannot control the lesson content or admit others through the lobby into the lesson.

Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.

- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas and the background should be blurred if possible or an artificial background used. Staff and students should be mindful of any confidential information which could be seen in backgrounds if using live webcams e.g. information on office noticeboards/bookshelves.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time ensuring that both students and staff have the opportunity for breaks as needed.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
 - Staff should use the breakout room function selectively – only with classes with a high level of trust – and staff should keep break out sessions short and should keep close supervision by visiting groups.
 - Scheduling of 1-1 support sessions should only be done following prior discussion with line manager and parental approval and the time/date/duration of these sessions should be clearly noted.
 - Lessons should only be recorded if there is an explicit purpose to the recording e.g. the lesson content is essential to be viewed by any absent students. If the lesson is to be recorded students should be informed and should participate with cameras off. The recording should not be shared with anyone outside the organisation.

Supporting children not in school

Westhoughton High School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people. Students who are identified as vulnerable will be allocated a key worker and a specific plan for home-school communication will be created in the event of virtual working. A log of contact will be maintained by the key worker. The communication plan may include; remote contact by e-mail/SchoolSynergy message, phone contact, door-step visits/care packages.

The communication plan will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise the keyworker will refer to the DSL team to consider further action to support the student and their family. The offer of in-school provision for vulnerable students will remain in place and students will be

encouraged to actively maintain their engagement with school staff as much as possible.

Students have had routes of support signposted to them via assemblies/tutor sessions/PSHE and postcards of contacts. The school will continue to share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Students who are currently eligible for Free School Meals will be assisted with accessing food/vouchers in the event of partial/full school closure. Pastoral staff will be encouraged to maintain contact with families and signpost for further assistance/support if needed.

Westhoughton High School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at Westhoughton High School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. This includes observing weekend/holiday schedules alongside regular school operating hours.

Supporting children in school

Westhoughton High School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Westhoughton High School will ensure that during periods of partial/full school closure where we are able to care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, that appropriate support is in place for them. This will include both supervision, educational activities and resources and pastoral care. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. There will be a First Aider available on site at all times. There will be access to a DSL at all times (in person/by phone).

Westhoughton High School 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. If Westhoughton High School has concerns about the impact of staff absence on educational provision, the Headteacher will liaise with the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements as necessary.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Westhoughton High School recognises that during any closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a member of staff receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in KCSIE and of those outlined within the Safeguarding and 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.

In line with our policy, any concerns and actions will be recorded on CPOMS by the DSL.

Bereavement

Westhoughton High School recognises that more children and families may be experiencing unexpected bereavement due to Covid 19. Westhoughton High School has developed a bereavement policy which contains guidance to be followed. Below are some national organisations can also offer support and advice in specific areas:

- Child Bereavement UK on their website www.childbereavementuk.org
- Childhood Bereavement Network on their website www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
- Cruse Bereavement Care on their website www.cruse.org.uk/
- Hope Again (for young people living after loss) on their website www.hopeagain.org.uk

Should a bereavement occur during a period of school closure/partial school closure the school policy will continue to be followed to offer support.

Mental Health

Westhoughton High School recognises that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as COVID-19, can affect the mental health of our pupils and their parents.

We will ensure our provision of pastoral and extra-curricular activities are designed to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)

- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

We will ensure that support resources and services are appropriately signposted to staff and students and that this level of awareness raising is maintained during any prolonged period of school closure.

Domestic Abuse

We recognise that negative experiences and stressful life events, such as COVID-19, can affect relationships and as such there has been a significant rise in Domestic abuse incidents.

During any period of school closure Operation Encompass notifications will continue to be received and we will ensure those children involved are appropriately supported.

The above guidance will be regularly reviewed in line with updates from the local authority and national government.

All staff/governors will be alerted to any changes made.