

SES

Safeguarding and Child Protection Covid 19 Addendum Policy and Practice

Date created: 090420
First Revision: 100520
Second Revision: 210520
Third Revision: 150620
Fourth Revision: 070720
Fifth Revision: 300720

*SES Avocet Ltd (4926028) and SES Turnstone Ltd (7972485)
are subsidiary companies of Specialist Education Services Holdings Ltd (7970185)*

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1 **CONTEXT**

On 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 workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. Schools, and all childcare providers, were asked to continue 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.

From the week commencing 1 June, the DfE announced that they expected schools to be able to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. Specific guidance on actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020 was issued.

Current guidance from the DfE, updated on 27 July 2020, outlines the expectation that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term 2020. SES has ensured that all children have continued to receive education and learning throughout the pandemic (see section 6).

As a dual registered Residential Special School and Children's Home, Specialist Education Services have an obligation to ensure the ongoing care and education of our young people. To ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of young people was maintained to our outstanding level, the Learning Centre (registered school) was temporarily suspended from its normal structured operational routine on 18 March and 20 March at Turnstone House and Avocet House respectively. This has allowed all staff to work in partnership, delivering a range of learning opportunities alongside high quality care and therapeutic relationships. The current approach to education and care at Specialist Education Services will continue unchanged as all children are accessing learning overseen by the Head of Education.

Therefore, this addendum applies during the period of national school closures and extended disruption due to COVID-19.

It sets out to clarify our safeguarding policy and any changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including children:
 - With a child protection plan
 - Assessed as being in need
 - Looked after by the local authority
 - Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

All children at Specialist Education Services are therefore classed as vulnerable.

Specialist Education Services will continue to work in close partnership with our children's social workers. All social workers and authorities have received communication (SES Covid 19 Action Plan and letters) that outline current staffing changes and continuation of care for all young people. Any further changes to daily practice will be communicated with each Placing Authority.

HM Government guidance for both residential social care settings and education settings is being issued on a regular basis and will be constantly reviewed alongside this addendum.

2 CORE SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A trained DPCP will be present within the home at all times, with full access to the LDPCP or the Deputy LDPCP at all times
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

3 REPORTING CONCERNS

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

The standard SES reporting procedures will continue to apply. If the LDPCP is not available on site they must be made aware of any concerns immediately.

All staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

4 LDPCP, DEPUTY LDPCP and DPCP ARRANGEMENTS

The Lead Designated Person for Child Protection (LDPCP) is the Registered Manager. In the absence of the Registered Manager, the Head of Care acts as the Deputy LDPCP.

In addition, all Deputy Care Managers, Team Leaders, the Deputy Head of Education, the Head of Education, Principal and Executive Principal are trained as Designated Persons for Child Protection (DPCP).

Following temporary changes to the staffing rota pattern, the home will continue to have a DPCP available on site (either a Deputy Care Manager or Team Leader).

If staffing shortages result in this not being possible, the LDPCP or Deputy LDPCP will be available to all staff via the SES first port of call system.

All staff will be aware of who the DPCP will be on a daily basis through the morning handover.

DPCP training is very unlikely to take place during this period. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a LDPCP (or deputy) or DPCP who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained LDPCP (or deputy) or DPCP even if they miss their refresher training.

On occasions where the LDPCP or the Deputy LDPCP is unavailable, the SES Principal or Executive Principal will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding, both of whom are trained to the same level as the LDPCP.

5 WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6 LEARNING ATTENDANCE

All young people will continue to access learning although our approach to their education has changed. They will be fully engaged in learning activities with a particular focus on Personal, Emotional and Social Development, reading, PHSE and physical health, with teachers as well as care staff being present 24/7.

7 PEER ON PEER ABUSE

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately. Existing systems remain in place within SES. Vigilance from staff will continue at the same high levels, and in many circumstances, will benefit from enhanced staff:child ratios due to the new staffing rotas implemented.

8 CONCERNS ABOUT A STAFF MEMBER

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately in line with existing procedures. Where necessary use of email, video conferencing and telephone conferencing will be offered by SES.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9 ONLINE SAFETY

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in SES establishments (Kerio), with telephone support available from Chris Turner (System Solutions – 01508 549320) for any technical enquiries.

Where children are using computers, appropriate supervision and technology checks will be in place, as outlined in the young person's daily care.

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing guidelines set out in our Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and SES Safeguarding and Child Protection, including the Code of Conduct.

Staff continue to exploring ways of facilitating digital learning platforms, and whether these are appropriate for the learning needs of our children. Appropriate safeguards will be considered and implemented if this option is instigated.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have to key adults within either Avocet House or Turnstone House, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

10 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The staff team will continue to offer daily support to all young people, through our holistic therapeutic approach (The SES Way).

The staff team and young people will have full access to our Independent Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist (Dr. Sillifant) and regular monthly consultations will continue, with an option of conferencing calling or video conferencing.

We will also signpost young people and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. This will include sharing and utilising child friendly resources for coronavirus to help minimise anxiety. The continuation of a wide range of learning activities will ensure young people are kept both physically and mentally active.

11 STAFF RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND INDUCTION

Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our establishments are safe to work with children. We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at SES.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Interviews for new staff will continue with full consideration to appropriate social distancing (2 metres) procedures. This will mean reducing the number of candidates invited, and using larger rooms for interviews to create social distancing space.

Staff 'on loan' from other schools, Children's Homes and other educational provision..

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our establishments, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school, children's home or other educational provision that staff have had the appropriate checks. This will be completed by the Principal or Executive Principal. They will also be added to the Single Central Record.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information. Where SES receive staff from another school, children's home or other educational provision, we will judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. As a minimum, the visiting professional(s) will be provided with a copy of our safeguarding / child protection policy and the name and contact details of the LDPCP and deputy LDPCP.

Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive the full SES induction week, which will include an extensive safeguarding induction, a copy of our SES Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Keeping records of who's on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will use the single central record to log everyone working or volunteering in SES each day, including staff 'on loan'. Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers will be maintained in the SES office.

Staff Deployment Decisions

In order to continue to provide the three core principles of our Covid 19 Action Plan (see below), we have made individual staffing decisions that will continue to be reviewed by the Directors, Executive Principal, SES Principal, Registered Manager and Head of Education.

- 1. All individuals have a responsibility to their fellow citizens both within and beyond the work place.*
- 2. SES as an employer has a responsibility to ensure as far as is humanly possible its employees are supported in fulfilling (1) above.*
- 3. We have a responsibility for ongoing care and education of the young people for whom placing authorities and families have entrusted in our care.*

Key decisions taken so far have been:

- Recalling a care worker outside of their two year timescale for completion of the L3 Diploma, with an individual explanation on their personnel file.
- Assistant Care Workers offered full time working pattern in short term

12 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 weeks by the SES Principal and Executive Principal.

13 CHILDREN ATTENDING OTHER LOCATIONS

We have contact arrangements and plans for all children to visit their families, and these will be agreed with their social worker before going ahead in light of the current circumstances. Any visit to their family will need to balance the risk of potential coronavirus infection against the harm to emotional wellbeing of the young person.

14 VISITORS TO SES

All visitors to site will be asked a series of questions to establish whether they have had any level of direct or indirect contact with coronavirus, or displayed any symptoms. They will also have their temperature checked on arrival, and be asked to use hand sanitiser before leaving the office area.

All non-essential visits will be cancelled, with an increased use of video conferencing or conference calls. This will apply to key meetings and visits, such as statutory LAC reviews. Social worker visits will be able to go ahead if absolutely

necessary, and where it is felt this cannot be completed via phone or video conferencing. Reg 44 visits will be completed on site, in an office not located within the home.

15 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the policies and procedures listed in section 17 of the SES Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.

It should also be read alongside the SES Covid 19 Action Plan.