



## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Nerrols Primary School and Nursery**

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) (as amended, Jan 2021).

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them. We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners. We 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 coronavirus.

This addendum of the Nerrols Primary School and Nursery Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

### **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery 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.



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The lead person for safeguarding in the school is Rhian Locker, Head teacher.  
The lead person for children in the nursery is Andrea Bolton, Nursery Manager.  
The lead person for Children Looked After in the school is Catherine Cowlin.

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Nerrols Primary School and Nursery or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

In the event of a lockdown school closure, those children 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 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend the setting in the event of a lockdown school closure, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. Regular check ins will be made at least weekly for these children.

### **Attendance monitoring**

From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, all pupils are expected to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.



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In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction we will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

### Children moving schools

It is important for any school whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or deputy) level, and likewise between SENDCos for children with EHC plans.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

### Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the processes outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes making a written report via MyConcern and speaking to the DSL / Deputy DSL. Any concern must be reported immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report this immediately to the Head teacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head teacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head teacher.

Concerns around the Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Laurence Leader at [nerrolsclerk@nr.huish.education](mailto:nerrolsclerk@nr.huish.education).



### Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). 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 Nerrols Primary School and Nursery, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

### 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, Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for the setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021).

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. [Guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#)

Where Nerrols Primary School and Nursery utilises volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Regarding members of the school or college workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer. Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE. Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)



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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, Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### Online safety in school

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to provide a safe environment, 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

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 in accordance with 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 Code of Conduct. Staff should not make any direct contact with pupils and should always use school email addresses for communication with parents.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are areas for consideration if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by the Richard Huish Trust Director of IT and Facilities to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

### Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to Covid-19

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they will make remote contact with the family and a record of contact will be made. Where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. Nerrols



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Primary School and Nursery recognises that school is a protective factor for children, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at Nerrols need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

### **Supporting children in school**

Nerrols Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. Nerrols will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head teacher and Nursery Manager will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratios are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery 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.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will ensure that in the event of a further lockdown school closure, we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site and ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as DSL or first aiders, these will be discussed immediately with the trust.

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will encourage parents to send their children to school/nursery, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made for Elective Home Education, Nerrols Primary School will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the designated safeguarding lead will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as Nerrols Primary School becomes aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

Nerrols Primary School will work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

If a parent wants to admit their child to Nerrols Primary School or Nursery, we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications / nursery admissions.

### **Contingency planning**

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19) remote education plans.

Nerrols Primary School and Nursery will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework, which outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.