

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection at
Rochester Independent College**

1. Context

- From 5 January 2021 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 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.
- This addendum of Rochester Independent College Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Vulnerable children

Attendance monitoring

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Reporting a concern

Allegations against Members of Staff and Volunteers

Safeguarding Training and induction

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

Online safety in schools and colleges

Children and online safety away from school and college

Supporting children not in school

Supporting children in school

Peer on Peer Abuse

Support from Dukes Education

COVID-19 School Closures – Contact Details

COVID-19 school closure - Safeguarding Support

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Maeva Elliott	01634 828115	Maeva.elliott@rochester-college.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kelly Flatman		Kelly.flatman@rochester-college.org.uk
Principal	Alistair Brownlow		Alistair.brownlow@rochester-college.org.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Tim Fish		Tim.fish@dukeseducation.com

2. Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. The College will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

3. Attendance monitoring

Registers are being maintained as usual on Isams and absences are followed up by administrative staff, with teachers and personal tutors also contacting students where necessary.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will record the matter as usual and liaise with outside agencies, such as local authority children's services or the police, if required.

5. Reporting a concern

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff have a concern about a student, they should call the College number on 01634 828115 or email maeva.elliott@rochester-college.org.uk and kelly.flatman@rochester-college.org.uk, to ensure that the concern is received.

Where staff are concerned about an adult's conduct towards a student they should report the concern to the principal by emailing alistair.brownlow@rochester-college.org.uk.

If a child is at risk of imminent danger or harm concerns will need to be referred by telephone to **First Response 01634 334466 and/or the police**. If it is an emergency the police need to be called on 999.

If there are child protection concerns the role of the school is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be referred to children's social care and Early Help via the Medway online form ([the portal](#))

Allegations Against Members of Staff

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- Allegations should be referred immediately to the principal (or DSL in their absence) who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the student and staff member. Please refer to the Medway [LADO Leaflet](#) if you need further information.
- In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the principal then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the safeguarding governor, who will contact the LADO in the first instance.
- Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the principal or safeguarding governor should contact **the LADO directly on 01634 331065**.

6. 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 and assistant DSLs have all had their updated training.

New staff recruited before 5 January 2021 have been provided with a safeguarding induction. No staff have been recruited after this date.

7. 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. If recruiting new staff, the College 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.

The College 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 179 of KCSIE.

The College will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as detailed in 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

The College will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KCSIE.

8. Online safety in schools and colleges

For any remaining boarders, the College will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

9. 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 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 College code of conduct.

The College will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- 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.
- 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 provided by the College to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

10. Supporting children not in school

The College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

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 should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that student.

Details of this plan must be recorded and a record of contact must be kept. The College and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

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

11. Supporting children in school

Some boarders remain on College site with the necessary number of boarding staff to look after them. Key boarding staff have had mental health first aid training. The DSL and an ADSL are also on site during the day and two senior members of the boarding staff who take part in evening duty have had DSL training. The small number of boarders who remain on site will continue to be registered twice a day, so they are seen in person. They will take part in their online lessons in classrooms in New Court, rather than their bedrooms, again so that they are seen by staff and see each other. Meals continue to be provided for them. The common rooms will be kept open. Activities arranged for them will be within the current guidelines given by Government.

We have a very small number of children who are coming in to school because they are vulnerable of the child of a key worker. They will register and study online in New Court under the supervision of a member of staff, using their own laptop and bringing their own lunch.

12. Peer on Peer Abuse

The College recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school 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 policy. The school will listen and work with the

young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

13. Support from Dukes Education

Dukes Education will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. This may take the form of online meetings in group or individual sessions.

14. COVID-19 school closure - Contact details

Education Safeguarding Officers (Education Safeguarding Service)

- Kate Barry (Education Safeguarding Officer – **Full time** (MASH and QA))
- 01634 331017
- kate.barry@medway.gov.uk
- educsafeguarding@medway.gov.uk

- **Contact details for the LADO:**
 - Telephone: 01634 331065
 - Further information and contact details found: [Advice and resources for professionals](#)

- **Children's Social Work Services**
 - First Response: 01634 334466 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm)
 - Out of Hours: 03000 419 191
 - No Name Consultation Line 09:30-12:30 provide professionals with advice on safeguarding issues and processes, when feeling uncertain as to whether or not to make a referral, where concerns are held, over a child or young person.

- **Kent Police**
 - 101 (or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm)

- **Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP)**
 - mscp@medway.gov.uk
 - 01634 336 329

16.COVID-19 school closure - Safeguarding Support

Support for staff

- The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust
CWMT Aims to equip young people to look after their mental health. They have developed a working from home wellbeing action plan, the link to which is here:
<https://www.cwmt.org.uk/working-from-home>

- With more teachers swapping classrooms for front rooms, Oliver Ireland shares five ways to avoid bad home-working habits:

<https://www.tes.com/news/5-wellbeing-rules-teachers-working-home>

- Remember, the Education Support Partnership is there for anyone who works in a school.

Education Support Partnership Helpline:

Telephone: 08000 562 561 (24/7)

Text: 07909 341229

Website: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Support for Students

- **Online safety**

Thinkuknow is an education programme from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command.

Thinkuknow gives advice to young people about staying safe online when using a mobile phone, computer or tablet and the website is divided according to age: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Anyone worried about online abuse or the way someone is communicating with them online can make a report to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) via the button at the bottom of the student and parent portal on our website here: <https://rochester-college.org/information/student-and-parent-portals>.

- **Emotional wellbeing**

With the increased focus on emotional health, as well as physical health, there are many different resources available providing support for mental wellness. Two that are well-established are Kooth and Young Minds. You can find more information about them here: <https://www.kooth.com> and <https://youngminds.org.uk>

If you have a premium Spotify music account you can download the Headspace app for free. Headspace focuses on the benefits of meditation and has lots of guided meditations, animations, articles and videos. The web address is <https://www.spotify.com/uk/headspace/student/>.

Support for parents/carers

- **Online safety**

Thinkuknow is an education programme from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command.

Thinkuknow has released online safety activities for a range of age groups, which can be found here: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>

- **Talking to a child worried about Coronavirus**

The NSPCC has created a new webpage with information and advice for parents or carers who are worried a child or young person may be struggling with their mental health or has anxiety about Coronavirus. The webpage includes information on: talking about feelings and worries; keeping in touch and balancing screen time; ways to create structure and routine; and helping to give children a sense of control. Read more information and advice on the links below:

[NSPCC talking to a child about Coronavirus - Click here](#)

Tips on How to have difficult conversations with children [NSPCC How to have difficult conversations - Click here](#)

- **MIND - Coronavirus and your wellbeing**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

- **Resources for parents during coronavirus** – Please click on the link below for a list of handy, free online activities and materials to use at home.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/resources/>