Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Covid-19 Addendum

School Name: Kingsmead Academy
Policy owner: Andy Dunnett – Deputy Headteacher – Well Being & Diversity
Date: August 25th 2020

Date approved by Governing Body:

Date shared with staff: September 3rd 2020

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the initial period of a full return to school following school closure due to COVID-19. It reflects updated advice from our local safeguarding partners, the local authority and the Department for Education.

It should be read alongside our current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and aims to contextualise the important safeguarding practices relating specifically to a full return to school after a long period of closure/ partial closure.

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

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

We recognise that a return to school will be difficult for some young people and we are still actively 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 designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy will be available 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, both for children attending school and those who may be at home if following advice from a medical clinician or public health guidance.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We will have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site at all times. Details of all important contacts are listed in the main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Working with other agencies

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

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

> Our 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. Monitoring attendance

We will resume taking our attendance register from 7th September 2020. We will expect all students to attend school unless they are ill, have been granted absence or are absent after following advice from a medical clinician or public health officer.

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 will continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending school and those who may be at home.

8. Concerns in relation to children returning to school and Mental Health

We fully recognise that a return to school may be stressful for some of our students and equally, we understand that the long period of absence may have impacted negatively on their well-being and mental health.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 specifically includes in the definition of safeguarding; "preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development". Mental health needs can be an indicator that a child has suffered abuse and can put them at risk of abuse. Traumatic events can also have a lasting impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education.

Whilst only trained professionals can diagnose mental health problems, school staff still have a responsibility to spot signs that a young person may be experiencing a mental health problem or are at risk of developing one.

If a member of staff has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, we will follow school procedures for reporting and recording this and access appropriate support as required.

We are mindful that the impact of Covid-19 will have been significant for many students and therefore are including specific training for all staff on reintegrating students after Covid-19 – including how to support their well-being – as part of our annual safeguarding update training on the 3rd and 4th of September 2020.

We are fully committed to recognising any signs of poor mental health and providing support both within school, or in liaison with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.

9. Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be especially alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they begin to see students in person. Any concerns will be acted on in line with the main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Online safety

As was the case during Covid-19 school closure we will use our communications with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. If students are working remotely we are committed to ensure parents/carers are aware of:

- What you're asking their children to do online and what sites they'll be using
- Who from your school will be interacting with their children online, if anyone
- The importance of using reputable organisations or individuals if parents/carers are getting additional support for their children (e.g. through online companies or tutors). They should be able to provide evidence of being safe to work with children
- Resources that can help them keep their children safe online, like:
    - Thinkuknow
    - Parent Info
    - Childnet
    - Internet Matters
    - London Grid for Learning
    - Net Aware
    - Let's Talk About It
    - The UK Safer Internet Centre
    - Government advice on keeping children safe online and staying safe online