



## **COVID-19 College Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection for The Bedford College Group**

<b>College Name:</b>	The Bedford College Group
<b>Policy owner:</b>	Director of Student Services
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## **1. Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for colleges to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Colleges were asked to provide care for a limited number of young people - 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 The Bedford College Group's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

## **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. Many young people within this category can safely remain at home.

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 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 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable young people are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The Bedford College Group will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable young people. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual head for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Fiona Phillip – Director of Student Services.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will only attend an education setting if they cannot be safely cared for at home.

## **3. Attendance Monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If The Bedford College Group has any young people in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

If the college has closed, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE.

The Bedford College Group and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending college – The Bedford College Group will then follow up on any young person that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The Bedford College Group 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.

#### **4. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Bedford College group has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a Deputy DSL and a number of Safeguarding Officers.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Emma Lowe – Vice Principal

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Fiona Phillip – Director of Student Services

In the absence of the two above contacts, the Safeguarding Officers can be contacted via [safe@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:safe@bedford.ac.uk).

The optimal scenario is to have a member of the Safeguarding Team available on a site within the group. Where this is not the case a trained DSL / Deputy DSL or Safeguarding Officer will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained member of the Safeguarding Team is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating Confidential Comments on ProMonitor and liaising with the offsite DSL / Deputy DSL or Safeguarding Officer and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the college.

The Safeguarding Team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

#### **5. Reporting a Concern**

Where staff have a concern about a young person, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via Confidential Comments on ProMonitor, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access ProMonitor from home, they should email [safe@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:safe@bedford.ac.uk). This will ensure that the concern is received by a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Where staff are concerned about an adult working with young people in the college, they should report this to the member of Senior Management on site that day.

Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

## **6. Safeguarding Training and Induction**

DSL training is unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. If a member of the Safeguarding Team misses their face-to-face refresher training during this period, they will continue to be classed as a trained member however, online refresher training will be sourced.

Members of the Safeguarding Team will continue to update their training and awareness of various topics using online training sessions and webinars.

All existing college staff have had safeguarding awareness training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The Safeguarding Team will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a young person.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter The Bedford College Group, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

## **7. Safer Recruitment/Volunteers**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the workforce or gain access to young people. When recruiting new staff, The Bedford College Group 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 (2019) (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 The Bedford College Group are utilising 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.

The Bedford College Group 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.

## **8. Online Safety in Colleges**

The Bedford College Group will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in college, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **9. Students and Online Safety Away from College**

It is important that all staff who interact with our students, including online, continue to look out for signs a young person may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

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

### **10. Safeguarding Staff**

It is important that staff members are aware of their behaviours during this period of time. Staff should ensure that they remain professional at all times and follow the guidance as set out within the Professional Boundaries Guidelines.

Staff must ensure that they do not share any personal contact details with students. If you have received permission to use your own mobile phone, this includes ensuring that telephone numbers are withheld before making a call. Students should not be given personal telephone numbers for them to call staff. The student should provide the staff member a telephone number and then the staff member should call them.

#### ***10.1 How to Withhold Your Telephone Number***

To withhold your telephone number when making a call, you can put 141 before the number you are calling.

If you are using an iPhone, you can withhold your number by:

Go to "settings"  
Then "phone"  
Then "Show My caller ID"

Then you can switch on or off.

If you are using an Android mobile phone, you can withhold your number by:

Go to phone/dialler app  
Then tap the three dots at the end of the search bar.  
Go to "Settings"  
Then "Call settings"  
Then "Additional settings"  
Then "Caller ID"  
Select "Hide number"

#### ***10.2 Safeguarding Yourself When Delivering Virtual Lessons***

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

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and students 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 should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

### **11. Supporting Students Not in College**

The Bedford College Group is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its young people.

Where the Safeguarding Team has identified a young person to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in college, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on ProMonitor, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact or video calling. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the Safeguarding Team will consider any referrals, as appropriate.

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

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

### **12. Supporting Young People in College**

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

The Bedford College Group will continue to be a safe space for all young people to attend and achieve. The Senior Leads will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Bedford College Group 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.

The Bedford College Group will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, there appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each young person and recorded on ProMonitor.

### **13. Peer on Peer Abuse**

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

Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Peer on Peer Abuse Guidelines for Staff.

The college 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.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on Confidential Comments on ProMonitor and appropriate referrals made.