

QUEEN ALEXANDRA COLLEGE
Safeguarding Policy: COVID-19 addendum

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Important Contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Liz Egginton	legginton@qac.ac.uk
Deputy DSL Team Members	Jan Gormley	jgormley@qac.ac.uk
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Principal & Chief Executive	Beverley Jessop	bjessop@qac.ac.uk
Chair of Governors	Ian Richards	
Link Governor for Safeguarding	Jan McCall	
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Lado Team	ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of College closure due to COVID-19, and reflects changes to our normal Safeguarding 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. We will follow the guidance of funding bodies/local authorities and West Midlands Police as appropriate.

Unless covered here, our normal Safeguarding 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

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 our students and clients must come first. Throughout this policy we refer to 'students' which means all young people attending education, training or in the care of QAC.
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any young person, they should continue to act on it immediately - using our normal reporting process (My Concern)
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deput(ies) are available at all times (see section 4 for details of QAC arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the College workforce or gain access to students.
- Students 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 young person immediately even if the young person is not in College and is studying at home. It is still vitally important to do this. Our reporting procedures remain the same as in our main Safeguarding Policy (i.e. record on My Concern). As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support our students' social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable young people.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

Our DSL/deputy DSLs are available to action concerns while working remotely, as they would whilst on campus. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

QAC staff are aware of the names and contact details of the DSL and Deputies which are also available on the College's website and the Safeguarding noticeboard as well as on My Concern. We will keep all staff and volunteers informed if there are any changes to our DSL Team.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable young people in our College are.

On evenings and weekends, the senior on call manager is available on a rota basis. They can be contacted on the main College telephone number which will transfer to the out of hours service.

The senior on call manager will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can take any immediate action and/or liaise with the relevant agencies.

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with social care and other agencies as appropriate.

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

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners (CCG, Local Safeguarding Board and Police)
- The local authorities about young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officers and social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

The following guidance is currently in place:

We have RAG rated our most vulnerable students in accordance with guidelines and have put measures in place to ensure their continued safety. The safeguarding team is continuing to meet weekly to discuss and complete actions for our students who are most at risk of harm.

6. Monitoring attendance

As most of QAC's students are not attending QAC during this period of closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance. However Student Support and Academic Staff are in regular contact with students and families, liaising about students' learning at home as well as pastoral needs such as counselling and mentoring. Our Safeguarding Team will maintain contact with the students' social workers should the need arise about any concerns picked up during this home/College contact.

QAC is using the Department for Education's recording system and maintaining records of both contact with students/families as well as learning taking place and goals achieved. We have up to date contact details for the majority of our students and families and we have been able to make contact with families to get any updated details. Where we are concerned and we have not had contact, we have referred in to agencies for safe and well checks.

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. This will be through the My Concern reporting tool which is available online. The Safeguarding Team will action and look into any concerns in the normal way and liaising with family, agencies etc.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

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. There is no change to this aspect of the Safeguarding Policy and any concerns will be investigated and recorded as per QAC investigation processes, as directed by the Principal.

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).

9. Safeguarding for students not attending College

9.1 Contact plans

We will have contact plans for all QAC students where:

- They won't be attending College (for example where the parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the young person's best interests); or
- The College is closed or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- How often the College will make contact
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact
- We continue to use our safeguarding duty system so there is always a point of contact from a deputy DSL as well as the DSL

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, either via our

continued contact with the designated social worker or duty social worker and under any change of circumstances, either within the family or in college. Plans will be reviewed during our Safeguarding Team/Teaching & Learning Team meetings.

If we can't make contact, we will get in touch with social services, the police or the Education Department of the relevant local authority.

9.2 Safeguarding all students

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all disabled young people at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on our students' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, young people are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

10. Online safety

10.1 In College

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in College. In the unlikely event of all our Resources Team being unavailable, our contingency plan is to use an external company to provide such support. Our monitoring system is monitored by the DSL.

10.2 Outside College

Where staff are interacting with students online, they will continue to follow our existing/updated staff Code of Conduct/Social Media policies.

We continue to use our staff code of conduct (including updated online guidance). Expectations are that contact is made during college hours only unless there is an urgent safeguarding issue. All contact is either via staff college email, college mobiles or blocked personal mobile to ensure consistent and efficient contact is made with students and families. All contact is recorded on Databridge under home learning. Staff must report any safeguarding concerns directly to the safeguarding team via My Concern.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a student 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 students know how to report any concerns they have back to QAC, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

10.3 Working with parents and carers

- We have published information for parents and carers on our website about online safety as well as more general support and advice including mental health and wellbeing.
- Curriculum and support staff are in continued contact via email and phone/ video call and continue to advise on online safety to parents and students.

11. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for mental health for all students. We are able to provide mentoring and counselling during College closure. We will also signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for learning remotely and not attending College, tutors will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both young people's and adults' mental health.

12. Staff recruitment, training and induction

12.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work at QAC are safe to work with vulnerable young people. We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

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 QAC. 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.

12.2 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:

- A safeguarding induction

- A copy of our Safeguarding Policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

13. Students attending other settings

Should QAC students be temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving provider is given any relevant welfare and child/adult protection information. Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputies) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the student is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The student's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of their social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL or a deputy can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the student arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by the DSL. At every review, it will be approved by the Board of Governors.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Data Protection
- Data Management
- Social Media
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Bullying & Harassment for Students

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