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| <b>Staffordshire University Academies<br/>Trust</b> |  | <b>Trust Policy Document</b>               |   |                     |
| Trust Board   | Issue date:  | May 25 <sup>th</sup> 2020                  | Review date:  | Whenever applicable |
| CEO   | Page: 1 of 7                                       |  |   |                     |
| Trustees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>        | Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | Pupils <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Local Academy Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                     |
| Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>         | General Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |   |                     |

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY COVID 19 UPDATE  
(TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUAT'S MAIN SAFEGUARDING POLICY)**

**Updated June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, in line with DfE Covid 19 safeguarding in schools, colleges  
and other providers' guidance**

This policy is a generic policy; each SUAT Academy will adapt this policy to their  
circumstances.

## **CONTEXT**

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked, by the DfE, to keep their children at home, wherever possible. From this point in time SUAT's Academies remain open for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. However, from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 all of SUAT's Academies welcomed back more children in identified Year groups.

SUAT's Academies were also 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 is an addendum to the Staffordshire University Academies Trust Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy.**

### **Name of Academy St Peter's CE Academy**

Key contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Rebecca Walker

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Anna Bennett and Tracey Pemberton

Chair of Local Academy Council (LAC) - Julia Smith

Safeguarding LAC member – Julia Smith

### **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.

SUAT Academies recognise that previously looked after children are a potentially vulnerable group who may not have a social worker and will consider the support and offer to this cohort of children. In particular families and friend's carers may need additional support. Some previously looked after children may still have significant emotional wellbeing needs linked to their journey into care. Education settings have a key role in supporting the stability of those children with special guardianship orders or in adoptive homes.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed by an individual Academy in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in a SUAT Academy 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.

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 children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

**All SUAT Academies** 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. SUAT Academies will work with social workers to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children are up to date with the current education offer that looked after children are accessing.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the SUAT Academy will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, our Academy or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

SUAT Academies will encourage their vulnerable children and young people to attend the Academy, including remotely if needed. The DSL will continue to provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and families) who are not yet returning to the Academy.

### **Attendance monitoring**

SUAT Academies recognise that Local Authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. It is noted that the DfE has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending SUAT Academies. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows our Academies to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places

**INDIVIDUAL SUAT ACADEMIES** and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending the Academy. **THAT ACADEMY** will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. They 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.

To support the above, **SUAT ACADEMIES** will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place their Academy, or discontinues, **THAT ACADEMY** will notify the relevant social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

In **ALL SUAT ACADEMIES**, as more children return to the Academy, the optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL

(or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) 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 and managing access to child protection online systems and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) 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 Academy.

As more children return to the Academies, the DSL in each Academy will ensure all relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on children remains accurate, and complete. If a child from a SUAT Academy attends another setting, that Academy will do what it can reasonably to provide the receiving institution with relevant welfare and child protection information

In all SUAT Academies it is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them.

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

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff in a SUAT Academy have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the SUAT Safeguarding Policy.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. This may mean by email to the DSL/DDSL to ensure the concern is captured.

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

Concerns around the Academy Principal should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust. SUAT will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing staff in SUAT Academies have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). In each Academy the DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. This will include contact numbers and emails for DSL's/DDSLs' if not on site.

Where new staff are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting **OUTSIDE A SUAT ACADEMY**, that Academy will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the original school confirms in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

For movement amongst schools, SUAT Academies will seek assurance from the donor school that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of SUAT's Child Protection Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **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, SUAT Academies 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 a SUAT Academy is utilising volunteers, that Academy 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.

SUAT Academies 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.

They will also 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)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any SUAT Academy is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be on their premises, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, all SUAT Academies will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason a SUAT Academy has concerns about an individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

## **Online safety in SUAT Academies**

Our Academies will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers appropriate supervision will be in place.

## **Children and online safety away from the Academy**

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 SUAT's 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 SUAT's code of conduct. SUAT Academies will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

## **Supporting children not in SUAT Academies**

Our Academies are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all their Children and Young people.

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

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

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

DSLs in SUAT Academies 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. Academies will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

SUAT recognises that its Academies are a protective factor for children and young people, and that the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. All staff are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Our Academies will ensure that where they care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, they ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

## **Supporting children in SUAT Academies**

SUAT is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all of the pupils in its Academies. Our pupils will continue to have a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. Our Trust Board, members of our Local Academy Councils and Academy Principals will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

All SUAT Academies 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. They will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers, vulnerable children and returning pupils on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where an Academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they will discuss them immediately with the Chair of the Local Academy Council.

### **Mental Health**

All SUAT Academies are aware of the impact of the negative experiences and distressing life events on the mental health of children, parents and staff. We will, as we always have, ensure there is appropriate support and signposting to relevant support agencies in place, and also supporting those children who continue to work from home

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

SUAT Academies recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where an Academy receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the SUAT Child Protection Policy. Our Academies 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 will be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

### **USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS**

**FIRST RESPONSE PHONE NUMBER      08001313126**

**DUTY LADO    Contact First Response, 0800 1313126**

**NSPCC      0808 800 5000**

[virtual.school@staffordhsire.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.school@staffordhsire.gov.uk)

**ESAS 01785 895836**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>