

Addendum to the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy



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

College Name:	The Bedford College Group
Policy owner:	Director of Student Services
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1. Context

From 5th January 2021, 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.

Colleges were asked to provide care for a limited number of young people - children who are vulnerable, children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home and finally those who require access to IT.

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 2 pm -

<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.

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. 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 (2020). 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 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.

Where The Bedford College Group are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in part three 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.

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.

The Bedford College Group has written Netiquette Guidelines for Students and these should be shared during induction.

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.

The Bedford College Group has produced Netiquette Guidelines for Staff and these can be downloaded from the Connect Intranet page or by clicking [here](#).

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. Safeguarding Concerns

The Bedford College Group have produced a handy guide to Safeguarding Wellbeing which includes details of national helplines and support services for each of the Safeguarding categories that can be found within KCSIE. The staff version of this document can be found [here](#), and the student version can be found on the College's Moodle pages.

14. Mental Health

During this time, it's especially important that we all pay attention to our mental health and wellbeing and the mental health of our young people.

Our students may feel worried or anxious about different things. Beyond the virus itself, there is the interruption of the normal routine, suddenly spending most of their time indoors and no longer regularly seeing family and friends.

The College has a dedicated section on its Connect Intranet for staff to access information in relation to Mental Health and how to help students through this difficult time. The Mental Health page can be viewed [here](#).

The Bedford College Group also have specific Mental Health First Aiders available to help support staff and students with any concerns. Staff can view this list [here](#).

There is a wealth of information on national websites that can help to support any anxieties or worries that our young people may have. Key contacts for support include:

Mind	0300 123 3393 / Text 86463 info@mind.org.uk / https://www.mind.org.uk/
Papyrus UK	0800 068 4141 / Text: 07786209697 pat@papyrus-uk.org / www.papyrus-uk.org
Samaritans	116 123 jo@samaritans.org.uk / https://www.samaritans.org/
Shout	Shout to 85258 https://giveusashout.org/
The Mix	0808 808 4994 https://www.themix.org.uk/

The Bedford College Group have produced a Covid-19 Guide to Mental Health which can be found [here](#) for staff or on the College's Moodle pages for students.

15. 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 outlined within 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.