



**COVID-19 school closure and partial closure  
arrangements for  
Safeguarding and Child Protection at  
Strong Close Nursery School  
September 2020**

Aire Valley Nursery Schools Federation



## Context

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

Schools and all childcare providers were 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.

Strong Close Nursery School remains open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Helen Jones**, will ensure all necessary safeguarding actions are completed and will continue to ensure continuity in safeguarding leadership.

This addendum applies to all staff and governors within our schools including staff on supply, students, work experience students and volunteers. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This addendum of the Aire Valley Nursery Schools Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Working Days on Site	Contact number	Email
Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Helen Jones	Monday, Tuesday Wednesday	01535 605272 07548532809	Helen.jones@strongclose.co.uk
Assistant Headteacher & Named Person	Nicola Wood	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	01535 605272	Nicola.wood@strongclose.co.uk
Named Safeguarding Governor & Co-Chair of Governors	Jill Gilhome	N/A	01535 605272	Jill.gilhome@strongclose.co.uk

## 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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads 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. Any staff members that develop concerns about a child who is not attending after speaking to their family, should speak directly with a named DSL.

The Headteacher 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. The lead person for this will be: **Helen Jones**. The virtual school head is as follows:

Jonathan Cooper

[jonathan.cooper@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.cooper@bradford.gov.uk)

01274 436401

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 or carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and **Helen Jones** will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent or carer to agree suitable arrangements.

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

### **Attendance monitoring**

The school will complete their day-to-day attendance processes as advised by the local authority and the DfE to follow up on non-attendance of those children on the wider opening register. Those children who have not returned to school will not be included on the register. However, the Headteacher will ensure that families are contacted at least weekly to check on their individual circumstances and children's health and well-being. Each key person will contact their key children at home when they are working in school.

In addition, all families of children accessing an Early Years Enhanced Specialist Provision (EYESP) place will be contacted weekly.

The Assistant Head, and Headteacher will contact families of children where there are or have been safeguarding concerns on a weekly basis.

This system will ensure that children from vulnerable families are contacted two or three times each week.

**Helen Jones** and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. **Helen Jones** will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. **Helen Jones** will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child and the child subsequently does not attend.

To support the above, key persons will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. They will check on the health of the children and their families and note down any information about a family experiencing Covid-19 symptoms. They will also check if the family are accessing the food voucher system successfully (if applicable) and if they are experiencing any hardship or difficulties of any kind. Key persons will also check if families are accessing the online resources provided by the school and engaging with Facebook or website posts for updates to learning. The Headteacher will provide staff communicating with parents with a script of prompts and questions to ensure consistency with all families.

In all circumstances, where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, **Helen Jones** will notify their social worker.

**Helen Jones** will consult with the Headteacher or Manager of settings with regard to absences of children from other settings that are attending at Strong Close Nursery School.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

At least one DSL will be on site at all times. If, due to staff shortages or sickness, it is not possible to have a DSL on site, a trained DSL will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. For example, when working from home. Staff and governors will be informed immediately of any issues relating to the availability of a DSL on site.

If a trained DSL from Strong Close Nursery school is not on site, in addition to the above, the Headteacher from Midland Road and Abbey Green Nursery Schools– **Ginny Robinson**, will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. Staff and governors will be consulted and informed immediately of these arrangements, should they become necessary.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, Safeguarding Monitor, and liaising with the offsite DSL as required. It may include liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all Nursery School staff have access to a trained DSL. On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them. This will also be included at induction for any new staff. The DSL on site information will be written on the staffroom noticeboard daily.

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

## **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. This includes completing a child protection form and having a conversation with the DSL. Staff can find further advice and guidance in the following policies and procedures:

- 2 Steps
- Child protection referral flow chart
- Bradford Partnership Continuum of Need

- CP Form 1 staff report
- Uncollected and lost children policy
- Safer working practices
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Guidance on recognising abuse
- Health and safety policy
- Procedures for assessing risk
- Safer recruitment policies and practice
- Induction and Code of conduct for staff during Covid-19
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Prevent Guidance

The DSL will record all safeguarding concerns reported by staff onto Safeguarding Monitor. All safeguarding concerns are handwritten before being put onto the digital system. Should the digital system become unavailable for any reason, the paper trail system will be used until the digital system can be updated.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will use Datacable to maintain ICT systems. They can be contacted on 01535 616000 and where possible during the Covid-19 breakdown, they should be e-mailed with queries at [helpdesk@datacable.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@datacable.co.uk).

To resolve any issues with Safeguarding Monitor, the Edaware team can be contacted on 01509 611341 or at [support@imperosoftware.com](mailto:support@imperosoftware.com).

**Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.**

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow guidance set out in the Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally via telephone and followed up with a written incident form. **Helen Jones can be contacted on 07548532809 at any time.**

Concerns with regard to the Headteacher should be directed to the joint Chairs of Governors: **Sheila Rye & Jill Gilhome**

Allegations against staff will be managed using the methods outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. Where possible, DSLs will complete refresher training online.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training. As soon as practically possible, and when government restrictions allow gatherings of people, the DSL will complete their training as usual.

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

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter Aire Valley Nursery Schools, they will continue to be provided with an induction, which will include comprehensive safeguarding induction.

Staff that are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school will receive an induction, including a comprehensive safeguarding induction. We will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer 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 staff moving from another school setting we will request that the staff member brings with them photographic ID, proof of address and their original DBS certificate with them at the point of their induction. We will require the school setting to send details from their Single Central Record linked to each staff member they send that can be cross referenced against the documentation the staff member brings with them. Further to this, where a staff member is on the update service, we will carry out a DBS check as usual.

For staff moving from a childcare setting, we will carry out a full DBS check. We will not accept the DBS from another setting. The staff member will not be permitted to work alone with children until such time as their DBS check is returned and acceptable.

For movement within the Aire Valley Federation, the Head teachers will liaise to send necessary documentation between schools. All staff moving between schools in the federation will receive an induction, including a comprehensive safeguarding induction.

During induction, staff will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy and Addendum during Covid-19. They will also be provided with information about DSLs, reporting formats, a staff code of conduct and necessary fire and health and safety procedures, including evacuation and lockdowns. See Induction policy and guidance.

## **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, Aire Valley Nursery Schools 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.

If Strong Close Nursery School should begin to utilise the help of 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.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools 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.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will continue to 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, should the need arise.

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 that Strong Close Nursery school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Strong Close Nursery School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in school**

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where children are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.



## **Children and online safety away from school**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be reported to the DSL immediately. The DSL will continue to follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures and where appropriate referrals will be made to children's social care or the police.

Online learning resources will be issued to parents every two weeks. Aire Valley Nursery Schools recognise that during this period children may spend more time than usual screens and computers and will provide parents with guidance about how to keep children safe online. See online teaching and learning policy.

The use of online teaching will also take into regard the following policies:

- Staff Handbook and Code of conduct
- Acceptable Use Policy

Staff will contact parents via the school's telephone system. Staff are not permitted to use whats app to communicate with families as this platform does not meet with GDPR requirements.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Strong Close Nursery School will provide parents with rhymes and stories on Facebook to use with their children. Videos will be pre-recorded by staff and sent to **Helen Jones** for approval and posting online.

When recording videos staff must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household taking part.

Staff are not permitted to make any live postings to Facebook and do not hold passwords for Facebook or other social media. These are held and managed by the Headteacher and Resources Manager.

## **Supporting children not in school**

Aire Valley Nursery Schools are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all their children.

The Headteacher, with the support of the named DSLs, will record contacts with families of children that we have safeguarding concerns about on Safeguarding Monitor.

The schools will share safeguarding messages on their websites and social media pages.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances could affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. All staff communicating with parents and carers will ask about the emotional well-being of the family when making weekly contact calls from school.

## **Supporting children in school**

Aire Valley Nursery Schools are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all their pupils.

Strong Close Nursery School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Children will be grouped in smaller class bubbles to support social distancing.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools 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 COVID-19.

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will ensure that where we care for children of key workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and any safeguarding matters relating to this will be recorded on Safeguarding Monitor.

If a concern arises about a child that does not normally attend Strong Close Nursery School, **Helen Jones** will initially contact the Headteacher or manager of the child's usual provision to discuss the concern. However, if a child is considered to be in immediate danger, **Helen Jones** will contact the police and social care.

If Helen Jones has any concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – these will be discussed immediately with the federation governors and the Local Authority.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

If Strong Close Nursery School 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 Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that child.

Concerns and actions will be recorded on Safeguarding Monitor and appropriate referrals will be made as necessary.

## **Bereavement**

If a child that normally attends the setting experiences bereavement of a relative or household member during the Covid-19 crisis the Headteacher, with the support of the Parental Involvement Worker, DSLs and key person, will maintain contact with the family and review whether or not the child should attend the school setting.

The Headteacher will liaise with any Social workers that may be involved. An individual support package, tailored to meet the needs of the child and the family, will be put into place.

Staff can access support for children experiencing bereavement through the following sources:

Winston's Wish <https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>

Grief Encounter 0808 8802 0111

Childhood Bereavement Network 01756 797799

Child Bereavement UK [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org) 08000 288840

## **Support from Governors**

The Aire Valley Federation governing body will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the Headteacher and DSLs to carry out their roles effectively.

This includes regular telephone calls from the Safeguarding governor/Chair of Governors and access to the Federation Advisor via telephone for advice and support.

The Headteacher will ensure governors are aware of the government's interim safeguarding guidance.

## **Updates, support and continuing professional development**

Aire Valley Nursery Schools will ensure that current guidelines are being adhered to by:

- referring to Bradford Schools Online for safeguarding updates
- visiting the DfE website to check for updates

- receiving daily update e-mails from the Deputy Director of Education and Learning for Bradford – Mariam Haque
- Annual review of Acceptable Use Policy – agreed and signed by all colleagues
- All updated guidance received via the DfE / Bradford Local Authority will be will be shared with relevant colleagues as necessary.