

Addendum: Version 4



**COVID-19 School Reopening
Temporary Safeguarding and Child Protection
arrangements at
St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy**

Policy owner: Charlotte Crosse, Headteacher ,
Chair of Governors, Dr Clare Macdonald

Date: 08.03.2021

Signed: Dr Clare Macdonald

1. Context

On Monday 22nd February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government’s roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

St Thomas More will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping children safe in education (as amended, Jan 2021).¹ We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them.

This addendum should be read in conjunction with the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, protocols of which, unless covered here, continue to apply. The key contacts remain as per the School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In line with reopening, St Thomas More ‘s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum has been updated and contains details of our Trust-wide safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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This is version 4 of the addendum to take account of safeguarding arrangements during school reopening. It reflects the need for staff to have a heightened awareness of safeguarding concerns, related to both the children attending school and the small number who are not, due to following

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

clinical or public health advice related to COVID-19. This addendum is available on the school website, and a copy is made available to all staff.

2. Attendance monitoring

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of an illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)² for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction³ we will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

3. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the reporting process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child protection Policy, by making a report via CPOMS without delay.

Where staff are concerned about a member of staff, volunteer or supply teacher working with children, they should report the concern without delay to the Headteacher, or the CEO of St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust, if the concern is about the Headteacher.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf

4. Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). In addition, all staff have received an updated safeguarding refresher in preparation for children returning to school in March. The designated safeguarding lead will communicate with staff should any new local arrangements be introduced, as well as any changes to safeguarding process and procedure, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Thomas More, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and relevant documentation as identified in the Trust's Mid-Year Induction checklist.

5. Safer recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. Where new staff are appointed, St Thomas More will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021)

Where St Thomas More is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.⁴

6. Supporting children not in school because they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

St Thomas More is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

Where a child is not attending school, due to following clinical or public health advice, who is: identified as on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, or who is otherwise vulnerable, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. This will be based on the school closure safeguarding protocols, in place for the duration of the COVID-19 related absence, and recorded on CPOMS, along with a record of all contact made.

St Thomas More and its designated safeguarding lead will work closely with stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

⁴ Paragraph 183. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

When a vulnerable pupil is required to self-isolate, we will:

- notify their social worker (if they have one)
- agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support

7. Supporting children in school

St Thomas More is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. St Thomas More will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing⁵ and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

St Thomas More will ensure that appropriate support is offered to all children and young people with respect to their mental health.

8. Elective Home Education (EHE)

St Thomas More will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made, St Thomas More will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the designated safeguarding lead will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as St Thomas More becomes aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

St Thomas More will work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure Elective Home Education (EHE) is being provided in the best interests of the child.

If a parent wants to admit their child to St Thomas More we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications.

9. Contingency Planning

St Thomas More will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans.

St Thomas More will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework⁶, which has been updated and outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

10. Support from St Thomas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities>

The Director of Safeguarding, Marcella Gillespie, will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the designated safeguarding lead to carry out their role effectively. This includes remotely accessing CPOMS for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

Contact Details: mobile: 07552245172 or email: mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org.

The Director of Business Services, Antoinette Bouwens, can be contacted for support and guidance on Health and Safety.

Contact Details: mobile: 07778150779 or email: abouwens@aquinas-cmat.org

St Thomas More will try to ensure that, as children return to school, the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy are given more time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals and other agencies where appropriate.