



Mount Tamar

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**Mount Tamar School**

**COVID-19 school closure  
arrangements for Safeguarding and  
Child Protection**

Version Control:

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**Mount Tamar School**

# COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

## 1.Context

The government announced that from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 schools in the UK would shut until further notice as a response to the coronavirus pandemic. Parents and carers 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 childcare providers were asked by the government 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 addendum to the Mount Tamar School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## 2.Key Contacts:

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kim Wentworth	k_wentworth@mounttamar.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Brett Storry Jackey Cook	j_cook@mounttamar.org.uk
Headteacher	Brett Storry	b_storry@mounttamar.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Frank Lowry	cog@mounttamar.org.uk
Safeguarding Officer	Sandra Bryant	s_bryant@mounttamar.org.uk

## 3.Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children are defined as those who have a social worker and children 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.

All children at Mount Tamar School have an EHC and 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. Many children 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.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) know who the most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place during this crisis to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Mount Tamar School 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 Kim Wentworth our DSL.

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/carer does not bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Mount Tamar School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Mount Tamar School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Mount Tamar School will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school, including remotely if needed.

#### **4.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.

Mount Tamar School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Mount Tamar School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Mount Tamar School will also follow up with any parent/carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above monitoring of attendance, Mount Tamar School will, when communicating with parents/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 at school, or discontinues, Mount Tamar School will notify their social worker (where relevant).

#### **5.Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Mount Tamar School has a DSL and two Deputy DSL's (DDSL).

The name of the DSL is Kim Wentworth.

The names of the DDSL's are Brett Storry and Jackey Cook.

The school will aim to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site at all times. Where this is not possible, 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 duty) is not on site, in addition to the above, a member of SLT will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might

include updating and managing access to systems such as Arbor 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 carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all Mount Tamar School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue (as far as reasonably possible) to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, that can be done remotely.

## **6. Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes making a report via Arbor or CPOMS, which can be done remotely if necessary.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access Arbor from home, they should email the DSL, DDSL's and Headteacher immediately. This will ensure the concern is reported and acted upon.

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 must report the concern verbally (and then followed up in writing) to the Headteacher (or in his absence to the DSL). The Headteacher must also be notified of the concern, by the DSL, if he was unavailable to take the initial referral.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors (and not the DSL/DDSL) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (Tel: 01752 306340) should they be unavailable. Please see contact details for the Chair of Governors in section 2 of this document.

## **7. 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 refresher training.

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 Mount Tamar School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, 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; and
- The member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the Mount Tamar School child protection and safeguarding policy, confirmation of local processes and procedures, and provided with details of DSL arrangements.

### **8.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, Mount Tamar School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for its setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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. For a temporary period, the changes will enable:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link; and
- Scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted

Full details of the changes can be obtained from [customerservices@db.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@db.gov.uk)

Where Mount Tamar School 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 (2019). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Mount Tamar School 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Mount Tamar School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral' guidance.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals to the TRA will be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Mount Tamar School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

### **9. Online safety in school**

Mount Tamar School will continue to provide a safe learning environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

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

### **10. 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 a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with as per the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and where appropriate referrals will still be made to children's social care and as required, the Police.

Any online teaching will follow the principles as set out in the Mount Tamar School code of conduct.

Mount Tamar School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1's, groups only
- Staff and children 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 must use only platforms provided by Mount Tamar School to communicate with students

- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held

### **11.Supporting children not in school**

Mount Tamar School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral type support in school, they will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child. Details of this plan must be recorded on Arbor, as should a record of the contact be made.

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

Mount Tamar School and its DSL will look closely with its 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.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Mount Tamar School recognises that the school is a protective factor for children, and in the current circumstances, the situation can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at Mount Tamar School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students work where they are at home.

### **12.Supporting children in school**

Mount Tamar School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its students.

Mount Tamar 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 student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Mount Tamar School 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.

Mount Tamar School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke for them and recorded on Arbor.

### **13.Peer on Peer Abuse**

Mount Tamar School recognises that during the closure, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, it will follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and of those outlined within the school child protection and safeguarding policy.

The school will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of the child.

Concerns and actions relating to peer on peer abuse will be recorded on Arbor and appropriate referrals made when necessary.

#### **14. Staff working at home or on site during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Mount Tamar School recognises the contribution made by staff to remain working either at home or on site during the current pandemic.

The school will ensure that where staff remain working on site with pupils, they are fully aware of the need for social distancing and are provided with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to safely carry out their duties.

Where staff are working on site, they will only do so on a suitably agreed rota basis to limit their contact with pupils and other colleagues.

Mount Tamar School will ensure that all staff working either at home or on site can share their anxieties, concerns or worries about their ongoing safety or the safety of others, during the pandemic, with the DSL or any other member of SLT. Staff will continue to receive access to the school's counselling and welfare support service during this time.

