East Somerset Federation

School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Approved by the Governing Body of
The East Somerset Federation

Signed: Anna Chubb and Suzanne McCutcheon – Co Chair of Governors

Date: September 2026
Date for Review: September 2028

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1. Context

This policy was created to cover the closure of school following the COVID-19 pandemic and remains in existence to cover any future school closures owing to COVID or similar issues that may arise that could lead to the closure of those settings within the East Somerset Federation.

From 20th 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. Should a similar situation arise, the following information will be relevant.

This addendum of the East Somerset Federation Safeguarding and Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Bruton)	Rachael Bisset	01749 812331	brutonoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ditcheat)	Elaine Cosser	01749 860329	ditcheatoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Upton Noble)	Luke Oakes	01749 850375	uptonoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Bruton)	Sapphire Giles	01749 812331	brutonoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Bruton)	Bev Partridge	01749 812331	brutonoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Upton Noble)	Sally Curtis	01749 850375	uptonoffice@eastsomersetfederation.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ditcheat)	Nicky Morris	01749 860329	ditcheatoffice@eastsomersetfederation.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, 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 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.

East Somerset Federation 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: Rachael Bisset.

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 East Somerset Federation will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID or other infectious illness, the East Somerset Federation or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

East Somerset Federation will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school.

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.

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

How will this look within East Somerset Federation?

To support the above, East Somerset Federation 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, East Somerset Federation will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

East Somerset Federation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Executive Headteacher at Bruton, Head of School at Upton Noble and Head of School at Ditcheat with Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads across the federation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the East Somerset Federation is: Rachael Bisset, Luke Oakes and Elaine Cosser

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Sally Curtis, Sapphire Giles, Nicky Morris, Bev Partridge.

The optimal scenario is to have one trained DSL and deputy available on site.

It is important that all East Somerset Federation 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 have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes writing a cause for concern form.

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 report the concern to the Executive headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Executive Headteacher or Head of Schools whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Executive Headteacher of Head of Schools.

Concerns around the Executive Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place if there is a threat of COVID or similar. For this period where restricted 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 school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff is recruited, or new volunteers enter East Somerset Federation, 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 a 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Safeguarding 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, East Somerset Federation 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 (2023).

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 East Somerset Federation is utilising 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.

East Somerset Federation 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.

East Somerset Federation will 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.

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

Online safety in schools and colleges

East Somerset Federation will continue to provide a safe 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.

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 should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

East Somerset Federation will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Supporting children not in school

East Somerset Federation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its 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 in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

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

East Somerset Federation and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

Communication 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.

East Somerset Federation recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at East Somerset Federation need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

East Somerset Federation 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.

Supporting children in school

East Somerset Federation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

East Somerset Federation 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.

East Somerset Federation 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 infection.

East Somerset Federation 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.

Peer on Peer Abuse

East Somerset Federation recognizes that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims**.**

Where a 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 of 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 young person