



## CONNECTED LEARNING CODE OF CONDUCT

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## **1. Introduction**

The overriding expectation is that employees, volunteers and those engaged to work within schools within the Trust will adopt the highest standards of personal integrity and conduct both in and outside work. As role models they must behave, through their words and actions, at all times in a manner which demonstrates their suitability to work with children and which upholds the standards and reputation of the school.

This Code of Conduct provides an overall framework of the behaviours expected of individuals who work within the Trust. The Code is not intended to be exhaustive and individuals should use sound professional, ethical and moral judgement to act in the best interests of the school, its pupils and its community.

The Code should be read in conjunction with:

- other school policies and procedures;
- the terms of any employment or service contracts and agreements;
- relevant professional standards.

## **2. Scope**

This Code applies to all individuals employed by the Trust or those engaged by the Trust including:

- relief/casual staff;
- supply staff;
- third parties providing services to the Trust (including self-employed individuals); and
- voluntary workers.

For the purpose of elements of this Code applying to all individuals set out above, they are collectively referred to as “workers”.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 Trustees**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to establish and monitor standards of conduct and behaviour within the school, including the establishment of relevant policies and procedures.

Trustees (and Local Governors where applicable) are subject to their own Code of Conduct.

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### **3.2 Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Heads of School and Line Managers**

It is the responsibility of Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Heads of School and Line Managers to address promptly any breaches of good conduct and behaviour, using informal procedures where possible but implementing formal procedures where necessary.

### **3.3 Employees**

It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with, and comply, with this Code.

Any breaches of this Code of Conduct will be regarded as a serious matter which could result in disciplinary action and, in certain circumstances, could potentially lead to dismissal.

### **3.4 Engaged Workers/Volunteers**

Engaged workers and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves, and comply, with this Code in so far as it is relevant to their role. Any breaches of this Code may result in the engagement of the worker/volunteer being terminated in accordance with any applicable terms of engagement.

## **4. Reporting breaches of standards of good conduct**

The Trust wishes to promote an open environment that enables individuals to raise issues in a constructive way and with confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately without fear of recrimination.

All employees, engaged workers and volunteers are expected to bring to the attention of their line manager /CEO/Trustee (whichever appropriate) any impropriety, deficiency in the provision of service or breach of policy or this Code. Where appropriate individuals should also refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy which is available from each school office within the Trust and on Trust's website.

## **5. The Code of Conduct**

### **5.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection**

It is essential that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work, and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. Adults must be clear about appropriate and safe behaviours for working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts, including outside work.

The relevant requirements specific to safeguarding and child protection are set out in:

- the individual MAT school's Child Protection Policy and the Trust's Behaviour Improvement Policy
- the Department for Education Statutory Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (January 2021, as amended from time to time).

This is the key statutory guidance which all employees must follow and all employees and

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volunteers must, as a minimum, read Part 1 of that Document.

“Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings” issued by the Safer Recruitment Consortium sets out key expectations for adult interactions with children and young people – the full guidance is available at [Professional and Personnel Relationships \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://www.professionalandpersonnelrelationships.org.uk)

In addition, individuals should be aware that it is criminal offence (s 16. Sexual Offences Act 2003) for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

Individuals should familiarise themselves with these documents in conjunction with the body of the Code of Conduct and other relevant Trust policies and procedures.

## **5.2 Conduct outside work**

The Trust recognises and respects individuals’ right to a private life without interference. However, individuals connected with the Trust must not act in a way that would bring the Trust, its schools, or their profession, into disrepute or that calls into question their suitability to work with children. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, inappropriate behaviour such as lewd or offensive action, as well as negative comments about the Trust or its community.

Workers must disclose to the relevant Executive Headteacher/Headteacher (or, in the case, of an Executive Headteacher/Headteacher to the CEO) immediately, any wrongdoing or alleged wrongdoing by themselves (regardless of whether they deny the wrongdoing/alleged wrongdoing), including any incidents arising from alternative employment or outside of work which may have a bearing on their employment or engagement with the school.

Employees should also refer to the expectations set out in their contract of employment and the disciplinary procedures.

In addition, any worker engaged in a post covered by the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (“the Regulations”) must immediately inform the school of any events or circumstances which may lead to their disqualification from working in the post by virtue of the Regulations. The statutory guidance relating to Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006#disqualification-under-the-childcare-act>.

### **5.2.1 Secondary employment**

The Trust does not seek to unreasonably preclude employees from undertaking additional employment but employees are required to devote their attention and abilities to their duties at their own school during their working hours and to act in the best interests of their school at all times. The Trust also has

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a duty to protect health and safety in relation to employee working hours. Accordingly, employees must not, without the written consent of the Chief Executive Officer, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of their duties. In addition, employees should avoid engaging in business or employment activities that might conflict with the Trust's interests.

### **5.3 Confidentiality**

Confidential information can take various forms and be held and transmitted in various ways e.g. manual records (files, reports and notes), verbal discussions and electronic records. As a general rule, all information received in the course of employment or whilst volunteering/being engaged by the Trust, no matter how it is received, held or transmitted, should be regarded as sensitive and confidential and must not be disclosed or divulged within or outside the Trust other than in accordance with the requirement of the role and/or where specific permission has been provided.

**NOTE:** All workers must be aware that they are obliged to disclose information relating to child protection issues and should make it clear to the individual either that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and/or decline to receive the information and direct them to a more appropriate person e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the relevant school.

The Trust is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses the personal data of its workforce, and to meeting its data protection obligations. The Data Protection Policy (available on the Trust website) sets out the Trust's commitment to data protection, and individual rights and obligations in relation to personal data.

Any actual or suspected/potential breach of data protection must be reported immediately to the Trust's Information Champion who will then liaise with the Trust's Data Protection Officer.

#### **5.3.1 Preserving anonymity**

The Education Act 2011 contains reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material which could lead to the identification of a teacher in the event of an allegation against them made by a pupil at the same school. Any individual who publishes material which could lead to the identification of the employee who is the subject of an allegation of this kind may be subject to criminal and disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

"Publication" includes any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes publishing details of an allegation or other information on a social media site which could lead to the identification of the teacher.

#### **5.3.2 Media queries**

Workers must not speak to the press or respond to media queries on any matter relating to the

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school. All media queries should be referred immediately to the Chief Executive Officer.

#### **5.4 Use of computers, email and the internet and social media (see Appendix 1 for guidance regarding contacting children via emails during the Covid-19 crisis)**

The school recognises that electronic devices and media are important tools and resources in an educational context and can save time and expense.

Those using the school's equipment and networks are expected to do so responsibly and to comply with all applicable laws, policies and procedures, and with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.

Personal use of social media and other online applications which may fall into the public domain should not be such that it could bring the Trust or the schools within it into disrepute and/or call into question an individual's suitability to work with children.

Detailed expectations are set out in the following Trust Policies (available on Trust website):

- *Use of Devices Policy (June 2021)*
- *Communications Policy (Sept 2020)*
- *Acceptable Personal Use of Resources & Assets Policy June 2021)*
- *Code of Conduct (data protection) (September 2020)*

Any worker who is unsure about whether or not something he/she proposes to do might breach those policies, or if something is not specifically covered in the policies, they should seek advice from their line manager or Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School.

#### **5.5 Relationships**

##### **5.5.1 The internal school community**

All workers are expected to treat members of the Trust community with dignity and respect and to work co-operatively and supportively. Bullying, harassment and victimisation will not be tolerated (see also the Trust's Grievance Procedure).

##### **5.5.2 The wider community and service users**

All workers have a responsibility to ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community. No favour must be shown to any individual or group of individuals, nor any individual or group unreasonably excluded from, or discriminated against, in any aspect of school or Trust business.

##### **5.5.3 Contracts**

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors,

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must be made known to the Trust's Chief Operations Officer. Orders and contracts must be in accordance with the Trust's Financial Regulations. No special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the awarding of contracts, tendering process or any other business transaction.

#### **5.5.4 Gifts and Hospitality**

Workers may not accept any gift or hospitality from a person intended to benefit from their services (or those whom they supervise) or from any relative without the express permission of the school.

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the sponsorship should always be related to the school's interests and never for personal benefit.

The Trust's policy on gifts and hospitality is available on the Trust website. Any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

#### **5.5.5 Neutrality**

Workers must not allow their own personal, political, religious or other views and opinions to interfere with their work. They are expected to be neutral in their views in the course of their work at the Trust and to present a balanced view when working with pupils.

### **5.6 Close personal relationships at work**

Close personal relationships are defined as:

- workers who are married, dating or in a partnership or co-habiting arrangement;
- immediate family members for example parent, child, sibling, grandparent;
- other relationships for example extended family (cousins, uncles, in-laws), close friendships, business associates (outside the school).

#### **5.6.1 Applicants**

Applicants are required to disclose on their application form if they have a close personal relationship with any person connected with the Trust.

Applicants are asked to state the name of the person and the relationship. Failure to disclose such a relationship may disqualify the applicant.

Workers should discuss confidentiality, with their Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School, any relationships with an applicant.

It is inappropriate for any worker to sit on an appointment panel for those with whom they have a close personal relationship.

#### **5.6.2 References**

It is expected that, for those working with children, professional references, and not personal references, are sought and provided. All references provided on behalf of the Trust must be signed by either the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / CEO.

Anyone agreeing to act as a personal referee must make it clear in the reference that it is provided as Approved by Board in June 2020 and amended in November 2020



a personal or colleague reference and is not a reference on behalf of the Trust. Personal or colleague references must not be provided on school headed paper.

### **5.6.3 Relationships at work**

It is also recognised that situations arise where close personal relationships can be formed at work.

Such relationships should be disclosed, in confidence, to the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / Head of School by the individuals concerned as this may impact on the conduct of the school.

Whilst not all such situations where those in close personal relationships work together raise issues of conflict of interest, implications can include:

- effect on trust and confidence;
- perception of service users, the public and other employees on professionalism and fairness;
- operational issues e.g. working patterns, financial and procurement separation requirements;
- conflicting loyalties and breaches of confidentiality and trust.

Open, constructive and confidential discussion between workers and managers/supervisors is essential to ensure these implications do not occur and that all parties can be protected.

No-one should be involved in discipline, promotion, pay or other decisions for anyone where there is a close personal relationship.

It may be necessary in certain circumstances to consider transferring workers that form close personal relationships at work. Any such action will be taken, wherever possible, by agreement with both parties and without discrimination.

Colleagues who feel they are affected by a close personal relationship at work involving other colleagues should at all times feel that they can discuss this, without prejudice, with their Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / Head of School.

### **5.6.4 Workers related to pupils**

Any workers related to, or who are the carer of, a pupil are expected to separate their familial and employment role.

Workers must not show or provide any preferential treatment to them or become involved in their education or care beyond their specific role as an employee/volunteer or their role as a parent/carer/relation.

### **5.7 Dress code**

Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should also be fit for purpose according to the specific role and activity for example appropriate dress for PE, outdoor activities etc.

These standards will apply to all official school activities. Full details are available through the Trust's Dress Code which can be found on the Trust website.

In all cases dress should be such that it:

- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;

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- does not distract or cause embarrassment;
- does not include political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans; and
- is not considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally insensitive

### **5.8 Use of financial resources**

Workers must ensure that they use public and any other funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They must strive to ensure value for money and ensure rigorous adherence to the Trust's Financial Regulations (available from the Chief Operations Officer).

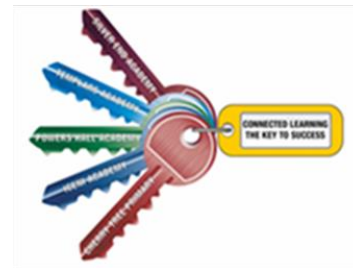
### **5.9 School Property and personal possessions**

Workers must ensure they take due care of Trust property at all times, including proper and safe use, security, appropriate maintenance and reporting faults. If employees are found to have caused damage to Trust property through misuse or carelessness this may result in disciplinary action. Workers are responsible for the safety and security of their personal possessions while on school premises. The school will not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of personal possessions.

### **5.10 Covid-19**

All staff members should ensure they read and understand all risk assessments issued in relation to Covid-19. Any staff member who breaches this risk assessment will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

## CONNECTED LEARNING ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY



### For Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Governors & Contractors

This Policy covers use of digital technologies used whilst in school (email, internet, network resources, learning platforms, communications tools, social networking tools, school websites, apps and any other digital systems provided by the Trust and the schools within the Trust). This Policy also covers school equipment when used offsite, use of online systems provided by the Trust when accessed offsite and posts on social media made away from Trust premises and outside of school hours which may refer to the Trust or the schools within it and which might bring your professional reputation or the reputation of the Trust and those employed within it into disrepute.

It is the main aim of this Policy is to ensure that staff and volunteers will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other communications technologies for educational, personal and recreational use. Please be aware that school systems and users are protected and monitored by security and filtering services to provide safe access to digital technologies. Therefore your behaviour whilst online when in school, and on all school devices whether on or offsite, may be subject to monitoring.

We ask that all staff, volunteers, trustees, governors and contractors abide by the following rules:-

- To only use the Trust's digital technology resources and systems for professional purposes
- To not disclose any user names or passwords to anyone else nor try to use any other person's username and/or password
  - When creating passwords we advise users to steer away from predictable passwords and never re-use passwords between work and home
- To only access emails through the approved email system for any school business; when communicating via email, users are expected:
  - To be polite and appreciate that other users might have different views; the use of strong language, swearing or aggressive behaviour is not condoned
  - To never open attachments to emails unless they are received from someone already known to the user as they might contain viruses or other programs which could destroy information and software
  - To not send or receive emails containing material likely to be unsuitable for children or which is strictly forbidden by the Trust; this applies to any material which is of a violent, dangerous, racist or inappropriate content
- To not browse or download any software or resources from the internet which may compromise the network or might allow the user to bypass the filtering and security system or are not adequately licensed
- To not obtain, download, send, print, display or otherwise transmit or gain access to materials online which are unlawful, obscene or abusive
- To always check copyright and not publish or distribute any work including images, music and videos which are protected by copyright without first seeking the permission of the author/owner
- To not connect any device including USB flash drives to the network unless it has current anti-virus software and is encrypted
- To not use personal digital cameras including those on mobile telephones for taking, editing and transferring images or videos of pupils or staff; no such images or videos may be stored at home or on any personal devices
- To only use the school-approved equipment for any storage, editing or transfer of digital images or videos and to ensure that such images and videos of children and staff are stored on the appropriate system or drive within the school
- To only take or publish images and videos of staff of children with their consent (as per the Trust's Consent Procedure) and such images and videos, if published on the school website, in newsletters or in the media will not identify children by name or relay any other personal information
- To use the Trust's online Cloud electronic storage platform in accordance with Trust protocols
- To ensure that any private social media networking sites or blogs which are created or contributed to by the user is done so professionally and will not bring either the user or the Trust into disrepute
- To agree that any mobile device or laptop loaned to the user by the Trust is provided solely for his/her professional responsibilities and that, in the event that it also used for any 'personal significant use' (as defined by HMRC) that the Trust's HR Manager will be advised

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- To only access school resources remotely (including at home) through the approved system ensuring that all eSecurity protocols interact with them
- To ensure that any confidential data that may be taken from one location to another is encryption protected and all Trust data security protocols are followed
- To be fully understand that the Trust's data protection policy requires that any staff or pupil information is held on the Trust's information management system and seen by the user must be kept private and confidential **except** when it is deemed necessary by law to be disclosed to an appropriate authority
- To fully understand, under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, the Trust, the schools within it and the individual users have extended responsibilities with regard to the creation, use, storage and deletion of data; the user may not store any pupil data that is not in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and which is not adequately protected
- To be aware that it is the duty of all staff that they must support the Trust's safeguarding approach and thus will report any behaviour of individual employed or engaged within the Trust which is believed to be inappropriate or concerning in any way; such reports should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the relevant school or to the Trust's Chief Executive Officer
- To be aware that all internet and network traffic / usage may be logged and this information can be made available to the relevant Delegated Safeguarding Lead within the relevant school or to the Trust's Chief Executive Officer
- To follow the policy on the use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices (including smart watches) ie that they may not be used in public areas of the school between the hours of 8.30am and 3.30pm, except in the staff room
- To promote Online Safety with the pupils within the user's care and to help them to develop a responsible attitude to safety online, system use and to the content they access or create.



## **CONNECTED LEARNING**

### **Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff, Governors, Visitors & Contractors**

This agreement applies to all online use and to anything which may be downloaded or printed.

All adults within the school/education setting or other establishments must be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities when using any online technologies such as the internet, email or social networking sites. They are asked to sign this Acceptable Use of Agreement so that they provide an example to children and young people for the safe and responsible use of online technologies. This will educate, inform and protect adults so that they feel safeguarded from any potential allegations or inadvertent misuse themselves.

- I know that I must only use the school/education setting or other establishment equipment in an appropriate manner and for professional uses
- I understand that I need to give permission to children and young people before they can upload images (video or photographs) to the internet or send them via e-mail
- I know that images should not be inappropriate or reveal any personal information of children and young people if uploading to the internet
- I have read the Trust's Online Safety Policy and understand the procedures for incidents of misuse so that I can deal effectively with any problems which may arise
- I will report accidental misuse
- I will report any incidents of concern for a child or young person's safety to the Headteacher, Child Protection Officer or CEOP trained designated person in accordance with procedures listed in the Acceptable Use Policy.
- I know who my Child Protection Officer is
- I know that I am putting myself at risk of misinterpretation and allegation should I contact children and young people via personal technologies, including my personal email. I know I should use the school/education setting or other establishment email address and phones (if provided) and only to a child's school/education setting or other establishment email addresses upon agreed use within the school/education setting or other establishment.
- I know that I must not use the school/education setting or other establishment system for personal use unless this has been agreed by the Headteacher and/or CEOP trained designated person.
- I will ensure that I follow the Data Protection Act 2018 and have checked I know what this involves.
- I will ensure that I keep my password secure and do not disclose any security information unless to appropriate personnel. If I feel someone inappropriate requests my password I will check with the CEOP trained designated person prior to sharing this information.
- I will adhere to copyright and intellectual property rights.

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- I will only install hardware and software I have been given permission for.
- I accept that the use of any technology designed to avoid or bypass the school/education setting or other establishment filtering system is forbidden. I understand that intentional violation of this rule may result in disciplinary procedures being initiated.
- I am aware that the Online Safety Policy is available on the Trust's website to refer to about all online safety issues and procedures that I should follow.

I have read, understood and agree with the contents of this Agreement as I know that by following them I have a better understanding of online safety and my responsibilities to safeguard children and young people when using online technologies.

Signed..... Date.....

Name (printed).....

## APPENDIX 1 – CONTACTING CHILDREN VIA EMAIL DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

The Trust is acting in accordance with the following DfE guidance “Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers” (published on 27 March 2020) on keeping children safe online whilst away from school:

*All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or college. 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 child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children’s social care and as required the police.*

*The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.*

*All schools and colleges should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school’s or college’s staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. Schools and colleges should, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if their existing policies adequately reflect the new reality of so many children (and in some cases staff) working remotely online. As with the child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key COVID-19 related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy. The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) may help schools and colleges satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour policies are robust and effective. In some areas schools and colleges may be able to seek support from their local authority when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.*

*Schools and colleges should ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.*

*An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:*

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Staff are reminded that they should only email the children in their class via the class page email and never using either their own or a child’s personal email address. Any contact between teachers and children should only be through a platform provided by the school and not through any personalised accounts open to public viewing, comments or sharing.

Staff are further reminded that there should be no 1:1 remote sessions via live webcams. Any group sessions, having been risk assessed in advance, should be held in an appropriate area (ie not a bedroom) and, where possible, with a neutral background, both staff and children must be appropriately clothed, and should be recorded (and backed up in the event that any issues are subsequently raised); language must be both professional and appropriate.

Staff at this time continue to have a duty to identify and respond to child protection concerns and must, therefore, report such concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead (please refer to your school’s Child Protection Policy During

School Closure, April 2020).

*April 2020*  
*Appendix approved by Trustees via email*

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