

# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at British Embassy School Ankara (BESA)**

## **1. Context**

On the 16th March 2020 all schools in Turkey were closed due to concerns surrounding the Covid-19 virus. This was initially for a one week 'vacation', followed by a programme of distance learning beginning on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Following the guidance of the Turkish Ministry of Education, BESA has adopted this schedule and will remain closed until Turkish schools are permitted to reopen.

For the duration of school closures all BESA students are educated at home through a programme of distance learning using Google Classroom.

This addendum of the BESA Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

| Role                                | Name                 | Email                     |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead        | Katie Vincent        | kvincent@besaturkey.org   |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Sarah Sener          | ssener@besaturkey.org     |
| Head teacher                        | Andrew Ryan          | aryan@besaturkey.org      |
| Safeguarding Governor               | Ozlem Odabas Tavares | oot@odabastavares-law.com |
| Chair of the Board of Governors     | Paul Creary          | paul.creary@fco.gov.uk    |

## Vulnerable children

The UK government identifies vulnerable children as those who have a social worker, children who have a Child Protection Plan and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Although at BESA these formal identifications are not applicable, Senior Leaders, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable pupils are. We will endeavour to maintain frequent contact with these children and to safely support them in accessing the distance learning programme.

## Attendance monitoring

BESA uses Google Classroom to review virtual 'attendance' on a daily basis and this is recorded on our school's management information system, Schoolbase. This allows us to undertake a regular welfare check on all children.

Where a specific reason for 'absence' has not been provided or approved in advance by the Head teacher, we will follow all absences up with a phone-call to the families. The member of staff responsible for making these calls is the Admin Assistant.

In all circumstances where a family cannot be contacted by phone or subsequent email the Head Teacher & DSL will be notified.

## Designated Safeguarding Lead

BESA has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL, both trained to Advanced level.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Katie Vincent

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Sarah Sener

During the period of school closure the DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone, email or online video when working from home.

## **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, which includes making a report via CPOMS and which can be done remotely.

In the event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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

Where there is a concern about a member of staff, they should report the concern to the Head teacher. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head teacher.

Concerns around the Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mr. Paul Creary.

## **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All BESA staff have received safeguarding training (either annual or induction) and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Distance learning using online platforms, Educare & IAPS, is encouraged as a way to maintain Safeguarding training during school closures.

The DSL will also keep up to date with new information and guidance through online systems such as Safeguarding.Pro and MyConcern, disseminating information to staff as appropriate.

The DSL will communicate with staff any changes to arrangements, so they will continue know what to do if they are worried about a child.

## **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 BESA will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

BESA will not utilise volunteers during this period of school closure.

BESA 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.

BESA 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.

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 global emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff will be engaged in online learning on behalf of the school and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for those considered to be engaging in regulated activity. As such, BESA will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Children and online safety away from school and 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 can still be made as required, to the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the BESA Staff Code of Conduct.

BESA 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 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas and the background should be plain or blurred.
- Live sessions will be conducted with a minimum of 2 adults present.
- Live sessions 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 at all times, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use school platforms to communicate with pupils i.e. Google classroom

## **Supporting children not in school**

BESA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

Where the DSL & Head Teacher have identified a child who would normally receive additional pastoral-type support in school, they will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan will be recorded on CPOMS by the DSL along with a record kept of any contact made.

The communication plans might include telephone or online contact. Other individualised contact methods may be considered and recorded.

Any communication plans will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any changes as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website, newsletter and online learning platforms.

BESA 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 BESA will need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work when they are at home.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

BESA recognises that during the school 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 Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person and their parents/carers to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions will be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate action taken.