



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY COVID19 ADDENDUM

Introduced June 2020

Approved by the Governing Body

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Lockdown (Invacuation) Policy
- Guidance for staff on Appropriate Conduct and Behaviour
- Online Safety Policy

1. Context

1.1 On 20 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced that from 15 June 2020, further education settings (including general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, and other providers) can offer face-to-face support to 16 to 19 learners, although remote education should remain the predominant mode of learning during the coronavirus pandemic.

1.2 Big Creative Academy has undertaken a number of steps to ensure that it is ready to open in compliance with this announcement, however due to lack of available staff it has decided that it would be unsafe for the Academy to offer face-to-face learning to large groups of students at this time. However, in preparation for the possibility that the current staffing situation may change, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has made the following amendments to the Academy's current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in order to remain diligent in looking after student safety and welfare.

1.3 Big Creative Academy has always maintained the following principles even in light of the changes to our education practices in response to Covid-19. The Academy will continue to adhere to these principles and will ensure that they are at the forefront of our practice as and when we allow students to return to on-site learning:

- the best interests of children must always come first
- if anyone in Big Creative Academy has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy continues to be available and contactable by all staff and students
- we continue to be vigilant that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

2. Policies and Procedures

- 2.1 Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy continues to apply to all Academy staff, even during the site closure. Amendments that have been made to our Health and Safety Policy in response to Covid-19 have not weakened our commitment to child safety and any further responses to Covid-19 will always take into account how they may impact child safety before they are put into practice. All staff have been briefed on their responsibility to continue to monitor student safety and welfare while they are learning at home and our updated safeguarding procedures have been published on our Academy website.
- 2.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) remains the first point of contact for any staff who have concerns about a student's safety and welfare. Upon reopening, the DSL should be available onsite during Academy opening hours. If, by chance, he is not available onsite, all staff and students have his contact information which has previously been distributed. Should circumstances arise where staff have not had a response from the DSL in a timely manner, all staff should then contact the Principal, as per already established safeguarding procedures.
- 2.3 During lockdown, the DSL has maintained all records of student welfare and safeguarding cases and will continue to update during re-opening. Staff contact with students and parents should continue regularly during re-opening to ensure that any changes to student welfare, health and wellbeing are being recorded and responded to promptly.

3. Student Welfare and Wellbeing

- 3.1 When students begin returning to Big Creative Academy, all staff are aware that they may be facing an influx of safeguarding concerns that may have arisen during lockdown that are only coming to light now. Therefore, staff familiarity with all safeguarding procedures remains priority one.
- 3.2 The circumstances of being in lockdown may have caused students to experience heightened levels of stress and anxiety, the effects of which might only come to light once students have returned to Academy. Therefore, all staff upon returning to work will re-familiarise themselves with the Academy's policies on student welfare and wellbeing, and the process to refer students for counselling via learner services.

4. Online Safety

- 4.1 Although students may return to some form of on-site learning in light of recent developments, the majority of their learning remains at a distance via online resources. While all online activity within the Academy is monitored by the Academy's IT Manager, our staff are also utilising the Academy's Online Safety Policy in order to educate our students on how to remain safe while online both at Academy and at home.
- 4.2 While Covid-19 has increased the necessity of online learning, guidance on appropriate communication with students from Big Creative Academy's Guidance for Staff on Appropriate Conduct and Behaviour and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is still being strictly adhered to. Staff are taking reasonable steps to minimise any contact with students that may be deemed unprofessional, ie. via personal mobiles and social media accounts. All contact with students online is via Big Creative Academy-monitored email and video conferencing software. Where necessary to phone pupils, staff are using Academy-supplied mobile phones. All mobile phones supplied by the Academy are subject to inspection upon request.