

Covid-19 Addendum to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

November 2022

At Apricot Online, we understand the profound strain that the period of the Covid-19 pandemic has put on society as a whole. However, we are also aware that online learning for our students and families is their normal mode of learning and not a reaction to the pandemic. Unlike colleagues in physical locations, we have not had to adapt to teaching in an online environment. We have been doing it for 13 years. Our policies, procedures and safeguarding measures were all developed to ensure the highest possible quality education delivery online. As such, our Safeguarding policy will continue to apply in its current state, but we will still monitor Government advice as the pandemic develops.

We will remain cognisant of the environment outside of Apricot Online and the possible impact this is having on students. We will also continue to monitor students and their families to ensure that we are quick to react and support them if there are any concerns.

Core safeguarding principles

We will continue to follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

We will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy will be available at all times
- Children are protected when they learn online

Reporting concerns

All staff must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. Apricot's procedure for reporting concerns about students has not changed through the pandemic and will continue as set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

DSL (and deputy) arrangements

Apricot has established a Safeguarding Panel with several members of staff all trained to the DSL level. There will always be at least one member of this team available to Apricot staff at any time.

If a member of staff has a concern about a student, these should be raised through the existing procedure. If you have a concern about a student, you must act immediately.

Safeguarding all children

Staff are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk as students are not engaged in activities outside of school in the normal fashion.

Staff will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns

Mental health

If any pupil, parent or carer has concerns about mental health and wellbeing, they should speak to a member of staff. The school will make sure pupils, parents and carers are aware of this.

Staff will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.