

Unsted Park School

Arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding During Covid school closures

This document forms an extraordinary amendment to the policy already in place

and is operational from 7th April 2020 for as long as required.

Document may be subject to updates if situation changes

Introduction

From 20th March 2020 schools were required to close to the majority of pupils and to remain open only for the children of identified essential workers (related to the COVID virus and emergency measures in place) and some groups of pupils identified as particularly vulnerable.

This document forms part of the school's Children Protection and Safeguarding policy and contains the adjustments the school is making to operational practice and safeguarding practice during the COVID-19 emergency measures. It is written in line with Government guidance **Coronavirus (COVID – 19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers – published 27th March 2020 initially**, and regularly updated since on the DfE website.

This document will be kept under review and amended if necessary when further guidance is issued by the Government.

If the situation arises where the school either hosts as a cluster school, or where pupils from the school are educated at another local school as a result of local cluster arrangements all schools involved will uphold the principles in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2021 and this policy.

The way in which the school is currently operating in response to COVID is fundamentally different to how we would normally operate, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The welfare of children remains our key priority;
- The best interests of children will always continue to come first;
- If any staff member or volunteer has a safeguarding concern about any child, they will continue to respond appropriately, pass on concerns to the DSL and appropriate and timely action will be taken
- A DSL or deputy will be available, either onsite or remotely;
- Unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children;
- Children will continue to be protected when they are online.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

The DSL is: Daniel Goldstraw (Headteacher)

Email: danielgoldstraw@priorygroup.com

Deputy DSLs are:

Name: Shane Kenny (Deputy Head) & Joan Tobin (SENCO)

Email: shanekenny@priorygroup.com & joantobin@priorygroup.com

We will endeavour to have a trained DSL available to staff at all times, wherever possible this person will be onsite, where this is not possible they will be available to be contacted via mobile or online video link. Staff have been provided with contact details for all key members of staff.

If a DSL is not available a nominated senior leader (**Marinha Braganza**) will take responsibility for the co-ordinating of safeguarding onsite. Duties will include:

- Managing access to child protection files (CPOMS);
- Liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy);

- As required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school;
- Reporting any changes or concerns;
- Ensuring site safeguarding checks are carried out and recorded.

Advice can also be sought from Stella Macaulay, Safeguarding in Education Advisor, MASH or other key officers (for full details see App 1)

Pupils on site

The school has carried out risk assessments for each pupil with an EHCP (in consultation with Health, LA and parents) to decide whether they should be offered a school place during the COVID crisis or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. These assessments will be revisited if individual circumstances change, or if Government guidance is updated.

Pupils with a parent or carer who is a critical worker should be offered a school place if they cannot be cared for at home.

Pupils who meet the vulnerable children definition, that is:

- Those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- Those who have a social worker including those who are subject to 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.

The school also has flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support or where there are other significant concerns about their wellbeing.

The DSL is aware of the most vulnerable children and has ensured that those pupils who meet the criteria have been offered places during this period.

School have made sure they have requested and recorded the most up to date contact details for all pupils to enable the most effective contact with pupils and families during this difficult time.

The school continues to work with and support children's social care to help protect vulnerable children. We expect those pupils identified as vulnerable children to attend school, provided they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where the parent does not want to allow their child to attend school we are working with the family and the allocated social worker to encourage attendance. If required risk assessments have been carried out to ensure any risks have been fully considered and the most appropriate plan put in place.

Non-attendance will be followed up in accordance with usual procedures.

The school will notify the allocated social worker if any vulnerable child expected in school fails to attend.

While children are educated onsite the school has put appropriate safety and hygiene regulations in place in accordance with Government guidance.

The school has set up systems to ensure all vulnerable children and their families not in attendance are contacted on a regular basis, to monitor their wellbeing and provide an opportunity for any

concerns the child or family have to be shared. The school has ensured that those staff members responsible for making contact with families have been provided with advice about how to conduct their contact with families and given key information about families and professional networks to facilitate any necessary contact. Guidance was provided to schools about keeping in touch with vulnerable pupils (app 3)

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability in terms of COVID criteria. However, the school recognises that families whose children qualify for FSM may be experiencing particular challenges during this crisis, and have made arrangements to ensure that FSM children either have access to a meal or are provided with food vouchers.

Reporting concerns

If any member of staff or volunteer becomes aware of a safeguarding concern about a pupil or family, they will record it in the usual way according to school procedures and pass it on to the DSL so that appropriate decisions and actions can be taken. Appendix 2 provides information about CSC services and access during the current situation

If there is a safeguarding concern or allegation about a member of staff or volunteer, the Headteacher or DSL will be informed immediately so that the matter can be investigated. The LADO will be consulted, or a referral made to LADO, as per usual guidance. The LADO service is contactable via telephone and email as usual.

The whistleblowing policy remains in place and can be followed by any staff member or volunteer if required.

Safeguarding all pupils

The school remains committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of **all** pupils and recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people. The current circumstances create some unusual challenges in ensuring children have access to safe adults outside their immediate family in whom they can confide any worries or fears. We also recognise that many families are under immense pressure in the current situation, both emotionally and financially, which will mean that not every home is a place of safety for children and young people. Some may be confined to small living spaces or may be witnessing or subjected to abusive situations.

Teaching staff do not have access to emails beyond the school, due to GDPR and security reasons. You can also email unstedparkschool@priorygroup.com which is accessed by SLT & SMT should you need additional support.

Online safety and providing off site teaching

All staff who interact with children and young people, including online, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk.

Online teaching should follow usual principles for safe and acceptable use of technology. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Acceptable use of technologies
- Staff pupil/student online relationships
- Communication, including the use of social media

- Minimum expectations
- Online safety
- Essential rules for remote teaching, which includes no live teaching

The school has communicated basic information to parents where online learning platforms are being used which has included

- Confirmation of online tools and or sites that the school will be using/if using
- Confirmation of what the child may be asked to do online
- Confirmation as to who their child will be interacting with online
- Confirmation as to whether other pupils will be able to access their child via the online platform
- Allowing the parent or carer the opportunity to voice any concerns
- The importance of not leaving the child alone during screen time
- Monitoring the search history
- Maintaining open communication with the child about online safety
- How to report a concern

Parents and carers have also been provided with details / links to support services e.g. Internet Matters, LGFL, Net-aware, ThinkUKnow, Safe2net, Safer Internet Centre etc.

The school recognises that not all children will have access to a computer or internet facilities in the home and has ensured that age appropriate resources have been provided for any child who needs them.

Safer recruitment / movement of staff and staff training

In response to the current situation the Government have issued guidance in relation to required checks that staff who are already working in regulated activity and have undergone appropriate checks do not need to be rechecked if required to work on a different site temporarily, provided the details required are confirmed by the current employer.

Any new staff or volunteers will be checked in line with relevant processes and details recorded on the Single Central Record in the usual way.

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part One of KCSiE. DSLs will ensure all staff are informed of any updates or variations due to the COVID pandemic.

Any new staff or volunteers will be provided with a safeguarding induction to ensure they are clear about expected processes.

DSL training is unlikely to take place at present. The Government have advised that any DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

If any staff member requires initial DSL training during this period, as they need to take on DSL responsibilities they have not previously had, the school will take advice from the Safeguarding in Education Advisor and an appropriate level of input will be provided.

Peer on peer abuse

The school recognises that during the closure / partial closure there is an increased opportunity for peer on peer abuse to take place. We will continue to remain vigilant to any signs of such abuse, listen to and work with any child who may have suffered abuse from a peer, their parents and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of the child or young person concerned. This is a high priority area of concern as specific in KCSIE 2021.

Domestic abuse

Notifications are shared verbally with DSL by the Safeguarding in Education Advisor – this provides opportunity to agree any actions required in each individual circumstance.

Please use this link to the Surrey CC domestic abuse helpsite <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/families/support-and-advice/keeping-your-family-safe/domestic-abuse-information-for-families>

Support services information

All support services have adapted their working protocols to provide best possible input for children, young people and families during the COVID pandemic. The school will ensure they access any guidance and updates in relation to national and local services and circulate as appropriate to staff members.

Some useful links are:

Surrey SPA (replaced MASH): <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childrens-social-care/contact-childrens-services>

ChildLine: 0800 1111 who are operating a 9am – Midnight service in response to COVID.

UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/report/>

www.thesafeguardingalliance.org.uk

CEOP: <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Young Minds Crisis Messenger: 85258 – free text service for 24/7 support

NSPCC Helpline:

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

The Department for Education COVID helpline:

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

Updates on current access to CAMHS and school nursing are attached as app 4 & 5

App 1

Support for schools during Covid emergency

Schools are having to cope with an unprecedented situation at present and are often on the frontline in relation to dealing with parental anxiety and frustration with the difficulties being caused by the crisis. The situation also means that some school staff are having to work off site, reducing the immediate support networks usually available to those still in school.

In addition, Government advice is changing daily as the situation develops and this provides challenges in ensuring that colleagues are kept effectively updated.

The key information for Surrey CC regarding support for students, parents and school is all through their dedicated Covid site

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus/schools-and-childcare>

We also have access to other services which we can signpost you too – for example Early Help colleagues are available and are taking calls from families and helping to resolve problems arising as well as contacting families directly when issues have been raised.

Please do contact us if you need any support or have worries or concerns about particular children and families or general issues about the current situation we can help with.

App 2

Dear Partners,

COVID: Arrangements for Children's Social Care

I am writing to set out how Children's Services intends to maintain its core statutory functions, whilst following Government guidance and joining the national response to COVID-19. We hope to continue our close working relationship with partners, in what are challenging times for us all. I know you will all appreciate that we are working in a rapidly evolving situation, so the arrangements set out below may change in the coming weeks and months.

Unless unwell, our staff continue to work. Whilst they will be largely based at home, they will continue to fulfil their statutory functions as far as is safe and possible. We intend to maintain continuity for the families we work with and have communicated with them to explain how our meetings, visits and support will be delivered at this time. We recognise that many vulnerable families will find self-isolation emotionally and practically challenging, and we are working on contingency plans to support them in a variety of different scenarios.

New referrals

Referrals should continue to be made to the local authority MASH / SPA team relevant to each student using the form from each local authority. The teams capacity will be significantly reduced so referrals will be prioritised according to immediate and acute risk. For Surrey CC the link is:

Surrey SPA (replaced MASH): <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childrens-social-care/contact-childrens-services>

Child Protection Conferences

At present, we intend to continue with all planned Child Protection Conferences, however these will take place 'virtually' using Microsoft Teams software or conference call. We ask that you ensure your staff are aware of this, and that they continue to provide written reports to Children's Planning and Review as usual, via child.protection@wandsworth.cjsm.net.

Where a virtual conference is not possible, Review Child Protection Conferences may take place as a paper-based process; all reports will be considered by the Chair, and a detailed discussion will take place between the Child Protection Coordinator, Team Manager and Social Worker. You should anticipate that Social Workers and Child Protection Coordinators will maintain contact with you regarding the arrangements.

Statutory visits to children and their families

We are reviewing risk assessments and plans for all of the children and families we work with, so that we are in a position to prioritise those where it is essential to maintain frequent contact. Home or school visits will only be carried out if critical to a child's welfare, but we will remain in weekly remote contact with families and will endeavour to see and speak to children alone where possible. We would very much value partners' involvement in our safety plans for children, so that families continue to receive contact and support from the wider multiagency group.

Core Group meetings

Core group meetings are a critical part of our ongoing risk assessment and they enable support planning for families; this is particularly relevant at the present time. Core group meetings will continue virtually where at all possible, using Microsoft Teams, conference call, or other software. Social Workers will be responsible for liaising with Core Group members about arrangements to meet remotely.

Children Looked After

Unless critical, we will not be visiting children in placement in order to reduce the risks to any children in the home, foster carers and residential care staff. Social Workers and IROs will be maintaining contact with young people and their carers by telephone, WhatsApp and Skype. Contact between children and their families is being risk assessed on a case by case basis, and where face to face contact is not safe or possible, WhatsApp and Skype arrangements will be made. Statutory reviews for Children who are Looked After will continue as planned but remotely. You can expect that where needed, the Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer will contact you for written or verbal information.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Referrals should continue and be made via telephone and email. Consultations and advice will continue to be given via telephone and email. Liaison will take place with partner agencies and other organisations via telephone and email as needed.

The LADO can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0300 123 1650 (option 3)

Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk

Allegations against Staff and Volunteers Meetings will continue to take place via Conference Call. This method is already embedded in practice and no difficulties are foreseen unless partner agencies and other organisations are not available. Please make us aware of this on an individual case basis.

Safeguarding advice and support to schools

Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)

Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm

The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership co-ordinates how children are safeguarded and protected from harm. The SSCP is based in Leatherhead.

The [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership website](#) provides guidance and protocols for professionals as well as details of child protection training courses available.

Request for Support Form

If you require support from Surrey Children's Services, please download and complete the [Request for Support Form](#) on our website:

Useful contacts

- SSCB Support Team: 01372 833330
- SSCB Chair: 01372 833378
- SSCB Training: 01372 833330 or sscb.training@surreycc.gov.uk

App 3

Keeping in touch with vulnerable pupils during school closures

We are aware that schools have already given this issue considerable thought and most have already set up robust systems to enable continual monitoring of those pupils identified as vulnerable.

This guidance is therefore intended as complementary to systems already in place across schools and supplementary to guidance previously circulated locally and nationally.

The definition of vulnerable children provided by DFE during the coronavirus emergency covers the following groups

- Those who have a social worker
- Those with EHCPs

Those children with a social worker fall into the following key groups

- Children subject to Child Protection (CP) plan
- Children with a Child in Need (CiN) plan
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Children currently under assessment by children's social care due to safeguarding concerns

Many schools will also want to add other vulnerable pupils to the list of children who will need to be regularly monitored; examples would be

- Those who are known to self-harm
- Those who have expressed suicidal thoughts / made previous suicide attempts
- Those with other emotional / mental health concerns (e.g. low mood / high anxiety etc.)
- Those with medical conditions making them additionally vulnerable
- Young Carers
- Particular stresses in the family situation (e.g. housing issues, sibling with disability or poor health etc.)

Currently the key groups have been identified and offered the opportunity to attend school during the closures. However, we know that many families (for a variety of reasons) have declined to accept this offer and the children are at home. Social Care staff are working and will be continuing to monitor those children known to them, but value schools' continued involvement in safety plans and monitoring to ensure children are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

While not in school, children will have reduced access to safe adults outside their family and those who have concerns and worries will have less opportunity to be able to disclose these. It is therefore crucial that each school puts systems in place to make regular contact with identified children and to also provide all children with ways to contact school staff if they have any worries of a safeguarding nature as well as reminding them of national helplines such as Childline. A dedicated telephone number and email address for contact is advised – regular monitoring of these can be shared by key staff members if necessary.

It is important that all contact with identified children (and any new contacts instigated by a child) are recorded in safeguarding systems in the usual way. With many staff working offsite each school

will need to establish a system for information to be shared with DSLs and agreement about how records will be kept up to date.

It is also important to realise that in the current situation a parent could fall ill quite quickly and children need clear information about how they can access support if this were to be the case.

It is likely much contact with children and families will be by telephone (although some may be by email). Wherever possible school phones (including school mobiles) should be used but if personal phones have to be used staff should ensure personal numbers are withheld. Simply inputting the number 141 before dialling the number means that the number will be withheld. This works for both landlines and mobile phones. Wherever possible call on a landline (if one is available) or via the parent's mobile number. If talking directly to a child, ask if an adult is present.

Ask staff members to record each conversation – a proforma is attached with some guidance about possible questions as an aide memoire.

If a child has a safety plan (e.g. for those who self-harm or have expressed suicidal ideation) remind them of how they keep themselves safe.

Many schools will have allocated a group of children / families to particular key individuals on the staff team to facilitate contact. All those involved need to ensure their recording is robust and the DSL is informed of any safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity so that decisions about any necessary actions can be taken in the usual way.

Referrals should be made to Children's Social Care via the MARF to MASH / SPA as usual. Local Authority MASH and Referral and Assessment Team social workers are maintaining services to provide assessment and take action to protect children in cases of immediate risk and/ or significant harm being identified. MASH / SPA workers will also be able to provide advice if required.

If key staff undertaking these monitoring tasks are working off school site it is important that they have access to contact details for families and also for other professionals in the network in case there is a need to contact the relevant person quickly. This information needs to be kept securely.

It will also be helpful for key staff to have access to information about other agencies who may be able to provide support around specific issues that arise, in case this is required.

Some schools have already made plans to make direct contact with families by making home visits – if this is considered, risk assessments should be carried out prior to any visit. Generally social care or early help colleagues are better placed to carry out any visits that are required and schools may want to seek advice if visits are planned. If visits are carried out by school staff reasonable social distancing measures should be in place – for example doorstep visits rather than entering family homes and staying at the recommended distance from family members. Sensible hygiene precautions should be taken. It is important for children to be seen and where possible spoken to directly by the person carrying out the visit.

If school staff maintaining contact become concerned about a vulnerable child / family this should be reported as soon as possible to the child's allocated social worker. Most social workers are working from home, so e-mail alerts are the best option or calls to mobiles if available. If the allocated worker is not contactable (e.g. through illness) schools should contact the line manager if details are known or MASH / SPA if the concern is urgent.

If schools are concerned about reasons for families not taking up the offer of a school place they should discuss these concerns with the child's allocated social worker so that they can support with talking to the family and encourage take up where this is considered safe and appropriate.

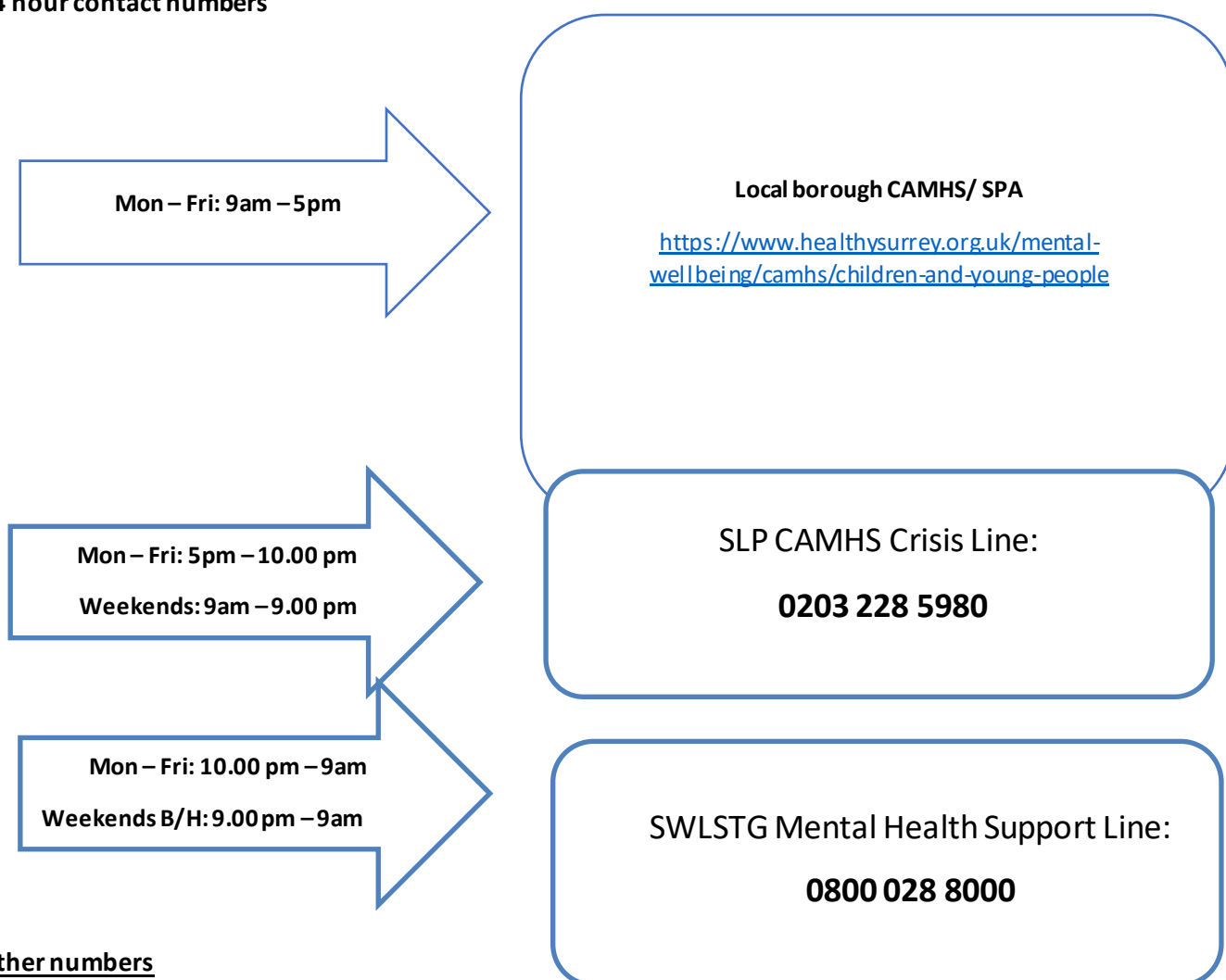
If schools cannot contact any vulnerable child or family while carrying out routine monitoring and robust attempts have been made (e.g. 3 calls; alternative numbers tried if available) the social worker (or MASH / SPA if worker not available) should be alerted to this immediately.

App 4

Duty / Crisis line for Young People, Families and Professionals

During Covid-19 CAMHS have reduced Face to face contact to a minimum. However, we are still here to provide support and will often do this by phone or using video. In a crisis young people/ families/ carers are encouraged to access support by phone.

24 hour contact numbers



Other numbers

- Child line **0800 1111** – calls are free and confidential
- HOPE line UK **0800 068 4141**
- Samaritans **116 123**
- Young Minds Crisis Messenger - provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK mental health crisis - If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- If you need urgent/life threatening medical attention' call 999 or attend your local A&E

App 5

Health Visiting and School Nursing Universal Service

In response to COVID -19 the universal Health Visiting and School Nursing services have changed their offer in line with the NHSE and NHSI guidance.

The services are now offering:

- <https://childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting-service>
- Vulnerable Antenatal women will be contacted and offered either video, telephone or face to face
- All of our New Birth visits will be carried out by a range of video calls and face to face contacts depending on need
- 6-8 week maternal mood assessments will be carried out by phone or video call
- Red Accident and Emergency attendances will be followed up

From the 1st April 2020 the health visiting and school nursing services will be offering a 7 day a week 9am-5pm duty line for parents and young people to call for support and advice.

The duty line will be staffed by an administrator, Health Visitor and School Nurse. The number for the county is.

Contact information for all school health and nursing services:

<https://childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk/services/school-nursing-general>

Chat Health

Across Surrey, they also offer a text service called [ChatHealth](#), a confidential school nurse messaging service for young people aged 11-19. Young people can contact their school nurse in confidence by text. The Chat Health text number is: 07507 329 951. Young people can also call our [advice line](#) to get in touch with a school nurse

Vaccination programs

All adults within the service who are eligible for vaccinations and wish to have vaccinations have done so. With regards the roll out of vaccinations to young adults and children, Unsted Park School will follow the advice as given out by Public Health England / NHS / School Age Immunisation Service. This advice is available through the dedicated Government website: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/coronavirus-covid-19/guidance-and-support)