



Addendum to Mosaic Safeguarding Policy **for use during Covid 19 Emergency**

This addendum includes material from Government guidance on safeguarding & remote education issued to schools in May 2020 & from addendums to school safeguarding policies across Dorset. Although **safeguarding of all children is everyone's responsibility**, guidance particularly focuses on 'vulnerable children', defined as those with Child Protection Plans; 'looked after children'; those with Education, Health & Care plans, & those who would qualify as Children in Need. **Children suffering bereavement during the current crisis could be considered even more vulnerable to the possibility of abuse than under normal circumstances.**

At the time of writing Governmental restrictions during the Pandemic crisis on physical contact, to curtail the spread of COVID-19, precludes the use of face to face meetings with children. Mosaic takes the health & safety risk of both children/young people and our counsellors seriously – support for bereaved families will always need to be in line with current Government and Professional Body advice. Therefore, resuming safe face to face working will be subject to current advice and a risk assessment of the safety and welfare of children and Mosaic Counsellors. We recognise that ongoing safeguarding responsibilities for all children remain & are likely to be even more necessary during a national crisis, when schools are wholly/partially closed.

Mosaic will continue to maintain all the principles & procedures included in its overall Safeguarding policy, while adapting the provision of the counselling service, pro tem, via the use of phone calls, email & secure distance meetings, e.g. zoom/video calls, along with face to face contact when safe to do so .

As far as possible referrals will continue to be accepted from families or other agencies by phone letter or email. Details in written form will conform to the requirements of GDPR & individual privacy & will be held on Mosaic's secure database.

Initial assessments which at the time of writing cannot take place by visits to a family home could by agreement with the family, take place via video call or webcam with a counsellor plus Family Services Manager/Senior Therapist/Mosaic Counsellor/Support worker. Agreement to set up counselling sessions following initial assessments will be made following a plan agreed by family, child & an individual counsellor, such that all parties feel safe, secure & as comfortable as possible under whichever method is agreed on.

Mosaic staff & counsellors must throughout all contacts be alert to any possible concerns or risks to a child's welfare which may include: -

Observation of body language, emotions displayed, remarks of child or adults present, suggestions of access to inappropriate TV programmes, social media or other online sites, etc.

Research & current reports from police & social care indicate increased numbers of disclosures of abuse allegations, online grooming & domestic abuse incidents during lockdown restrictions. Children bereaved of a family member during this period are consequently even more vulnerable to most forms of abuse than usual. Counsellors should be hypervigilant to that possibility & follow the procedures for reporting concerns as laid out in Mosaic's main safeguarding policy.

Mosaic will require all Counsellors to take responsibility of risk assessing and ensuring that work in whatever the chosen medium complies with this Addendum, Mosaic Safeguarding Policy and their own professional body advice. Therefore, guided by the following points:

- Before commencement of online/telephone counselling, Counsellors will need to ensure they have the appropriate training/CPD, along with their Mosaic Supervisor's agreement to do this
- Counsellors will need to check with their Professional Insurer that they are insured to cover remote/telephone working or continue with face to face sessions during the pandemic crisis
- All families to receive Mosaic's Health & Safety Leaflet and will be required to digitally sign and return their consent to working safely prior to allocation to a Counsellor
- Consent to be obtained at assessment from parents prior to online work and will be discussed fully with their Counsellor to support privacy and confidentiality of the sessions
- A discussion will have taken place with the family/young person about how to manage risk online/telephone in a crisis/emergency and how this will be managed
- An agreement to be made prior to commencement of working online or by telephone that a family member or trusted adult will be present before and after each session for a child/young person
- An agreement prior to sessions taking place that online sessions are not recorded, and that appropriate clothing is worn
- Staff & counsellors should not use their personal mobile phones or email addresses in contact with families; blurred backgrounds for video/webcam calls can assist in maintaining counsellors' personal privacy.
- Whenever possible scheduling sessions in working hours when Support Services are available
- Access regular supervision with a Mosaic supervisor who has experience in remote working

This addendum has been put together as a response to the COVID-19 crisis so that we can continue with supporting bereaved children & young people during this time. The addendum is to be used and read in conjunction with the main Safeguarding Policy to ensure that the safety of children & young people remains central to the Mosaic Service.

23.6.2020