



This policy has been developed as best practice to set out the safeguarding arrangements for all children and should be read in conjunction with each individual school/academy's child protection policy and other safeguarding related policies (see section 3).

The procedures within this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and Governors and are in line with recommended practices outlined by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

Introduction

Safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. This policy sets out the Trust's responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

Terminology:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

The aim of **safeguarding** is to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

What's the difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection?

Safeguarding is an 'umbrella' term that incorporates child protection. **Child Protection** is the process and activities undertaken to fulfil statutory obligations to protect specific children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of significant harm. All agencies and individuals should proactively **safeguard and promote** the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

Principles & Aims

Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carry out school activities.
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, and culture.
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately.
- To safeguard and protect all staff from unnecessary abuse or threatening behaviour from those with whom they come into contact through their working duties.

We aim to:

- provide all staff (employed, contracted, and visiting) with the necessary information/training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children.
- provide parents carers and children with information about each individual school's arrangements to keep children safe.
- ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school.
- demonstrate the Trust's commitment regarding safeguarding children.
- provide a safe working environment for all staff.

Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- **Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006** Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE (February 2015)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006

- **Education Act 2002 Section 157** and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 - require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- **Education Act 2002 Section 175** – requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, DfE (KCSIE 2023 update)
- **Teachers' Standards 2012**, DfE (July 2011) These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

Relevant Associated Policies

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy should also be read in conjunction with other associated policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Confidentiality
- Educational visits (including overnight stays)
- E-safety
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- Health and Safety including site security
- Information sharing
- Intimate Care
- Medicines and medical policy, including first aid
- Physical Intervention and positive handling
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct
- Whistle-blowing

Safeguarding Themes

Anti-Bullying: The Trust recognises the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be seen because of bullying. It is the responsibility of each individual school/academy to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address anti-bullying issues. There is a more detailed Anti-Bullying Policy available on each school/academy website.

Attendance: In accordance with each school/academy's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. Each school/academy, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. The Trust's schools/academies implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME), off rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

Child Protection: There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within each school/academy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. It is the Local Governing Body's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children's Services telephone number **0300 1234043 (including out of hours)**

Complaints: Each school/academy has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the individual school/academy website. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process.

Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff.

Confidentiality: Each school/academy's Confidentiality Policy is available to parents on request. All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSL may share information without consent and will make clear records of the reason for the information being shared.

Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. Each school/academy will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Information and Records Management Society. A school/academy will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil.

Curriculum: Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), relationships and sex education lessons as well as through all aspects of school life.

The Trust's schools/academies are committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as PHSE discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the e-safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

Online Safety: Each school/academy has an online safety policy. These policies include how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Each school/academy will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring methods are in place to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

Digital images: The use of digital images in the Trust's schools/academies is a complex area. Each school/academy has a clear policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

Schools/academies recognise the importance and usefulness of including the children's use of technology within the classroom, such as an iPad. With this brings lots of opportunities for children across all age ranges to explore and learn in an explorative and creative way. The use of a technology item, such as an iPad, is likely to have a camera and children will be using the camera as part of their learning experience. However, the use of iPad's and other tablet equipment can also present risks if children are left to use the equipment in an unsupervised environment. It is therefore understood that the school will ensure that all usage of iPads within the school will be always supervised by an adult.

Staff and children sign an ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. This includes a section for staff on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

Health & Safety: The Trust has a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on the school premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff.

At all times there must be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate, and agreed pupil / adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Headteacher/Head of School.

Our Trust's schools/academies have lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

Inclusion & Diversity: Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our Trust's vision & values promotes and accepts the differences between all children and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, gender, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a classroom environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for children and adults with communication needs.

Safeguarding Staff Welfare & Safety: The Trust will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to any school/academy site.

Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers: The Trust aims to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the children at our schools/academies. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour and actions of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Hertfordshire LADO Service can be contacted on **0300 123 4043**.

Partnership with Other Services & External Agencies: The Trust recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies who are part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

Partnership with Parents: The Trust's schools/academies are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The Trust shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly.

Safer Recruitment: The Trust's recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that the appointment of unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children.

The Trust's schools/academies have a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left.

If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff in our schools/academies, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or HR. The Trust adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

Safer Working Practices: All adults who encounter our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards (2012) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability'.

All staff will be provided with a copy of their individual school/academy code of conduct/staff behaviour policy/handbook at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

Abuse of Position of Trust: All Trust staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behavior is consensual.

Security: The security measures put into place at Trust schools/academies have considered the need to balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary). The findings will be used in the review of this security policy and shared with staff.

Access to buildings: The Trust will ensure its schools/academies take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the school to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff.

Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel: The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part the Trust's site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the individual school/academy Local Governing Body transfers control or otherwise allows the use of school premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, the school/academy will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitors' badge whilst on each school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Trust Board annually (in the autumn term).