



Achieving excellence together

Protecting and Safeguarding Children Policy

Approved by:	Trust Board		
Responsible department:	Core MAT Team		
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Next review due :	September 2025		

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for dealing with all matters relating to safeguarding children. Our policy applies to all staff, trust members, members of local governing bodies and volunteers working in the Trust.

The main elements of policy:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers, being clear about what they can expect from the Trust and what is expected from them, including information on parental responsibility, accessing pupil records and information on dealing with concerns and complaints about the Trust.
- Ensure we provide a safe environment for all pupils through robust recruitment and training of staff and volunteers who work with and have contact with children within the academy setting.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Implementing referrals to the appropriate agency based on advice from Calderdale's Safeguarding Children Partnership (Calderdale Schools), Local Safeguarding Children partnership (LSCP) (Leeds Schools) or Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed multi-agency Child Protection Plan and to participate in the planning and review framework for Child Protection
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

Rationale

The Trust is committed to providing a secure and supportive environment in which children can develop and grow into mature and responsible people. Safeguarding children is a central part of our whole trust approach to ensure that:

- Children are protected from abuse and neglect
- Every child reaches their full potential

By:

- Creating an environment whereby high standards of work, effort and behaviour are expected and rewarded with praise and encouragement.
- Providing a curriculum, which will help all children, develop their full potential.
- Providing appropriate training and learning opportunities to sustain the personal and professional development of all staff, academy councils and volunteers
- Developing an academy community whereby everyone feels valued and secure, show understanding of others, respect for diversity and promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging a sense of pride in our trust
- Working in partnership with parents by offering support, information and advice about their child's learning and development
- Our aim is to ensure that no child is discriminated against by being treated less favourably or by a failure of staff to make reasonable adjustments in recognition of pupils' needs and abilities

- Fulfilling our pastoral duties to our children and working in collaboration with other agencies as set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2024) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023).
- identifying children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm at the earliest opportunity, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting
- recognising that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, in particular children with SEN and disabilities. We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging. We recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all of our pupils.

3. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and provide a framework for them to report anything that might indicate that a child is at risk of or suffering significant harm.
- To make all staff aware of and how to operate the Continuum of Need and the Assessment Framework as provided by the Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership , LSCP or KSCB.
- To inform all staff of the named Designated School Lead (DSL) for each Academy and the deputies in their absence.
- To provide information to parents (through this document being available in full to parents) of our roles and duties to safeguard children
- To ensure all pupils are aware of who they can talk to, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Action to be taken in the event of concerns:

Through their day to day contact with pupils, and direct work with families, education staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect, and in referring concerns to the DSL.

10 Steps to safeguarding children

1. Stay calm and seek support and advice for yourself at an appropriate juncture
2. Ensure that interactions with children are child centred, appropriate and professional
3. Listen, believe, and take seriously what the child is saying to you
4. Be honest and clear about confidentiality boundaries. Children need to know that staff may not always be able to uphold confidentiality where there are child welfare concerns and will need to share them with the DSL
5. Allow children time and space to talk to you, avoid interrogating, investigating or examining children in your care
6. If you see a child with an injury, always ask them how they sustained the injury
7. Seek an explanation from their parents/carers unless you consider, in consultation with the DSL that the injury requires immediate medical treatment or is so serious to warrant an immediate referral to the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST)/Children's Social Work Service (CSWS)
8. Record details including what the child said to you, in their own words, and any parental explanation i.e. explanations for injuries etc. All recording must be

factual. Distinguish between fact and opinion. Date and wherever possible record the time on all records. This including the date and time that you obtained the information, and the date and time of writing the record (there is often a delay in between the two events). Include the nature of your concerns; what gave rise to them, and any action you taken.

9. Discuss your concerns with the DSL.
10. If you have serious child protection concerns, do not delay in seeking advice.

Preventing violent extremism

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Great Heights Academy Trust is aware that we must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and that this is known as the Prevent Duty.

If a member of staff identifies causes for concern linked to possible radicalisation to violent extremism, they will alert the DSL. If, when more information is gathered there is an immediate risk or emergency then the emergency services would be contacted. If there was no immediate risk but action is required then discussion with the nominated local police officer would take place and this would then determine the further response.

In terms of being aware of potential risks and signal events which can impact on our pupils and our school community the schools makes every attempt to:

- Ensure that staff are aware of and manage potential risks to pupils and the wider school community effectively by ensuring staff have received information/training to help them to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- Respond effectively to events, locally, nationally and globally, which could have an impact on individual pupils and on the school community.
- Regularly review emergency plans and procedures to prepare for future events and risks.

4. Roles and Responsibilities All staff:

- fully comply with the school's policies and procedures and are provided with a copy of part 1 of KCSIE 2024
- attend appropriate training
- identify concerns as early as possible and provide help, to prevent concerns from escalating and identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm
- provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- be aware that they may be asked to support a Social Worker to take decisions about individual children
- inform the designated person of any concerns

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of the DSL is to take lead responsibility for managing child protection issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with the local authority and working with other agencies.

The broad areas of responsibility as stated in KCSE (2024) for the designated safeguarding lead are:

Managing referrals

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and
- Barring Service as required; and
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required

Work with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;
- liaise with the Principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, IT Technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically;
- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with the Principal and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college. This includes:
- ensure that the school knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and, support teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

Raising Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies regarding this;
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this; and
- link with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
- Where children leave the academy ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Monitoring Child Welfare Concerns:

Not all situations will require a referral to Social Services for statutory intervention but may require staff to monitor the child within the academy and/or a referral to specialist services within the Academy or Children's Services Directorate e.g. Behaviour Support Services, Educational Psychologist Service

The following information will be used in the monitoring process:

- The Academy Child Protection Records
- Attendance records

- Internal monitoring of actions following all reported incidents

Making a Referral:

Following any information raising concern, the designated safeguarding lead will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- whether the child is subject to a child protection plan
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) and/or Safeguarding Advisor for Education
- the child's wishes Then decide:
- to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- whether to make a child protection referral to Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage
- if further monitoring is necessary
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g. CAF) and/or make a referral for other services.

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) will be followed up in writing using the Calderdale/Leeds or Kirklees Request for Service/Referral Form.

Action following a child protection referral

The designated safeguarding lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the social worker involved to stay informed
- wherever possible, contribute to the strategy discussion
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent child protection conference
- if the child or children are made the subject of a child protection plan, contribute to the child protection plan and attend core group meetings and review conferences
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- where in disagreement with a decision made by Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) e.g. not to apply child protection procedures or not to convene a child protection conference, follow the guidance in the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures 2.8 Resolving Professional Disagreements
- where a child subject to a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST)

Recording and monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen. All records will be kept in accordance with data protection laws.

All documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection file', separate from the child's school file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the head teacher and the DSL if a paper file. If an electronic file e.g. using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System), it will be stored securely with appropriate levels of access. The creation, retention and maintenance of all child protection files will meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (which includes the General Data Protection Regulations 2018)

It is the responsibility of the final school the child attends to maintain the original child protection file until the child reaches the age of: date of birth plus 25 years.

If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home, any child protection file will be transferred and sent to the Education Welfare Service.

Safe Recruitment and Retention

Two of the most important features of safer recruitment are deterrence and prevention. Deterrence is about ensuring that the rigour of the process and the determination of the selectors to do all in their power to avoid the appointment of unsafe people are so apparent that unsuitable applicants will not apply for posts. Prevention is about ensuring that as much information as possible is gleaned beforehand to prevent those unsafe people, should they apply, from gaining access to children.

The Trust pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept 2024. Please refer to the Trust's safer recruitment policy.

Staff Training

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of the academy's induction process and will be required to undergo training in order to raise their awareness and understanding of safeguarding children and child welfare issues. In addition child protection training will form part of the whole academy staff training in the autumn term each year.

All staff will receive, at least annually, updates in order to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguarding children effectively.

The monitoring and evaluation of staff training will form part of the report to governors in the summer term and will be published in the Principal's end of year report to the Local Governing Body.

Managing allegations against Staff:

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school that he or she has:

- a. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- c. Has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

We will apply the same principles as in the rest of this document and we will always follow the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding Children Procedures. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Initial action to be taken:

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Principal and make a record
- In the event that an allegation is made against the Principal the matter will be reported to the CEO who will proceed as the 'Principal'.
- The Principal or /CEO will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children
- The Principal or CEO may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage
- The Principal or CEO must consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by The Trust or if there needs to be a referral to Multi- Agency Screening Team (MAST) and/or the police for investigation
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff
- The Principal or CEO will inform the Trust Board of any allegation.
- If consideration needs to be given to the individual's employment, advice will be sought from the Trust's HR provider.

How will we know if this Policy is working?

The Local Governing Body/Trust Board shall:

- Support and assist the DSLs in their roles, including regular training in order to fulfil their responsibilities
- Ensure that this policy is kept up to date and consistent with the Calderdale Safeguarding Children Board procedures/ Local Safeguarding Children partnership (LSCP) (Leeds Schools) or Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board and government guidance
- Have in place systems to identify any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to safeguarding children arrangements and seek ways to remedy these
- Ensure that safeguarding children is a collective responsibility for the whole academy and an integral part of the corporate and strategic role of the Local Governing Body/Trust Board.
- Ensure that all staff receive child protection training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities
- Undertake an annual review of child protection activity within the academy, including allegations against staff

Relationships with others Trust Policies

The policy should be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance) in relation to the aims and content of other academy policies including:

Equalities Policy

Safer Recruitment Policy

SEN Policy

Staff Conduct

Attendance

Volunteering

Whistleblowing

Child Protection

Educational Visits

E-Safety

Anti-Bullying

DBS Policy & Procedures

Data Protection Policy

Freedom of Information Act Policy

Publication Scheme

Risk Assessments

Calderdale's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures September 2024