



Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2021/2022

Adopted by Trustees:

Next Review Date: October 2022

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: Director of

Safeguarding **Chair of Trustees:** *C.L. Chevassut*

Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Definitions	3
3. The Law and National Framework	4
3.1 Guidance issued by the Secretary of State	4
3.2 Local	4
3.3 Organisational	5
4. Roles and Responsibilities	5
4.1 All Staff	5
4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead	6
4.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	6
4.4 The Headteacher	7
4.5 The school Senior Leadership Team	7
4.6 The Multi Academy Trust	7
4.7 The Executive	8
5. Governance of Safeguarding	8
6. Quality Assurance	9
7. Escalation	9
8. Managing Allegations against Adults Working within the Trust	10
9. Safer Recruitment	12

1. Introduction

Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

The purpose of this document is to provide an umbrella summary of the aspects of safeguarding and child protection that are common across the Trust.

Each school within the Trust has a school-specific Child Protection Policy which is published on their individual website. A list of schools and their websites are included in Appendix 1 of this document.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Individual Academy: Site-Specific Child Protection policies
- Stowe Valley MAT: Managing allegations against adults working within the Trust policy
- Stowe Valley MAT: Safeguarding quality assurance framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, (DFE, 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – (DFE, 2018)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, 2014.

2. Definitions

It is important to see safeguarding as the "umbrella" term for everything done to support children and young people and keep them safe and promote their welfare.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)' defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection, however, is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' as:

- the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

It can be seen, therefore, that protection is only one part of safeguarding and indeed, the spirit of this document and individual school child protection policies is about the promotion of children's needs and the prevention of harm. This supports the need for all staff to respond early when they have a concern rather than wait until something is more defined and certain.

3. The Law and National Framework

The requirements of the Trust and each School to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people are embedded in legislation, government, and Local Authority guidance. Therefore, the policy of the Trust must be, and is, in line with this wider framework.

Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust has a responsibility under Part 3: the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, 2014¹ to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in our schools; and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

3.1 Guidance issued by the Secretary of State

The government guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021), are the essential national safeguarding documents and give practical guidance on implementing legal requirements.

Each school should have at least one copy of each which should be accessible to staff.

All adults working within the Trust must be issued with their own copy of Part one (or Annex A, if appropriate.²) of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

Time must be given for staff to read the document, and they must confirm by return that they have both read and understood the document.

The Trust also provides an audiobook version of part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) as a differentiated approach that ensures all staff can access the document.³.

3.2 Local

Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs) are made up of senior managers from the three safeguarding partners.

¹ [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations, 2014:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/schedule/made](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/schedule/made)

² Annex A is a condensed version of Part one of Keeping children safe in education. It can be provided (instead of Part one) to those staff who do not directly work with children.

³ Staff should be made aware of this during their induction, our annual safeguarding training.

A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- the local authority;
- a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area;
- the chief officer of police for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority area.

The three Safeguarding partners oversee at a local level the working together arrangements for safeguarding.

Each partnership arrangement will have a unique offer that relates to the community they serve.

Each school should have a copy of and show due regard to their local partnership arrangements.

It is also an expectation of the Trust that DSLs will attend update events as required by their local partnership arrangements.

3.3 Organisational

Each school has in place its own published Child Protection Policy, which mirrors and compliment all the above.

This school child protection policy document must be published on individual school's website.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring the well-being and safety of children, young people, their families, and each other.

Below is a brief description of those core responsibilities.

4.1 All Staff

All staff will:

- make sure they have undertaken the appropriate training for their role;
- take responsibility to report any concerns, no matter what their role;
- ensure they have a copy of part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and that they have read and understood it;
- be aware of the need to minimise their own vulnerability in not being alone with children or in situations that could render them vulnerable to poor practice and/or allegations against them; and

- always be aware of the needs of young people and be vigilant for any possible signs of abuse.

4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a member of the school Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for the strategic leadership of safeguarding.

The DSL is the person to whom staff should pass their concerns and who will ensure a practical and efficient way of dealing with those concerns.

The DSL will:

- ensure an open and efficient route for staff to bring concerns to them of any sort and to have their concerns taken seriously;
- ensure they are appropriately trained to carry out the role;
- support staff in ensuring they receive appropriate training;
- promote the procedural pathway within the school, so staff are aware of the way to report concerns;
- ensure the School procedures are followed and adhered to with regard to referring
- child if there are concerns about possible abuse;
- offer clear advice and support to staff bringing concerns or needing help;
- consider whether concerns referred to him/her need to be referred to Children's Services/Social Care;
- offer appropriate feedback as necessary as to the progress of the concern;
- maintain written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and keep a record system to ensure consistency;
- discuss with the Headteacher any complex concerns;
- ensure that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records;
- ensure that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil record;
- ensure those particular complex cases are referred without delay, and especially where it involves a child or young person subject to a child protection plan
- follows the LSP's escalation policy where cases are not progressing in an acceptable manner; and
- gather, collate and analyse as appropriate all relevant information for purposes of quality assurance.

4.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Each School within the Trust will appoint at least one Deputy Designated who will formally provide cover and additional capacity for the DSL. Each Deputy DSL will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the Headteacher will identify a Deputy DSL to undertake the duties of the DSL listed above.

4.4 The Headteacher

The Headteacher in each School is responsible for ensuring the Designated Safeguarding Lead is effective in their role of providing and accessing high-quality services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people accessing provision from their school, including:

- offer day to day support and guidance to the DSL as necessary;
- oversee the promotion of safeguarding throughout the Academy, ensuring all staff are;
- appropriately trained and aware of their responsibilities;
- ensure cover is provided where necessary in the absence of the DSL;
- offer supervision to the DSL in relation to their role and decisions made;
- ensure that a senior member of staff is designated as the person in charge of LookedAfter and Previously looked after Children and receives appropriate training;
- encourage pupils and parents to inform the school of any concerns;
- work with the representative of the governing body to put mechanisms in place to ensure that pupils requiring safeguarding measures are monitored in relation to their situation and progress with their learning;
- ensure all recruitment procedures follow safeguarding best practice based on advice;
- contribute as appropriate to quality assurance processes; and
- ensure sufficient allocation of time given to DSLs to undertake the role.

4.5 The school Senior Leadership Team

The School Senior Leadership Team will support the Headteacher to discharge the duties to safeguard children and young people.

The School Senior Leadership Team will:

- promote the importance of safeguarding throughout the school;
- oversee the effectiveness of safeguarding systems, especially procedures, and review and report any changes that are required;
- support the work of the DSL to ensure an effective process for dealing with concerns;
and
- ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duty to co-operate with other agencies and that the chain of accountability is clear from the front line to senior level.

4.6 The Multi Academy Trust

The Director of Safeguarding will provide strategic leadership within the Stowe Valley MAT for all aspects of safeguarding children and young people.

The Director of Safeguarding will:

- ensure that all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated in line with national and local requirements and appropriate changes disseminated to all schools;
- ensure that there are systems in place to support the effective management of safeguarding, especially the role of DSLs, training for all staff and supervision as appropriate;
- ensure that there is available to school Headteachers someone who can offer appropriate advice and support with safeguarding concerns, especially when they are complex and/or relate to allegations against staff;
- ensure quality assurance processes are in place and oversee the information they produce to measure the progress and effectiveness of existing safeguarding frameworks; and
- produce information to the Trust Board in relation to Safeguarding in order to ensure that the Board can demonstrate that it is discharging its safeguarding obligations appropriately;
- Support school headteachers with the management of allegations made against adults, staff or volunteers within the School community.

4.7 The Executive

The Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, through line management, will provide appropriate challenge and support to the Director of Safeguarding to ensure the Trust and the schools it sponsors are taking all opportunities to safeguard and protect the children and young people that access their services.

5. Governance of Safeguarding

The Stowe Valley MAT appointed a Trustee to take leadership responsibility for the Trust's safeguarding arrangements.

Name	Contact Details
Kyle Ferguson, Trustee.	01926 813128 Safeguarding@Stowevalley.com

The day-to-day strategic leadership of safeguarding is delegated to the Director of Safeguarding, who, as a member of the Trust Senior Leadership Team, will work with Headteachers and DSLs to ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled.

The Director of Safeguarding provides regular reports to the Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding along with other members of the Trust Board.

The role of the Safeguarding Trustee is to provide appropriate challenge and support to the Executive and Director of Safeguarding to ensure that they are satisfied that the Trust is fulfilling its safeguarding duties identified in the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

6. Quality Assurance

Robust safeguarding practices and procedures are key to supporting and safeguarding the children and young people that access services from the Stowe Valley Trust. Effective quality assurance measures are essential in ensuring the practices and procedures are fit for purpose.

Three assurance categories are in place to monitor safeguarding within the Trust (Red, Amber and Green), and Academies are placed in the category based on the current rating of their practices.

It is important to note that the current grading of each school is reviewed constantly and may be subject to change without prior notice.

Onsite assurance visits will be conducted in each school, at least once an academic year. Where schools are graded as Amber or Red, they may be visited more often.

The Trust will provide effective and robust feedback to schools that will support their ongoing evaluation and improvement work at a strategic level.

School leaders should familiarise themselves with the MAT Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework.

7. Escalation

Staff need to be aware of those times when concerns may look as though they are not progressing to an outcome or some form of action.

This may be indicated by:

- difficulty in getting hold of a DSL;
- staff not being satisfied with the decision of the DSL or Headteacher;
- staff aware that a colleague has not passed on a concern;
- external agencies not accepting a referral from a School when it is felt one is needed;
- staff not aware of what has happened to their concern because of a lack of feedback.

Staff must not close a concern because they feel "stuck" or "they can't do anymore".

If staff become concerned about the progress or action taken in relation to a concern, they should escalate their concern to the Headteacher or if necessary,⁴ to the Director of Safeguarding, Sam Godfrey.

If there are concerns about the work of an external agency, the school will follow the escalation steps outlined in the locally agreed procedures documents.⁵

The important principle is not to allow a concern to be “closed down” without it having received the necessary attention, assessment, and resolution.

Suppose the options above have been explored fully and the concern still isn't being handled effectively and therefore placing the child or young person at risk. In that case, it is important that you continue to escalate your concerns by contacting the Trust Board via Peter Robinson, Company Secretary and Head of Governance or by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

The Trust also has a whistleblowing policy available for staff⁶.

8. Managing Allegations against Adults Working within the Trust

The Trust takes allegations against members of staff very seriously and acknowledges that if concerns are not addressed as early as possible, they can create unsafe working environments and leave staff and children increasingly vulnerable.

The Trust has a 'Managing allegations against adults working within the Trust' Policy which should be followed in all cases where concerns are identified in relation to an adult working within the Trust's conduct which affects/could affect pupil(s) welfare or may result in a potential safeguarding issue.

Concerns about colleagues in the context of pupil welfare and safeguarding may arise in a number of ways, for example:

- poor attitude or practice that potentially impacts on the general well-being of children that need addressing;
- aspects of poor practice witnessed by others;
- staff speaking against the ethos of the Academy;
- non-compliance with Trust's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.

⁴ Such as a dissatisfaction with the response of the Headteacher, or if the concern relates to the Headteacher. In such a case, the Director of Safeguarding will work with the Chair of Governors to review the concern and may follow the steps outlined in the Trust managing allegations against adults policy to meet a resolution. This is not an exclusive definition, and staff are reminded they can report any practice concern to the Director of Safeguarding without hesitation.

⁵ [Warwickshire Safeguarding: Practitioner Escalation Protocol \(2020\)](#)

⁶ [Stowe Valley MAT Whistleblowing Policy \(2021\)](#)

More specifically, allegations may be made against an adult working within the Trust by a child or colleague in relation to abuse. All of the above will be seen as reportable matters, and discussions must take place without delay with the Headteacher.

Certain allegations in relation to staff must be reported by the Headteacher to the Designated Officer (LADO), who is the statutory lead for dealing with and advising about such issues, specifically where a member of staff has:

1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
4. behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

Internal decisions in such cases should not be finalised without the advice of the LADO.

As part of our MAT-wide approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the Trust (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported, without delay, to the Headteacher⁷.

In the case of allegations/concerns relating to a member of the Trust Central Team, they should be directed to the Director of Safeguarding.

It would not be unusual for people to know and believe that practice is not acceptable but feel unable to respond because of the fear:

- they might have the concerns wrong;
- for their own job and prospects if they report another colleague;
- of isolation by other staff;
- about what might happen to the member of staff in the long term.

⁷ Part 4a. Para 418. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

It is particularly difficult if staff members are also close friends and/or partners in a relationship. The reasons why staff may not wish to report their colleagues have to be understood.

It must be recognised that the child's welfare always remains paramount, and it can be very easy to lose sight of the impact on others of being on the receiving end of unacceptable and sometimes illegal behaviour.

Issues about attitude and poor practice may be dealt with internally and as part of the member of staff's development and competency. However, if such concerns are persistent and any plan with that member of staff has not affected change, advice should be sought, and appropriate people included in the decision-making process.

The Trust must be notified of any referrals to the Designated Officer. This can be done through the submission of a SGF4 to the Director of Safeguarding⁸.

9. Safer Recruitment

The Trust recognises that it is vital to create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children across our Trust. As part of this culture, we have in place robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities with the Trust.

Short-listing of candidates will be against the Job Description and Person Specification for the post.

Employment opportunities with Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to declare any relevant convictions, adult cautions or other matters which may affect their suitability to work with children. As a result of amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975) in 2013 and 2020, some minor offences are now protected (filtered) and should not be disclosed to potential employers, and employers cannot take these offences into account.⁹

Where possible, references will be taken up prior to interview, any concerns raised will then be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

⁸ SGF4: Allegation Management form – Available via the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Trust HR Manager or Director of Safeguarding at Stowe Valley MAT.

⁹ Candidates are reminded when applying for a role with the Trust, that if they are unsure whether they need to disclose criminal information, they should seek legal advice or contact Nacro or Unlock for impartial advice. There is more information on filtering and protected offences on the Ministry of Justice website.

The Trust will always seek at least two references for each candidate.

The Trust will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post. At least one interview panel member must have completed the statutory Safer Recruitment Training.

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks.

Pre-employment checks referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2021) and the Regulations¹⁰, will be carried out, and successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information as appropriate) and other relevant checks with statutory bodies.

The Trust maintains a record of pre-appointment checks carried out in each academy within the MAT, referred to in the Regulations as the register and more commonly known as the 'single central record'. This also includes members and trustees of the academy trust.

¹⁰ Part 4 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Appendix 1 – List of Academies

School	Website
Bilton School	www.biltonschool.co.uk
Bishops Itchington	www.bishopsitchington.com
Byfield School	www.byfieldschool.com
Kineton High School	www.kinetonhighschool.org.uk
Rokeby Primary	www.rokebyprimaryschool.co.uk
Southam College	www.southamcollege.com
Southam Primary	www.southamprimary.com
Stockton Primary	www.Stockton.Warwickshire.sch.uk
Temple Herdewyke	www.templeherdewykeprimary.co.uk