



Stowe Valley MAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2022/23

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Next Review Date: Annual

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: CEO and HR Manager

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

Content

1. Policy statement	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	5
4.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	6
4.4 The Headteacher	6
4.5 The Multi Academy Trust	7
4.6 The Chief Executive Officer	7
5. Governance of Safeguarding	7
6. Quality Assurance	8
7. Escalation	8
8. Safer Recruitment	11
9. External visitors	11
10. Volunteers	12

1. Policy statement

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 acting 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 an school-specific Child Protection Policy published on their website. A list of schools and their websites is included in Appendix 1 of this document.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Individual school Safeguarding and Child Protection policies
- Stowe Valley MAT: Managing safeguarding concerns and allegations Policy
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).
- Local arrangements for safeguarding
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Education Act 2002.
- Individual school behavior policies

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 (2022)' 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 safeguarding and 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 Academy Standards) Regulations, 2014¹ to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in our academy; 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 (2022), are the essential national safeguarding documents and give practical guidance on implementing legal requirements.

Each school must ensure both these documents are accessible to all 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 (2022).

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.

3.2 Local

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

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.

¹ [The Education \(Independent Academy Standards\) 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.

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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which mirrors and compliment all the above.

This school Safeguarding and child protection policy document must be published on individual school's websites.

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 (2022) 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's 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 them 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 using the trust wide platform; CPOMS.
- ensure that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the student 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 safeguarding lead (DDSL) who will formally provide cover and additional capacity for the DSL. Each DDSL 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 DDSL to undertake the duties of the DSL, as 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 academy, including:

- offer day-to-day support and guidance to the DSL as necessary;
- oversee the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school, 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 Looked After and previously Looked After Children and receives appropriate training;
- encourage pupils and parents to inform the academy 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 Multi Academy Trust

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 all headteachers someone who can offer appropriate advice and support with safeguarding concerns, especially when these 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 headteachers with the management of allegations made against adults, staff or volunteers within the school community.

4.6 The Executive

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

5. Governance of Safeguarding

The Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust has a trustee responsible for safeguarding.

The role of the Safeguarding trustee is to provide appropriate challenge and support to the Chief Executive Officer and the 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 (2022).

Name	Contact Details
Kyle Ferguson Safeguarding Trustee	01926 812560 via: SVM_safeguarding@stowevalley.com

The Trust Board has a duty to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- have regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State
- ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors, and proprietors.

When carrying out the Prevent duty as required under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, the trust's schools will follow the Home Office's 'Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales'³ and the DfE's general advice 'Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty'.

The day-to-day leadership of safeguarding is delegated to the Director of Safeguarding, who will work with Headteachers and DSLs to ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled.

The Director of Safeguarding provides regular reports to the education standards sub-committee with responsibility for safeguarding.

Safeguarding will be captured within governing body and Trust board reports.

6. Quality Assurance

Robust safeguarding practices and procedures are key to supporting and safeguarding the children and young people that access services from Stowe Valley Multi Academy 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 schools are placed in the category based on the current rating of their practices.

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 academies 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 to 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 become 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 are 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 any more".

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

If a member of staff becomes 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, Samantha 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.

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

If the options above have been explored fully and the concern still is not being handled effectively, therefore placing the child or young person at risk, you must contact the safeguarding trustee, Kyle Ferguson.

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 safeguarding concerns and allegations Policy' which should be followed in all cases where concerns are identified in relation to an adult's conduct which affects/could affect students(s) welfare or that may result in a potential safeguarding issue.

Concerns about colleagues in the context of student welfare and safeguarding may arise in a number of ways, for example (but not limited to):

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

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 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 or the Chief Executive officer without hesitation.

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, contrary to the school policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating pupils.

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

In the case of allegations/concerns relating to a member of the SVM Central Team, they should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer, Ranjit Samra. In the case of allegations/concerns in relation to the Chief Executive Officer, they should be directed to the Chair of the Trust Board, Claire Chevvasut.

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 not be right to have the concerns that they do;
- 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.

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 professional development. However, if such concerns are persistent and any plan with that member of staff has not brought about the necessary improvement, advice should be sought, and appropriate people included in the decision-making process.

The Director of Safeguarding must be notified of any referrals to the Designated Officer.

8. Safer Recruitment

The trust recognises that it is vital to create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. 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.⁵

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.

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

INSERT PARAGRAPH ON ONLINE SEARCHING ONCE APPROACH AGREED WITH DFE

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, which will be refreshed every three years as a minimum.

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

Pre-employment checks referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022) and the Regulations⁶, 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 school 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.

9. External visitors

All visitors who are invited into our academies to talk to the children have been chosen for

⁵ 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.

⁶ Part 4 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent Academy Standards) Regulations 2014

their valuable input to support their learning.

Staff will give due regard to DFE guidance, 'Using External Visitors to Support Online Safety Education: Guidance for Educational Settings'.⁷

10. Volunteers

Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust views volunteering as enriching and a value-added resource which brings mutual benefits to students, staff, parents, volunteers and the local community.

The headteacher has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if they believe that this is not in the best interest of the children.

Anyone wishing to work as a volunteer who will be based in a school within the trust, on a regular basis or on a one-off occasion, must complete a Volunteer Application Form, available via the Director of Safeguarding.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised⁸ or allowed to work in regulated activity. It is for schools to determine whether a volunteer is considered to be someone who must be supervised. Where an individual is supervised, to help determine the appropriate level of supervision, all schools must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.⁹

Whilst volunteers play an important role and are often seen by children as being safe and trustworthy adults, the nature of voluntary roles varies, so schools must undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

The risk assessment will consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check, and if it is, the level of the check, for volunteer roles that are not in regulated activity.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-external-visitors-to-support-online-safety-education-guidance-for-educational-settings>

⁸ For a person to be considered supervised, the supervision **must** be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity relating to children
- regular and day to day, and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

⁹ See Annex E – Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022): Statutory guidance - Regulated activity (children) - Supervision of activity with children which is regulated activity when unsupervised.

Details of the risk assessment will be recorded locally by the school.

Appendix 1 – List of Schools

School	Headteacher	School Website
Bishops Itchington Primary school	J. Sykes	Home - Bishops Itchington Primary school
Byfield Primary School	D. Hibbert	Home - Byfield School
Bilton School	T. Chambers	Home - Bilton School
Kineton High School	H. Bridge	Home - Kineton High School
Rokeby Primary School	J. James	Home - Rokeby Primary School
Southam Primary School	E. Longworth	Home - Southam Primary School
Southam College	R. Samra	Home - Southam College
Stockton Primary school	A. Bedgood	Home - Stockton School (stocktonprimarieschool.com)
Temple Herdwyke Primary School	D. Hibbert	Home - Temple Herdewyke Primary School