Stowe Valley
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

Stowe Valley MAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2026/2027

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Chair of Trustees signature: C.L Chevassut

Content

1. Policy statement 4

2. Definitions 4

3. The Law and National Framework 5

3.1 Guidance issued by the Secretary of State 5

3.2 Local 6

3.3 Organisational 7

4. Roles and Responsibilities 7

4.1 All Staff 7

4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead 8

4.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) 9

4.4 The Headteacher 9

4.5 The School Senior Leadership Team 9

4.6 The Multi School Trust 10

4.7 The Chief Executive Officer 11

5. Governance of Safeguarding 11

6. Quality Assurance 12

7. Escalation 12

8. Safer Recruitment 15

9. External visitors 16

10. Volunteers 16

1. Policy statement

Stowe Valley MAT 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 Trust adopts a culture of 'it could happen here', maintaining a child-centred and coordinated safeguarding approach in all schools. The wishes, views and voices of children will be sought, heard and considered in all safeguarding decisions

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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy published on their website.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Individual school Safeguarding and Child Protection policies
- Stowe Valley MAT: Managing allegations Policy
- Individual school level behavior policies
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (January 2026).
- Working together to improve school attendance
- Local arrangements for safeguarding from Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's partnership
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Education Act 2002.
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

2. Definitions

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

'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)' defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

• Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

• protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online

• 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

• taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection, however, is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) as:

- the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Safeguarding extends beyond child protection and includes:

- promoting children's health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- preventing harm from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation;
- ensuring online safety and protection from digital risks;
- early identification and support for children with additional needs (early help);
- addressing risks in the wider environment (contextual safeguarding); and
- listening to children's voices and involving them in decisions affecting their welfare.

Child protection is therefore one critical component of safeguarding, and this Trust-level policy, alongside individual academy child protection policies, emphasises prevention, early intervention, and prompt response. All staff are expected to act immediately on concerns, even when the issue is not fully defined, to protect children from harm and support their overall wellbeing.

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 MAT has a responsibility under Part 3: the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, 2014[1] to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in our school; 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 (2026) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026), 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 (which can be electronically) of Part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

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

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 access to an audiobook version of part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) as a differentiated approach that ensures all staff can access the document.[2].

3.2 Local

The purpose of Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements is to ensure that organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children at a local level. This will be the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Service Mananger for the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is Ramandeep Sandhu - **ramandeepsandhu@warwickshire.gov.uk**.
The partnership is multi-agency led with Children's Service, Health, Police and Education to ensure clear leadership, accountability, and coordination among partners.

There will be a **Lead Safeguarding Partner** (setting the strategic vision and priorities) and **Delegated Safeguarding Partner** (operational delivery of the priorities) representatives for each of the four agencies.
The Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together the three statutory safeguarding partner agencies —Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police, the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board, as well as introducing Education as a fourth safeguarding partner.

As stated in Working Together 2023, Strong, joined-up leadership and clear accountability is critical to effective multi-agency safeguarding, bringing together the various organisations and agencies. In the newly established partnership. It is important that the head of each safeguarding partner agency plays an active role in these arrangements. These are known as the **Lead Safeguarding Partners** (LSP), and they will work together to:

- Set the strategic plan and priorities for the safeguarding arrangements
- Have joint and equal responsibility for safeguarding children and young people
- Speak with authority on behalf of their agency
- take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing, and practice matters
- hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements
- Act as a team to protect Warwickshire children and young people

The Warwickshire LSPs are:

- **Local Authority**: Monica Fogarty, Chief Exec, Warwickshire County Council
- **Police**: Chief Constable, Warwickshire Police
- **Health**: Chief Executive, Coventry & Warwickshire Integrated Care Board

[2] Staff are made aware of this during their induction, our annual safeguarding training.

- **Education**: Sam Godfrey, Director of Safeguarding, Stowe Valley Academy Trust
- **Education**: Peter Hawkins, Assistant Headteacher, St Paul's Primary School

LSPs are responsible for delegating functions to the four identified Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) who will work together to:

- Implement operational delivery of the strategic vision set out by the LSPs
- Show leadership in delivering the multi agency safeguarding arrangements
- Provide evidence about the quality/performance of multi-agency practices including support and challenge from the Independent Scrutineer
- Identify and anticipate new challenges and escalate issues at the earliest opportunity
- Act as a team

The Warwickshire DSPs are:

- **Local Authority**: John Coleman, Executive Director, Warwickshire County Council
- **Police**: Charlie Naughton, Detective Superintendent, Warwickshire Police
- **Health**: Ellie Monkhouse, Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board
- **Education**: Johnny Kyriacou, Director of Education Services, Warwickshire County Council

3.3 Organisational

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

This school safeguarding and child protection policy document must be published on the 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 (2026) 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.
- must remain vigilant for signs that a child may be at risk of harm, including exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, online misinformation, or risks associated with generative AI. Staff must follow safeguarding reporting procedures for any concerns identified online.
- All staff, including volunteers and governors, will receive safeguarding training on induction and at least annually thereafter. Training will cover emerging risks, online safety, child exploitation, sexual harassment, radicalisation, and mental health. Staff must read and confirm understanding of KCSIE 2026 Part One and engage with refresher or targeted training as required. The Trust ensures consistent training quality across all schools.

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 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 or other agencies;
- 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.
- ensure that when pupils attend alternative provision, safeguarding remains paramount by obtaining written confirmation that all staff at the provider are appropriately checked and trained (including enhanced DBS checks where applicable), monitoring pupils' welfare, attendance, and progress, and reviewing the suitability of placements at least annually, with the academy's safeguarding procedures, including reporting concerns and referrals to children's social care, applied consistently.
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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 school, 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 Children in Care and previously child in care 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's Senior Leadership Team will support the Headteacher to discharge the duties to safeguard children and young people.

The school's 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 School 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 school 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 school headteachers with the management of allegations made against adults, staff or volunteers within the school community.
- Ensure all schools maintain effective filtering and monitoring systems, undertake annual filtering and monitoring reviews and respond to emerging online safeguarding risks
- Ensure schools maintain secure electronic safeguarding records capable of supporting effective information sharing, analysis and quality assurance

4.7 The Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive, 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 reasonable opportunities to safeguard and protect the children and young people that access their services.

5. Governance of Safeguarding

The Stowe Valley MAT has identified a trust board member to take leadership responsibility for the Trust's safeguarding arrangements.

The role of the Safeguarding trustee is to provide appropriate challenge and support to the Executive 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 (2026).

Name	Contact Details
Kyle Ferguson **Safeguarding Trustee,** Stowe Valley MAT	01926 812560 via: kyle.ferguson@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 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.

Trustees will receive appropriate annual safeguarding and child protection training.

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

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

6. Quality Assurance

Safeguarding reviews are conducted on behalf of the Trust Board under Section 175, 3(a) Education Act 2002 to meet our legal responsibility to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the School; and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

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

Onsite assurance visits will be conducted in each school, at least once an academic year. Where schools are graded as met or not met inline with the Ofsted framework.

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

The Trust may commission additional safeguarding reviews following significant safeguarding incidents, complaints, thematic concerns or emerging risks

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 an 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".

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.

[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 Chief executive officer 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.

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.

8. Allegations and Safeguarding concerns about staff or volunteers

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 Policy' which should be followed in all cases where concerns are identified in relation to an adult's conduct which affects/could affect pupil(s) welfare or that may result in a potential safeguarding issue. The managing allegations policy also covers any low level concerns which may be in relation to children or general professional conduct.

Concerns about colleagues in the context of pupil 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;
- 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, or Director of Safeguarding, 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, trainees, 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.

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.

All allegations about adults that meet the harm threshold for a referral to LADO are reported to the SVM Safeguarding Directorate.

9. 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 MAT 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.

SVM will undertake reasonable online searches, as part of the due diligence on the shortlisted candidates, where we identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online; these will be discussed with the candidate at interview.

Information will be viewed and gathered by an HR officer, separate from the recruitment panel. Any information of concern will be shared with the panel for their consideration, who will review and decide how to proceed. If there is sufficient concern that there is an immediate unsuitability to work with children and/or as part of our organisation, the recruitment process will be terminated and relevant referrals considered, in line with the SVM policy on managing allegations and safeguarding concerns about adults.

If the recruitment panel wish to make further enquiries with the candidate to explore their suitability, they will do so at interview. Documents for successful and unsuccessful candidates will be retained in line with our Record Retention policy.

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 has taken place.

[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.

Pre-employment checks referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) and the Regulations[6], 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 governors and trustees of the school trust.

10. External visitors

All visitors who are invited into our schools to talk to the children have been chosen for their valuable input to support their learning.

The headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site and will follow the requirements as per Keeping Children Safe in Education as to the appropriate level of checks.

11. Volunteers

Stowe Valley MAT views volunteering as enriching and a value-added resource which brings mutual benefits to pupils, 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 an school within the trust, on a regular basis or on a one-off occasion, must complete a Volunteer Application Form, available via the school office.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised [7]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 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

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:

[6] Part 4 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
[7] 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.

- 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.

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