



OVERARCHING SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Document detail	
Authorised by:	<i>CEO</i>
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Updates: Local Governing Body replaced with Local Advisory Committee. Addition of whistleblowing@hopelearningcommunity.org.uk	<i>January 2025</i>

1. SCOPE

- This overarching policy has been developed and published to outline the Hope Learning Community Trust commitment to a best practice approach in safeguarding children and young people from harm.
- The Trust and each school work in accordance with the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (SET) Revised 2022 Essex Safeguarding Board and the current Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE.
- Each school will ensure that the Child Protection Policy outlines the roles, responsibilities and local procedures to act quickly and confidently when a safeguarding issue/concern is raised.
- Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- Our pupils' welfare is of paramount concern. The trust will ensure that the school safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils, and works together with other agencies to ensure that the academy has robust arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer from harm.

2. ETHOS

- We believe that all our schools should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the well-being, social, physical and moral development of each individual.
- We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our academies that will enable children and young people to feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling them to talk openly and feel confident that they will be listened to.
- We recognise that all the adults within the schools, including trustees, local advisory committee members (formerly Local governing body) and volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm.
- We will work with parents and carers to build an understanding of the Trust's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children and young people, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on the Governing Body of maintained schools and further education institutions (including 6th form colleges) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non maintained and independent schools, including free schools and academies.

- Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to co-operate with the Local Authority to improve the well-being of children in the LA area.
- Under Section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Board can require a School or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Trust Board has a lead Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding to champion good practice and to liaise with nominated governors in each school.
- Every school will have a lead person(s) with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding called the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The DSL will be a member of the Leadership team and their role of DSL will be explicit in their job description. This person (s) will have the appropriate authority and be given time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussion and inter-agency meetings and contribute to the assessment of children.
- Each school has a nominated Local ambassador (formerly local governor) responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice. To liaise with the Headteacher and to provide information and reports to the Local Advisory committee and the Trust Board.
- The case manager for dealing with allegations of abuse made against the school staff members is the Headteacher. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the Headteacher is the CEO. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in the SET document. (2022)
- The Trust Board and their committees, are responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded with the schools ethos and reflected in day-to-day practice.
- All staff members, trustees, volunteers and external providers know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to pupils who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned.

5. SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- The Trust recognises that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- The schools will support pupils by: ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to e-safety, enabling children and parent/carers to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children feel safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
- Providing children with a number of adults to approach if they are in difficulties;

- Supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, independence and resilience;
- Encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
- Ensuring repeated hate incidents, racist, homophobic, gender or disability based bullying are considered under child protection procedures;
- Liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children;
- Monitoring children who have been identified and having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.

6. CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

- Each school will have a structured procedure in line with the SET (2022) policy and procedure which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- Within each school the name of the DSL(s) will be clearly advertised.
- All parents/carers will be aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by publishing the policy and procedures on the academy website.

7. RECORD KEEPING

- All child protection and welfare concerns will be recorded and kept in line with the SET guidance and other statutory guidance.
- Each school will continue to support any pupil leaving about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns is forwarded under confidential cover as a matter of priority

8. SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Trust and each school will:

- Prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our Trust and schools by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with statutory guidance, Keeping Children safe in Education (DfE 2024).
- Ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us with evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our schools.
- Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about safeguarding and responsibilities of the post holder.
- One member of every interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.
- A procedure to manage allegations against staff and volunteers is within the SET procedure.

9. STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- All new members of staff will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with safeguarding and child protection policy, staff Code of Conduct, Keeping Children safe in Education and other related policies.
- The induction will be proportionate to the staff members' roles and responsibilities.
- The DSL will undergo updated child protection training every 2 years.
- All staff of the school will undergo live safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated annually. Staff members who miss the whole school training will be required to undertake other relevant training as soon as practicable
- All trustees and local advisory committee members will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge.
- The DSLs will provide regular briefings to staff/Trustees on any changes to the child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.
- All schools will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

- The Trust recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Headteacher or DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- All staff members and volunteers must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.
- All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff members who come into regular contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- The Trust and each school will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.

11. MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

- The Trust and schools will promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social.
- Relevant staff members will participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.
- Relevant staff will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There will be a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, embedding recommendations into practice and completed actions within agreed timescales.

12. WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS

- The Trust recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.
- The Trust and schools will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak to the Headteacher or email whistleblowing@hopelearningcommunity.org.uk The Trust has a clear reporting procedure for children, parents/carers and other people to report concerns or complaints. The Complaints procedure is available on the website of the Trust and each school.
- The views of children, parents/carers and staff members are actively sought through discussion groups, school Councils, surveys and questionnaires.

13. SITE SECURITY

- All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that the buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- All schools check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into the building. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the visitor's log (book/electronic system) and to display a visitors badge while on the site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- The Trust and schools will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent/carer or anyone else, that threatens security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the site or police intervention.

14. QUALITY ASSURANCE

- The Trust will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic visits, audits of child protection files and records by the nominated Trustee.
- Each school will complete the Local Safeguarding Board audit tool as required.
- The Trust Executive team and the trust board will ensure that action is taken to swiftly remedy any weaknesses and deficiencies identified.

