



TRUST CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Signed:	<i>Jon Dews</i>
Position:	Co-Chair of the Trust Board
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TRUST CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy statement and principles

Unity MAT recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued in all of our schools. Our staff are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. Child protection forms part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for leadership & management and also impact the judgement on personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners.

This policy is available on the Trust website with schools having their own school-based Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which all staff and volunteers are required to read and confirm they have done so, in writing. The school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy can be found on each individual schools' website.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued in all of our schools. Our staff are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff (including supply staff), volunteers and Trustees and are consistent with statutory guidance and locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by Warwickshire Safeguarding (WS).

Policy principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All practitioners, regardless of their role, are professionally accountable for their actions and decision making in relation to keeping children and young people safe. (Early help to Safeguarding)
- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- Our schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and Trustees expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

All adults at the schools are required to take all welfare concerns seriously and to encourage children and young people to talk to them about anything that worries them. Staff must always act in the best interests of children.

- Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, staff in our schools are uniquely placed to observe changes in childrens' behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in our schools when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all school staff are alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by pupils, listen actively to children and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The schools will act on identified concerns and will provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in school.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child. Staff must follow their school's procedures and alert their DSL.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child in any of our schools, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately.
Anybody can make a referral.
- If a concern has been reported and the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for review.
- If any member of staff remains concerned about a child, they can discuss their concerns with the Headteacher, another DSL or contact the Children and Families Front Door (Previously known as MASH Education Lead) for additional advice as necessary (contact details in section 28 below).
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- The schools' policy will reference online abuse and abuse that may take place in person, they are not mutually exclusive, and children can experience these types of abuse simultaneously.
- The schools' policy will refer to harassment. Harassment is determined legally as behaviour from one person towards at least one other which is intended to cause alarm or distress. Sexual harassment is meant, in the context of this policy, as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether occurring online or offline
- The schools' policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Schools' Policy aims:

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of 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 acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Safeguarding legislation and guidance

Academies, free schools, independent schools, alternative providers of education - Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

The **Teachers' Standards** state that teachers, including headteachers, must have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions; and uphold public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)** covers the legislative requirements and expectations of individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area, any part of which falls within the local authority; and the chief officer of Police for a Police area, any part of which falls within the local authority area) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs. The guidance confirms that it applies, in its entirety, to all schools.

The statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025)** is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in the above guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

'College' means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, institutions designated as being within the further education sector and providers of post 16 Education as set out in the Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021: 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers. For colleges, the guidance relates to their responsibilities towards children who are receiving education or training at these institutions.

All staff must read **Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**. Staff can find a copy on the schools' websites or on the school server or see a DSL for a paper copy. In addition, all staff who work directly with children must read **Part Five and Annex A**.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 - Advice for practitioners is non- statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. This is available to view online or saved on the school server.

Roles and responsibilities

Key Personnel at Trust level:

The Co-Chairs of Trustees are: Jon Dews & Sue Gavin
email: jon.dews@unitymat.co.uk sue.gavin@unitymat.co.uk

The nominated Safeguarding Trustee is: Ian Middleton
Email: ian.middleton@unitymat.co.uk

The Chief Executive is: Tracy Pearce
Email: pearce.t1@welearn365.com

The Trust Board (through its Standards, Performance and Compliance Committee and its Academy Ambassadors) ensures that each school:

- appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to an appropriate level of child protection training.
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description (and also the job description of any Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer.
- ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL or a Deputy DSL will generally be

expected to be available in person but in exceptional circumstances availability will be via telephone and/or Skype or other such media.

- ensures that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available at least via telephone or other media as above during any out of hours/out of term school activities.
- ensures that the school has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with local safeguarding partnership and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means.
- ensures that the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the headteacher and allegations against other children.
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and disqualification from providing childcare regulators.
- develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, and volunteers receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) and the role of the DSL on induction.
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, and volunteers receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) and updates as required (at least annually) to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with any requirements of WS. The training strategy will also ensure that the DSL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the DSL's duties above.
- ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with copies of or access to the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct) before they start work at the school.
- appoints a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after by the Local Authority and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales; and ensures that the designated teacher has appropriate training.
- ensures that the school contributes to inter-agency working and plans.
- ensures that the school provides effective pastoral care and participates in the early help Pathway to Change process for pupils/students with additional needs in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of early help.
- teaches pupils about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The Trust Board nominates the Chief Executive to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher.

The Trust Board also identifies a named trustee to take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. That trustee will maintain regular contact with each DSL and will ensure that the Trust Board receives regular reports about safeguarding activity at the school.

All Trustees are required to undertake Child Protection and Safeguarding training when required and read and understand Part One of the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, which is updated annually.

It is the responsibility of the Trust Board to ensure that the schools' safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures consider the procedures and practice of the respective Local Authority, local safeguarding partnership and national guidance. The school will submit a response to WS's annual schools' safeguarding audit. This will highlight how the Trust Board's duties have been carried out. An action plan will be drawn up and any weaknesses will be rectified in accordance with that plan.

The Safeguarding Trustee will:

- Meet with the Academy Ambassadors with the portfolio for Safeguarding at least termly to receive an update from their visits to their respective school.
- Present Safeguarding information to the Standards, Performance & Compliance Committee on a termly basis to ensure that relevant policies, process and procedures are being undertaken at school level.
- Ensure that the Academy Ambassadors liaise with their school's designated safeguarding leads on a termly basis and provide a link between staff and the Trust Board.
- Oversee procedures relating to allegations made against Executive Leaders (this is not a direct role in undertaking enquiries, criminal or disciplinary investigations but one of liaison, ensuring good communication between all parties and providing information to assist enquiries if requested).
- Complete the Safeguarding Checklist at least once per academic year and report findings to the Standards, Performance & Compliance Committee.
- Liaise with the Chief Executive as required after each visit.
- Attend relevant training – including enhanced safeguarding.

The Chief Executive will:

- Ensure that the Head Teachers have the appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Approve policies in line with the agreed review frequency and Scheme of Delegation approval requirements.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Trustee on relevant safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Receive updates from Head Teachers on Child Protection and Safeguarding matters within each school and report accordingly to Trustees.
- Attend meetings with Local Authority representatives as required.
- Receive reports or allegations relating to the Head Teachers and arrange for investigations to take place.

Schools within the Trust:

All schools are required to have a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy local to their school and ensure that it is reviewed annually and posted on the school website. The policy will require approval from the Chief Executive in line with their delegated authority as outlined in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

All schools are required to appoint a member of the senior leadership team to co-ordinate child protection arrangements and to ensure that there are appropriate cover arrangements.

The Headteacher at each school will:

- ensure that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable DSLs and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- supports the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales
- ensures that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after and previously looked after children safe and arranges for training to take place as required
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing procedure
- ensures that the culture of the school supports the provision of effective pastoral care and early help,
- ensures that staff do everything they can to support social workers when Children's Social Care become involved
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- refers all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority (LADO) within one working day prior to any internal investigation.
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (and Teaching Regulation Agency, if appropriate), as agreed with the LADO.
- appoints an investigation officer to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and a member of the senior leadership team to act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

Each schools' policy will outline how they manage Child Protection and Safeguarding as required by the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children. The policy contains each of the following headings and advises staff and parents of what each school is required to do in each of the following:

- **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**
- **Abuse of position of trust**

- **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**
- **Children with special educational needs and disabilities or have mental health needs**
- **Early Help and use of the Pathway to Change process**
- **Attendance (including references to latest guidance)**
- **Children who are absent from their education and Children Missing from Education**
- **Children who run away or go missing from home or care**
- **Helping children to understand and recognise risk and identify available support**
 - *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 requires governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualise approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.'*
- **Support for pupils, families and staff involved in a child protection issue**
- **Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors**
 - **Including low level concerns**
- **Complaints procedure**
- **Staff reporting concerns about a colleague or other adult who works with children (Whistleblowing)**
- **Managing allegations against staff**
- **Staff training**
- **Safer recruitment:**
 - **Staff**
 - **Volunteers**
 - **Supervised volunteers**
 - **Contractors**
 - **Site security for use of school premises for non-school activities**
 - **Online Searches**
- **Behaviour Management**
 - **Appropriate Adult Searching**
- **Site Security**
- **Searching, screening, confiscation, and the role of the Appropriate Adult**
- **Record Keeping**
- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**
- **Extended School and off-site arrangements**
- **Photography and images**
- **Online Safety:**
 - **Safeguarding pupils in online learning and communication between staff and pupils**
 - **Filtering, Monitoring & AI**
 - **Misinformation**
 - **Disinformation (including fake news)**
 - **Conspiracy theories**
- **Child protection procedures**
- **Making a referral to Children's Social Care**
- **Submitting child protection referrals**

- **Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies**
- **What will Children's Social Care do?**
- **Bullying, child on child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour**
- **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**
- **How the school will respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment**
- **Youth produced sexual imagery ('sexting')**
- **Serious violence**
- **Contextual safeguarding**
- **Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation**
- **County Lines**
- **So-called 'honour based' abuse**
- **Female genital mutilation**
- **Forced Marriage**
- **Protecting Children from Radicalisation and Extremism**
- **Children who are looked after, were previously looked after or who have a social worker**
- **Private Fostering Arrangements**
- **Related safeguarding portfolio policies**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Homelessness**
- **Special Circumstances:**
 - *Alternative Provision*
 - *Work experience*
 - *Children staying with host families*
 - *Boarding Schools and Childrens Homes*
 - *Children and the court system*
 - *Children with family members in prison*
 - *Local Issues*

The link to each schools' Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy with comprehensive details contained within, is listed below:

Brooke School: <https://www.brooke.unitymat.co.uk/key-information/safeguarding>

Welcombe Hills School: <https://www.welcombe.unitymat.co.uk/about-us/policies-and-key-information/policies-and-guidance>

Woodlands School: <https://www.woodlands.unitymat.co.uk/key-information/school-policies>

