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# **Central Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2021/22**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust (Trust) believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. Across the Trust, at all levels, each adult has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. Our organisational culture and practice at each level of the organisation is reflective of this duty.
- 1.2 The Trust Local Academy Boards (LAB), including Strategic Task Groups (STG) of all academies take seriously their responsibilities, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies, to ensure adequate arrangements within our schools to identify, assess and support those children and young people who are suffering harm.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of requirements for safeguarding and child protection that are shared across the Trust. This includes the role of the Trust in the leadership, oversight and quality assurance of safeguarding and child protection arrangements and practice in the Trust schools.
- 1.4 It is important that individual academy policies are reflective of local context and characteristics. Each Academy within the Trust has a site-specific policy document which is published on their individual website. A list of Trust academies and their respective websites are included in Appendix 1 of this document.
- 1.5 This policy should be read alongside the following documents:
- Site Specific Child Protection policies
  - The Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust: Managing Allegations Against Adults Working within the Trust Policy
  - DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2021
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018
  - The Children Act 1989 and 2004
  - The Children and Social Work Act 2017
  - The Education Act 2002

## **2.0 The Law and National Framework**

- 2.1 The requirements of the Trust and each Academy to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people are set out in legislation and departmental guidance. The policy and protocols of Trust are determined by these.

## 2.2 Departmental Guidance

The government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' are the essential national safeguarding documents and give practical guidance on implementing legal requirements. Each Academy should have at least one copy of each which should be accessible to staff.

- 2.3 All adults working within the Trust must be issued with their own copy of Part 1 and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021', **and each subsequent update**. Annually, time must be given for staff to read and comprehend the document. Staff must confirm by return that they have both read and understood the document. This confirmation should be stored on our Trust-wide Safeguarding MIS - MyConcern.

## 2.4 Local

Local Safeguarding Partnerships are made up of senior managers from Children's Services, Health and Police in order to oversee, at a local level, the working together arrangements for safeguarding. Each partnership arrangement has an individual offer that relates to the community they serve.

2.4.1 This body produces local procedures in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018' which influence each organisation's own procedures.

2.4.2 Each Academy must show due regard to local partnership arrangements. It is also an expectation of the Trust that Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) will attend update events and training as required or requested by their local partnership arrangements.

## 2.5 Organisational

Each Academy maintains its own safeguarding arrangements which are reflective of requirements set out above.

These site-specific documents must be published on individual Academy websites and must be renewed annually. It is also the responsibility of individual academies to implement associated policies, including (not exhaustive):

- Safer Recruitment
- Administration of School Medicines

- Pupil Behaviour
- Peer on Peer Abuse
- Relationships and Sex Education
- E-safety
- The Staff Code of Conduct.

2.6 Academies will also provide evidence of annual safeguarding audits, whilst School Improvement Partners (SIP's) will forward their reports linked to safeguarding and the Single Central Register.

## 2.7 Definitions

'*Safeguarding*' encompasses everything that is done to support children and young people in order to keep them safe and promote their welfare. Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of a child's health and 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 life chances.

'*Child protection*' however is defined as:

- part of safeguarding and promoting welfare; and the activity to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are likely to suffer, significant harm.

2.7.1 Therefore, *protection* is a specific element of safeguarding, whereas safeguarding legislation in general is about the promotion of children's needs and the prevention of harm. This emphasises the need for all staff to be able to respond early when they have a concern rather than wait until this is more defined and certain.

The most critical message from the legislation is that "**the child's welfare is paramount**".

## 3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 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.

### 3.1.1 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 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and that they have read and understand these;
- 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.

## 3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

3.2.1 The DSL is the member of the Academy'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 that they receive appropriate training;
- promote the procedural pathway within the Academy so staff are aware of the way to report concerns (via MyConcern);
- ensure the Academy procedures are followed and adhered to with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse;
- offer clear advice and support to staff bringing concerns or needing help;
- consider whether concerns referred to him/her need to be referred to Children's Services/Social Care;
- offer appropriate feedback as necessary as to the progress of the concern;
- maintain written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and keep a record system to ensure consistency;
- discuss with the Headteacher any complex concerns;
- ensure that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records;
- ensure that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil record;

- ensure those particular complex cases are referred without delay, and especially where it involves a child or young person subject to a child protection plan
- follows the LSP's escalation policy where cases are not progressing in an acceptable manner; and
- gather, collate and analyse as appropriate all relevant information for purposes of quality assurance.

### 3.2 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL)

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

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

### 3.3 The Academy Headteacher

- 3.3.1 The Headteacher in each Academy is responsible for ensuring the DSL 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 Academy, ensuring all staff are;
  - appropriately trained and aware of their responsibilities;
  - ensure cover is provided where necessary in the absence of the DSL;
  - offer supervision, from an appropriate professional, 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 LAB 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;
  - contribute to quality assurance processes; and
  - ensure sufficient allocation of time given to DSLs to undertake the role.

### **3.4 The Academy Senior Leadership Team**

- 3.4.1 The Academy Senior Leadership Team will support the Headteacher to discharge the duties to safeguard children and young people.
- promote the importance of safeguarding throughout the Academy;
  - 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 Academy fulfils its statutory duty to co-operate with other agencies and that the chain of accountability is clear from front line to senior level.

### **3.5 Diocese of Hereford Multi- Academy Trust (Trust)**

- 3.5.1 The Trust Safeguarding Manager provides strategic leadership within the Trust for all aspects of safeguarding children and young people. Operational matters should be addressed in accordance with arrangements in each respective local authority.

The Trust Safeguarding Manager will:

- ensure that all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated, in line with national and local requirements, and that appropriate changes are disseminated to all Academies;
- 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 Academy Headteachers someone who can offer appropriate external advice and support with safeguarding concerns especially when they are complex and/or relate to allegations against staff;
- ensure that 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;



### **3.6 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO, as Accountable Officer, will:

- Provide appropriate challenge and support to DHMAT Safeguarding Manager to ensure the Trust and the Academies it sponsors are taking all opportunities to safeguard and protect the children and young people that access their services.
- Support Academy Headteachers with the management of allegations made against adults, staff or volunteers within the School community.

## **4 Governance of Safeguarding**

4.1 The Trust appointed a Director to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

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

4.3 The Trust Safeguarding Manager provides regular reports to the Trust with responsibility for safeguarding along with other members of the Trust Board. The role of the Safeguarding Director, is to provide appropriate challenge and support to the Board, and to the Trust Safeguarding Manager, to ensure that they are satisfied that the Trust is fulfilling its safeguarding duties identified in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

## **5 Directors' Responsibilities**

5.1 The Trust Board has a legal responsibility to make sure that the schools have an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and monitors that the schools comply with these. The Trust Board will do this by:

- a. commissioning independent safeguarding audits of schools
- b. Academy Improvement Partners undertaking routine reviews of safeguarding in their schools
- c. receiving regular reports from the Senior Education Officers on safeguarding to the Trust's Education Committee
- d. delegating operational responsibilities to LAB/STG, as defined below and set out in the Trust Scheme of Delegation

- e. Directors undertaking refresher training every two years.

## **6.0 LAB/STG Members' Responsibilities**

- 6.1 The LAB/STG of each school has appointed a named Safeguarding LAB member who has lead responsibility for overseeing and monitoring all safeguarding issues in each school.
- 6.2 The LAB/STG will ensure that the named member for Safeguarding & Child Protection attends the required training and that they refresh their training every two years.

## **7.0 Quality Assurance**

- 7.1 Robust safeguarding practices and procedures are key to supporting and safeguarding the children and young people that access services from the Trust. Effective quality assurance measures are essential in ensuring the practices and procedures are fit for purpose.
- 7.2 Three assurance categories are in place to monitor safeguarding within the Trust, (Red, Amber and Green) and Academies are placed in the category based on the current rating of their practices.

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

## **8.0 Escalation**

### **8.1 Internal**

All staff should be confident to act when concerned that there appears to be a lack of progress or improvement. The following examples are not exhaustive but illustrate the nature of these concerns:

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

8.2 It is important that staff do not close down a concern because they feel “stuck” or “they can’t do anymore”. It is important to escalate concerns to the DSL, Headteacher, other senior staff or if necessary, to the Trust Safeguarding Manager.

8.3 If there are concerns about the work of an external agency, please refer to the escalation policy published by the Local Safeguarding Partnership.

8.4 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 isn’t being handled effectively and therefore placing the child or young person at risk, it is important that you continue to escalate your concerns by contacting the Trust or by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

## **9.0 Managing Allegations against Adults Working within the Trust**

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

9.2 DHMAT has a ‘Confidential Reporting/Whistleblowing Policy. This policy should be followed in all cases where concerns are identified in relation to an adult working within DHMAT, the conduct of whom affects/could affect pupil(s) welfare or may result in a safeguarding issue.

9.3 Should you have any concerns about staff or colleagues in the context of pupil welfare and safeguarding, please refer to the above policy for the appropriate course of action.

## **10.0. Peer on Peer Abuse**

10.1 Some LA’s have produced separate policies for Peer-On-Peer abuse. Herefordshire Council has issued a template policy that has been developed in partnership with the Contextual Safeguarding Team, Bedford University. DHMAT Academies will use this policy and ensure that it is understood by all staff and LAB/STG members across the Trust.

**List of Trust Academies**

Bishop's Castle Primary - <https://www.bishopscastle-pri.shropshire.sch.uk/>

Bitterley CE Primary School - <http://www.bitterleyschool.co.uk/>

St Michael's CE Primary School Bodenham - <https://www.st-michaels.hereford.sch.uk/>

Burford CE Primary School - <https://www.burfordceprimary.co.uk/>

Burley Gate CE Primary School - <https://www.burleygate.hereford.sch.uk/>

St George's CE Academy, Clun - <https://www.clunprimaryschool.org.uk/>

Condover CE Primary School - <https://www.condoverschool.co.uk/>

St Edward's CE Primary School, Dorrington - <https://www.dorringtonschool.co.uk/>

Eastnor Primary School - <https://www.eastnorschool.co.uk/>

Morville CE Primary School - <http://www.morvilleschool.org.uk/>

Ludlow Primary School - <https://www.ludlowprimaryschool.co.uk/>

Ludlow CE School - <https://www.ludlowschool.com/>

St Thomas Cantilupe CE Academy - <https://www.st-thomascantilupe.org/>

Tenbury CE Primary Academy - <https://www.tenburyceprimary.co.uk/>

The Hereford Academy - <https://www.theherefordacademy.org.uk/>

### Quality Assurance

#### Annual cycle of DHMAT safeguarding governance and quality assurance

##### Purpose:

The safeguarding of children is of paramount importance. All educational establishments have a legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Regular monitoring is essential to ensure that strong policies, procedures and mechanisms are in place. The aim is to continually improve the quality of safeguarding practice.

The DHMAT executive Trust Lead for Safeguarding and the Central Trust Safeguarding Lead ensure the oversight and quality assurance of safeguarding at each school, across the Trust, through an annual cycle of monitoring activities.

The cycle of quality assurance activities assists the safeguarding team at each Academy in supporting effective safeguarding practice by evaluating measures currently in place and identifying any developments that may be required to improve policy and practice.

##### Quality Assurance Calendar

The quality assurance calendar will include the following activities for each school annually.

- Single Central Record Audit: Continual – Maintenance and checking ‘Sentry’ service to be procured from My Concern.
- Website Policy Compliance Check: This will be undertaken by the Trust Safeguarding Manager, within the first term of each academic year, to ensure that safeguarding policies, safeguarding statements, links to local safeguarding partners and details of safeguarding staff are up to date, have been localised and are easily accessible.
- Staff Safeguarding Questionnaire: There is an expectation that all staff across the Trust complete this questionnaire, distributed by the Trust Safeguarding Lead in the first half term of the academic year, to evidence that they have read and understood the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. The Trust Safeguarding Lead will liaise closely with the DSLs to ensure a completion rate of 100%. This information must be recorded on MyConcern. DSLs will analyse the results of staff at their school and address any misconceptions, thus ensuring all staff fully understand their safeguarding duty.
- LAB’s must be familiar with their role in the management of safeguarding. There is an expectation that, by half term of the new academic year, DHMAT LAB/STG members will read and understand Part1 and Part 2 of KCSIE.

- **Annual Safeguarding Report:** It is sensible that this report should coincide with the annual Local Authority safeguarding audit. This report will be completed by the DSL in the first half of the spring term and presented to the Trust Safeguarding Manager for monitoring and review purposes. A copy of the report will also be made available to the LAB and the Trust Safeguarding Lead. The report also provides information to the Local Authority, so that they can fulfil their statutory duty. It will include information on completed safeguarding training, referrals made, meetings attended, numbers of pupils on safeguarding plans and any significant safeguarding issues. The Trust Director for Safeguarding will present a Trust safeguarding report to the Trust Board in the second half of the spring term, providing an overview of the above information.
- **DHMAT Safeguarding Annual Audit:** This in-depth audit, led by the Trust Safeguarding Manager, will include a leadership conversation with the DSL, conversations with pupils and other staff and a review of procedures, training, safeguarding incidents and issues and safeguarding opportunities within the curriculum. This audit will be arranged in liaison with the DSL and may take place at any time across the year. This process will use the LA audit tool as a starting point for evidence against each self-evaluated grade.
- **Safeguarding Case File Audit:** This will consist of an audit of three randomly selected MyConcern safeguarding files, undertaken by the Trust Safeguarding Manager annually. This is to ensure that records are being maintained appropriately and that the information contained in each file is of a high quality. The Trust Safeguarding Manager will also monitor MyConcern activity at each school routinely, maintaining a record of checks undertaken, and may request additional full case file audits if this checking raises concerns.
- **Pupil and Parent/Carer Safeguarding Survey:** The Trust is committed to involving parents/carers, as well as the children themselves, in such processes. Therefore, safeguarding surveys for both groups, produced and distributed by the LAB in liaison with the Trust Safeguarding Manager, biannually in alternating years, will ensure feedback for Academy safeguarding teams to review and act upon. The involvement of the LAB will provide important support in the monitoring of safeguarding provision.

## **Systems:**

**Executive Governance:** The DSL at each school will meet with the Trust Safeguarding Manager at the start of the academic year to map out dates for each quality assurance activity. A nominated LAB member may wish to be involved at this stage and to attend some of the QA activities.

Trust Safeguarding Manager will undertake these activities and complete a report.

These reports will be shared with the DSL and the Headteacher/Head of School.

The Board will discuss the overview of safeguarding need at each school. Attendees will include the Trust Director for Safeguarding, the Trust Safeguarding Manager and the CEO.

**Safeguarding Committee Meetings:** A safeguarding committee meeting will take place at each school, termly. Attendees must include the DSL and the Headteacher/Head of School. Deputy DSLs and LAB members may also attend. The school may also wish to request attendance from the Trust Safeguarding Manager, particularly if there are specific concerns to discuss or to receive support in action planning.

The DSL will chair the meeting, unless a request is made for the Trust Safeguarding Lead to do so. A standing agenda will ensure that any quality assurance activities undertaken since the previous meeting are analysed, with areas of strength and areas for improvement being recognised. Analysis of data (provided by the DSL) will form a key part of the meeting and allow emerging trends and patterns to be identified. Minutes from the committee meetings will be shared with the Trust Director for Safeguarding and the Trust Safeguarding Manager.

Reporting to the Trust Board: Each term, the Trust Safeguarding Manager will attend School Effectiveness Meetings to contribute towards a Trust-wide safeguarding overview. This will include an overview of data, areas of strength and development and any concerns. This information will be shared with the Trust Director of Safeguarding.

**External Audits:** Each year, a safeguarding audit will be undertaken by an external safeguarding consultant at two Trust schools, alongside the Trust Safeguarding Lead.

This provides external moderation of the checks of the executive governance structure.