Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust

Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Presented & Approved by Trust Board	September 2025
Signed by Chair of Trust Board	
Name of Chair of Trust Board	Malcolm Maclean
Version	2.0
Date of Next Review	September 2026 or sooner if changes to legislation occur.

This Trust-wide policy applies to all staff, including the Board of Trustees and Central Staff, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency / supply staff, students or anyone working for and on behalf of Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust (the Trust).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school-specific policies published by individual schools within the Trust.

Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children's Act 1989, the Education Act 2002, the Children's Act 2004, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2025 edition) and in line with locally agreed guidance and procedures. Other reference documents are listed at Annex A.

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust (SCEAT) and the Local Governing Bodies (LGB) 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.

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as defined in KCSIE 2025

- 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
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Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive SCEAT's services;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection; staff and volunteers also need to have a good working knowledge of the academy policies.
- To create an ongoing culture of vigilance that will promote the best interests of children and protect them online and offline.
- To ensure that systems for reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children.

The Trust believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse, neglect, or exploitation of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Ethos
Improving outcomes for all children and young people underpins all of the development and work within the Trust.

Safeguarding is considered everyone's responsibility and as such our schools aim to create the safest environment within which every pupil has the opportunity to achieve. The schools recognise the contribution they can make in ensuring that all pupils registered or who use our facilities feel that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

We will do this by working in partnership with other agencies and seeking to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities throughout our curricula that will help equip our pupils with the skills they need. This will include materials and learning experiences that will encourage our pupils to develop essential life skills and protective behaviours.

Trustees Responsibilities

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 them. The Trust Board will do this by:

- commissioning safeguarding audits of schools and the Trust on a regular basis
- appointing a lead trustee to take leadership responsibility for the trust's safeguarding arrangements
- delegating operational responsibilities to LGBs as defined below and set out in the Trust Scheme of Delegation

Governors Responsibilities

The local governing board (LGB) of each school will appoint a link governor to monitor statutory compliance as referenced in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) and the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements in conjunction with the full governing board. Staff governors cannot be the lead governor with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The LGB will ensure that the named link governor for Safeguarding & Child Protection attends the required training and that they refresh their training every three years.

All governors on the LGB will complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online, and which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction to ensure they have a clear understanding of their strategic safeguarding roles and responsibilities as outlined in Part Two of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

All Governors will be aware of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human rights Act 1998 (HRA).

The LGB will ensure the school follow the duties to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (2018).

The LGB will ensure that their school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead on the school's senior leadership team.

Senior Leadership (SLT) in all academies throughout the Trust are required to ensure all staff, volunteers and visitors are provided with up-to-date guidance, in line with the publications from the Department for Education's guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education. SLT will evidence the distribution of guidance and store this with other essential Child Protection/Safeguarding training logs.

In addition to the basic requirements and good practice provided within this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, the Trust require each academy to implement a bespoke Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which is tailored to the needs of each academy setting and reflects the statutory requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025). The policy must include:

- reflects the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse (see paragraph 159 and Part five)
- reflects reporting systems as set out at paragraph 96
- describes procedures which are in accordance with government guidance
- refers to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners (see paragraphs 106-113)
- includes policies as reflected elsewhere in Part two of this guidance, such as online safety (see paragraph 134), and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (see paragraphs 201-203)
- is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and updated sooner if needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt; and is available publicly via the school website and by other means
- the schools' approach to online safety, including how it meets the standards for filtering and monitoring, and its approach to filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks.
- a statement making it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse, the systems in place for children to report child on child abuse.
- a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, this does not mean it is not happening within the school.
- a recognition that children are not always ready or able to talk about their experiences of abuse and/or may not always recognise that they are being abused.
- an understanding that some children may face additional safeguarding challenges and what arrangements are in place to support those groups including children with SEND and those who identify as LGBTQ+.
- the arrangements for remote learning and remote welfare checks.

The school policy should reflect clear arrangements on how susceptible learners will be safeguarded and their welfare will be promoted. In cases where children are being asked to

learn online at home (for example because of the coronavirus pandemic) the school policy should reflect the advice from the DfE on safeguarding and remote education.

A copy of the academy policy is to be forwarded to the Trust on publishing. Each academy has the duty to ensure their own Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is up-to-date and is displayed on the academy website.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff refers to all paid adults, volunteers or students on placement, contractors working in any capacity in the school or in activities organised by the school which brings them into contact with pupils or students of the school, including through online delivery.

The Trust and our LGBs recognise that for this policy to be effective, it is essential that school staff understand what safeguarding is, know how to access safeguarding information, know of any possible contribution that they may be required to make to safeguard our students and how to access further advice, support, or services.

All staff must know their responsibility to report incidents / concerns of harm or neglect including updated legislation on forced marriage and statutory duty regarding Female Genital Mutilation.

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring as set out in the schools Child protection policy. This will include updates as required and at least annually.

All staff must be aware of in-school policies, procedures and processes which support safeguarding, who their DSL is and the role of the DSL. All staff must be provided with the following documents:

- Part 1 of KCSiE (or Annex A as appropriate) and Annex B at the start of each school year (or on joining if later)
- The schools code of conduct or staff behaviour policy
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy
- The school's behaviour policy
- The school's safeguarding responses to children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions, during the school day or otherwise

Roles and responsibilities of LGB to ensure:

- The safeguarding and child protection policy is reviewed annually and hold the Executive Headteacher/Head of School to account for its implementation and any actions/recommendations made by the Local Authority / regulatory bodies / external audits in respect to strengthening the school's safeguarding arrangements.

- That there is a strong culture of safeguarding in school in order to ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all aspects of policy and procedure development.

- That in the event that safeguarding concerns, or an allegation of abuse is made against the Executive Headteacher, the chair of governors will act as the 'case manager'.

- That the school has in place, appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to protect children from potentially harmful content, that adhere to the recently published guidance. These should be reviewed in collaboration with IT staff and service providers and reported on to the LGB, at least annually. These systems should be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty in order to limit children's exposure to online risks. Governing bodies and proprietors should review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.'

- Written assurances are sought from any relevant school lettings and alternative/off site providers and provisions that their safeguarding arrangements are secure, in keeping with the requirements set out in KCSIE and in accordance with the guidance on keeping children safe in out-of-school settings. This includes ensuring that the provision has effective safeguarding policy/procedures/training in place for all staff. The provision follows safer recruitment processes and have clear allegation management processes.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, including:

- Ensuring that all staff (including temporary and supply staff) and volunteers are informed of this policy as part of their induction, including through online delivery.

- Communicating the policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.

- Ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of the DSL/DDSL as referenced in Annex C of KCSIE (2025) are reflected in their job description.

- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.

- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer, where appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

Each academy will appoint one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will have day to day responsibility for dealing with safeguarding in the school.

The DSL is the person appointed to take lead responsibility for child protection issues in school. The person fulfilling this role must be a senior member of the school's leadership team, and the DSL role must be set out in the post holder's job description. All DSLs (and where appropriate any deputies) are expected to carry out the full range of roles and

responsibilities outlined in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025). All designated staff will update their training every 2 years.

The school will nominate a deputy DSL to cover when the DSL is unavailable. All deputies will be trained to the same level as the DSL. In larger schools the Executive Headteacher will designate other senior staff who can take on this role as part of a designated safeguarding team. The lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL.

Schools are expected to have a trained DSL or DDSL available on site. Where this is not possible a trained DSL or DDSL will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working at another site.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

The DSL and any deputies are responsible for liaising with the safeguarding partners, working with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and follow their locally agreed safeguarding partnership arrangements in all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. The guidance document "When to call the police" (NPCC 2020) should help the DSL and any deputies understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

The DSL and (where appropriate any deputies) are responsible for promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and other pupils or students deemed susceptible.

The DSL is responsible for the safe transfer of the child protection file to a new school or college as soon as possible, following the timescales and procedures set out in KCSIE (2025)

DSLs must ensure that all other members of staff are provided with appropriate opportunities (including appropriate training) in order to carry out their statutory duties to safeguard children and promote their welfare as defined in KCSIE (2025). The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place)

In the case of serious concern, the DSL must ensure that Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is informed of all issues / concerns / incidents. In the absence of the CEO they should inform the Trust's Director of Teaching and Learning who will inform the CEO. Where there is doubt about what constitutes a 'serious concern' the Trust should be informed.

Managing allegations or safeguarding concerns against a member of staff or person in school.

The LGB must ensure that there are clear procedures for all staff to follow in any case in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including supply staff), governor, contractor, visiting professional or volunteer has:

a. behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
b. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
c. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children.
d. behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The LGB must ensure that all staff fully understand that any adult behaviours that deviate from the Guidance for Safer Working Practice, including inappropriate conduct outside of work are a concern, even if they are low-level. Low-level concerns are concerns that do not meet the harm test / allegations threshold. Examples of such behaviour include:

- Being over familiar with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The procedures for managing allegations or safeguarding concerns against a member of staff or person in school must reflect the requirements set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and be clearly outlined in each school's safeguarding and child protection policy. All concerns that meet the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) harm threshold must be reported to the LADO immediately in keeping with the agreed local three safeguarding partnership protocols. If a referral to LADO, Children's Social Care, or anyone else is not made, the decision, rationale for the decision and the name and post of the decision maker must be recorded.

The Executive Headteacher (or if appropriate, Chair of Governors) must report all incidents that meet the harm threshold relating to an adult working/volunteering with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately as well as the CEO. All notifications are to be followed up by email and clear records of all incidents must be kept confidentially, stored securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR (2018).

It is the responsibility of the LGB to ensure that there are clear procedures in place for any staff / volunteers who are dismissed by the school for gross misconduct or cumulative misconduct relating to safeguarding of children / young people and staff/volunteers will be referred to the DBS for consideration of barring and the Teaching Regulation Agency (where appropriate. Similarly, where the school has a reasonable belief that the member of staff / volunteer would have been dismissed by the school had they been employed at the time of the conclusion of investigations, they will be referred to the DBS and the Teaching Regulation Agency (where appropriate). The school will keep written records of all of the above.

Whistleblowing

It is the responsibility of the LGB and the Executive Headteacher to ensure that all staff members are aware of the Trust's Whistleblowing procedures in situations that a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine safeguarding concerns are not being addressed. There should be a clear reference to the Trust whistleblowing procedures in each academy safeguarding and child protection policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection practices internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Multi-agency working

Schools have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Governing bodies and trustees should ensure that the schools in SCEAT contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the local safeguarding board partnership arrangements. All SCEAT schools are under a statutory duty to co- operate with the published arrangements.

Parent Role

All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the individual academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on the school website. In keeping with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), parents / carers should supply at least two emergency contacts to their child's school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home.

Community

Community users organising activities for children are to be made aware of and understand the need for compliance with the Trust and academy child protection guidelines and procedures. This will be undertaken in partnership with the organiser during the planning stages for events and activities. In cases where a third party hires or lets school grounds for the purposes of providing activities or services for children, LGB's must seek written assurances that the organisation has appropriate child protection policies and procedures in place and that they follow safer recruitment principles as outlined in Part 3 of KCSIE (2025). See SCEAT Trust letting policy for further information on the written assurances required.

Recruitment

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust pays full regard and commitment to following the safer recruitment, selection and pre-employment vetting procedures as outlined in part three of KCSIE (2025) for all staff employed across the Trust. The Trust will maintain a single central record detailing checks carried out in each academy within the MAT. Whilst there is no requirement for the MAT to maintain an individual record for each

academy, the information should be recorded in such a way that allows for details for each individual academy to be provided separately, and without delay, to those entitled to inspect that information, including Ofsted inspectors.

LGBs and the Executive Headteacher of each school are responsible for ensuring that all recruitment panels include at least one person that has undertaken safer recruitment training.

All Trust schools must obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisations that they have carried out all relevant checks for anyone who will be working in the school, or providing education on the schools behalf including online delivery.

All Trust schools must ensure that written risk assessments are undertaken in situations where information provided on DBS certificates necessitates so. Written risk assessments must be undertaken for all volunteers not engaging in regulated activity as outlined in Part 3 of KCSIE (2025).

We will repeat checks on existing staff if they fall within the circumstances set out in KCSIE.

These are when:

- an individual working at the school or college moves from a post that was not regulated activity with children into work which is considered to be regulated activity with children. In such circumstances, the relevant checks for that regulated activity must be carried out

- there has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more, or

- there are concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children

All schools have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour, these will include,

1. The Trust will 'claim' the teachers in its employment through the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA), ensuring that any issues are communicated with us without delay.
2. All volunteers, including all Trustees and Governors, will be encouraged to join the DBS update service, which is at no cost for volunteers.
3. On promotion or significant change of role, staff will undergo a DBS check and any other relevant checks, including those who move from voluntary to paid employment.
4. Our staff code of conduct sets out the clear procedures for staff to disclose any criminal charges or convictions. All staff are reminded at appraisal of this duty and the importance of sharing information or concerns that would indicate they or others are unsuitable to work with children.

Information sharing and UK GDPR

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. As part of meeting a child's needs, it is important for governing bodies and trustees to recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school and with the three safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required. School staff should be pro-active in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR (2018) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Monitoring and Review:

The Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures will be reviewed and updated annually or sooner when circumstances necessitate.

Annex A - ESSENTIAL READING

1. The complete guidance, Keeping children safe in education 2025
2. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
3. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers 2019
4. The Education Inspection Framework Ofsted 2023
5. Teaching online safety in school January 2023
6. Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
7. Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
8. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
9. Statutory Guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
10. Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (GSWP) (Safer Recruitment Consortium Feb 2022)
11. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and UK Council for Internet Safety 2020 updated 2024)
12. Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2024)
13. Working together to improve school attendance 2024
17. When to call the police – Guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC – 2020)
18. Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
19. Searching screening and confiscation at school July 2022
20. Behaviour in schools September 2024
21. Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges March 2022 updated March 2025
22. Equality Act 2010
23. After school clubs, community activities, and tuition 2023
24. Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners 2024
25. Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership Manual