



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1. Introduction and aim

One of the most important duties we have is to ensure the safety of the children in our care. To this end, the Trust has developed a suite of policies, which support the safety and well-being of all.

The purpose of this statement is to collect in one place all of the Trust's arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of children and staff. In doing so, there is a risk of duplicating information produced and held in other places. To avoid this risk, while this document is intended to be comprehensive in dealing with all matters relating to safeguarding, it should merely signpost relevant policies and procedures if they are already available elsewhere.

Safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. This policy sets out Aspire Academies Trust's responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

2. Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- 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 impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The aim of safeguarding is to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

What's the difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection?

- Safeguarding is an 'umbrella' term that incorporates child protection.
- Child Protection is the process and activities undertaken to fulfil statutory obligations to protect specific children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of significant harm. All agencies and individuals should proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

This policy is available on the Trust website and each of the Academy websites.

3. Principles

3.1 Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carry out school activities
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

3.2 Our aim:

- To provide all staff (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information / training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To provide parents, carers and children with information about our arrangements to keep children safe.
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children
- To continuously review our practice and safeguarding protocols to ensure they are effective

4. Framework

4.1 Legislation and guidance

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175/157)
- Outlines that Local Authorities and School Governing Bodies have a responsibility to “ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are its pupils”.
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures Manual (Electronic)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (PREVENT duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018.
- Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DFE 2021)

4.2 Relevant associated policies

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy should also be read in conjunction with other associated policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Online Safety
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- Health and Safety including site security

- Intimate Care
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Managing Allegations against staff
- Medicines and medical policy, including first aid
- Physical Intervention and positive handling
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct
- Whistle-blowing

5. Safeguarding Themes

5.1 Anti-bullying

We recognise the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be seen as a result of bullying including online. It is the responsibility of Aspire Academies Trust to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address anti-bullying

5.2 Attendance

In accordance with our Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting unexplainable and/or persistent absences, children absent from education and off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

5.3 Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the Trust. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the Trust and each Academy website. It is the Trustee's Board's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately, and the Local Advisory Body's responsibility to monitor the policy's implementation.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/hscp.aspx> Children's Services telephone number is 0300 123 4043 (including out of hours).

5.4 Complaints

The Trust has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the Trust and each Academy website.

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations against Staff.

5.5 Confidentiality

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. The DSL will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for this. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. We will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 and The Information and Records Management Society. We will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at <https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/child-protection/safeguarding-records> for further information.

5.6 Curriculum

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our PSHE education and RSE lessons and through all aspects of school life.

We are committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the online section of this policy for further details on this topic.

5.7 Online Safety Policy

We have an Online Safety policy in place, available on each Academy website.

Our policy includes how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

We will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring methods are in place to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material. A review of our online safety curriculum and provision is carried out annually.

5.8 Digital Images

The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The Trust have a clear and sufficiently detailed policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

We recognise the importance and usefulness of including the children's use of technology within the classroom, such as an iPad. With this brings lots of opportunities for children across all age ranges to

explore and learn in an explorative and creative way. The use of a technology item, such as an iPad is likely to have a camera and children will be using the camera as part of their learning experience. However, the use of iPad's and other tablet equipment can also present risks if children are left to use the equipment in an unsupervised environment. It is therefore understood that the school will ensure that all usage of iPads within the Trust will be supervised by an adult at all times. Staff and children sign ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. For staff this includes a section on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

5.9 Health and Safety

We have a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on our premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. At all times there has to be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed pupil / adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Principal.

Our school has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training. A copy of the Health and Safety Policy is available from the Academy Office.

5.10 Inclusion and Diversity

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all children and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a classroom environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for children and adults with communication needs.

5.11 Honour-based Abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 explains so called 'honour-based' abuse as:

'Incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.'

Vulnerability to abuse of this nature can be increased by family circumstances and can take the form of physical and/or emotional abuse.

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Although honour-based abuse is less likely to manifest itself amongst primary aged children, we cannot assume it won't happen in our schools and staff must be vigilant.

5.12 Managing Allegations against Staff including agency staff and out of school settings staff

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the children at our academies. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour and actions of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm, abuse or exploit children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our academies are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Procedures and Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2024) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Hertfordshire LADO Service can be contacted on 0300 123 4043.

5.13 Partnership with other services

The Trust recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

5.14 Partnership with Parents

Aspire Academies Trust is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The Trust shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the class teacher in the first instance.

5.15 Safe recruitment and selection

Our recruitment process selects, screens (including online screening), trains, and supervises staff and volunteers so that the appointment of unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children. A copy of the Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy is available on our website.

The Trust has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or HR.

The Trust also adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

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5.16 Safe working practice

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards 2021 (DfE 2011) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability'.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our code of conduct/staff behaviour policy/handbook at induction and annually following review. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

5.17 Abuse of Position of Trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behaviour is consensual.

5.18 Counter Terrorism and Security

From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent Duty for Schools. As part of the Trust's ongoing safeguarding and child protection duties we are fully behind the government's Prevent Strategy and are compliant with the statutory guidance, paragraphs 57-76 of which are specifically concerned with schools.

We build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling our pupils to challenge extremist views.

The statutory guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Key Staff and Governors in our school have attended the Home Office training 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent' (WRAP) which outlines what Prevent is about and how to deal with any issues they may see inside or outside school. All staff members (and governors) have completed PREVENT Training. All new staff members receive PREVENT training as part of their initial Child Protection Induction. The training outlines an individual's responsibility to Notice, Check and Share information in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

5.19 Security

The security measures in place balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary). The findings will be used in the review of this security policy and shared with staff.

5.20 Access to buildings

The Trust will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the school to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff. The access control procedures for the buildings are put in place by each school and cover:

- Locking/unlocking of buildings and security alarms
- Access control for main building access, including timings
- Timings for access to parents in dropping off and collection of children
- Exterior gates, both vehicle and pedestrian
- Exterior doors, e.g. breaks/lunch/PE

Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel:

- The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Local Advisory Body transfers control or otherwise allows the use of the premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, we will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors, contractors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors, contractors and volunteers will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

The Trust will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens our security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

5.21 Human Rights and Equality

The Trust is aware of the need to be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 as outlined in KCSIE 2024. Trustees and LAB Members are made aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

5.22 Operation Encompass

Our school is part of Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day. Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/ies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or completed the online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other school staff and LAB Members. All schools staff, LAB Members and Trustees can undertake the online training.

6. Pupil Information

Our academies will keep up to date and accurate information in order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them. This information includes:

- The names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives, including two emergency contact details
- The names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- The details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above)
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- if the child is or has been on the Child Protection Register or subject to a care plan name and contact detail of G.P.
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

The academy will collate, store and agree access to this information in line with the Trust Data Protection policy.

7. School Training and Staff Induction

The Academy's senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection undertakes child protection training and training in inter-agency working, (that is provided by HCC) and refresher training at 2 yearly intervals. The Principal and all other school staff, including nonteaching staff, undertake appropriate induction training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training annually and face to face child protection training at 3 yearly intervals. LAB Members and Trustees are required to undertake regular training relevant to their role ensuring they are aware of their key responsibilities and are equipped with the knowledge to effectively challenge, advice and support each academy.