



Overarching Safeguarding Policy

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Contents

Table of Contents

OUTLINE.....	3
SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION:.....	3
CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITION:	3
RATIONALE:.....	5
Information sharing and confidentiality.....	6
PURPOSE:.....	6
LANGUAGE:.....	7
PREVENTION	7
DEFINITIONS.....	10
Children and young people who harm others (also referred to as Child on Child abuse):.....	11
Reintegration and Support Strategies	12
Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting.....	13
Equality Impact Statement.....	16

This document is the overarching policy statement for the Laurus Trust. All individual schools have their own safeguarding policy which detail local procedures

OUTLINE

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding them and promoting their welfare. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child- centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt and restorative action. In line with this understanding, any adult working or volunteering in the Trust community has a responsibility to recognise when a child or young person may be in need or be vulnerable in some way, and to respond to this recognition in a timely and appropriate way.

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- 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 that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

("Working Together to Safeguarding Children" DfE 2023)

CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITION:

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

THIS POLICY ENCOMPASSES CHILD PROTECTION.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989 and 2004) and

this is term used throughout the rest of this policy.

RATIONALE:

In the Laurus Trust we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy demonstrates the Trust's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Staff and volunteers working in the Trust have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse, neglect or exploitation and referring them to the correct persons or services for support and intervention. Everyone working or volunteering in the Trust is trained to recognise signs of concern and in line with this policy must report concerns following school and local authority procedures.

Staff and volunteers and sessional workers are updated on safeguarding issues frequently across the year – The Designated Safeguarding Lead will run sessions for staff. These updates include learning from serious case reviews and local learning reviews on how to improve practice to prevent children from harmed.

As a trust we believe that the welfare of every child is paramount and we take safeguarding very seriously. Therefore, should staff have any concerns they feel are of a safeguarding nature, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected and that key staff are aware promptly of any such concerns. We are aware that this can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times we collectively work to ensure that the child is at the heart of all our decisions and that we act in their best interests.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. As part of our commitment to and compliance with safeguarding legislation and guidance; we also refer to:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Ofsted Inspection Framework
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- The Education Act 2002
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. 2015
- Keeping children Safe In Education 2024
- Guidance for safer working practice for staff working in education settings. October 2015
- Local Authority Policies and Procedures
- Preventing and tackling bullying advice
- Sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges
- Mental Health and behaviour in schools November 2018
- Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. February 2018
- School online safety policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Staff use of mobile phones and Social Media Policy

Information sharing and confidentiality

We take data handling and information sharing seriously. Trust staff have received appropriate training in relation to information sharing and confidentiality. We have a trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our Trust is compliant with confidentiality and information sharing requirements. The DPO is Mrs Paula Murphy.

Sharing information enables practitioners and agencies to identify and provide appropriate services that safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where we share information in relation to safeguarding or a child protection matter we follow local and national guidance, we pay particular regard to [Information sharing advice for practitioners in safeguarding services](#) and [Data Protection Toolkit for Schools](#)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the welfare of children is understood and promoted at all times. In the Laurus Trust we understand that the welfare of the child is paramount.

We strive to ensure that all children regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity are protected from harm in all its forms. All staff and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act on concerns, suspicions or disclosures that lead them to suspect or understand a child may be at risk of harm. As part of our duty of care we also work to ensure that students and staff involved in safeguarding and child protection issues receive appropriate support.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 we work with a range of partners and adhere to local practice guidance supported by The Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All staff and volunteers understand what to do if there are concerns or allegations about any adult working or volunteering in any of our schools during or outside of the normal school day.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, sessional workers, students, agency staff or anyone working on behalf of the Laurus Trust. We expect that this policy takes primacy over other agency policies when work is being delivered on this site or on our behalf, as we maintain a duty of care to all in our community of schools.

LANGUAGE:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing 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.

Early Help refers to mechanisms providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Child Protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Trust in either a paid or voluntary capacity and will be used from this point on in this document.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached the age of 18. Students who are 18 years of age or older will be considered as children with regards to the application of this policy.

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

PREVENTION

We will establish and maintain an ethos where:

Children feel safe and secure in an environment which allows them to learn, and develop on a journey to achieving their full potential. We will educate and support our children in an inclusive, supportive and non-judgemental environment.

Children understand that there are adults in school whom they can talk to if worried, scared or facing difficulty. We will work hard to be a restorative staff team who actively listen and respond.

Staff development and awareness in respect of safeguarding is given the highest priority across the Trust to ensure we all fully understand and implement the national and local agenda. All our staff and volunteers are required to read Keeping Children safe in Education (KCSiE) Part 1 and annex A. All staff are required to undertake annual safeguarding training and update training in line with KCSiE 2024.

Staff development ensures that all members of the trust are alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues and recognise that under the Equality Act 2010, some mental health issues will meet the definition of disability. Processes ensure that pupils experiencing mental health problems are well supported effectively, working with external support where needed.

We provide frequent, appropriate opportunities for Personal, Social and Health Education throughout the curriculum, ensuring children develop skills and understanding on their journey to adulthood which will enable them to be safe; develop the skills to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships (both online and in the physical world); and where to find sources of support.

Children are supported in recognising risks in various forms including on the internet. That children understand what kind of physical contact and virtual contact is acceptable and are able to recognise inappropriate pressure from others, including that which threatens their personal safety and well-being and give them strategies to counter this.

Staff feel empowered to share safeguarding concerns in a swift and timely way bringing them to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/ or the Head of School. Accepting that safeguarding is the responsibility of all in our community, staff feel able to ask safeguarding questions and receive appropriate feedback following up on concerns as part of this shared responsibility to safeguard children. All staff know how to report concerns via CPOMS

Emerging issues and themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the [Local Authority \(LA\)](#) and local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) to ensure a multi-agency awareness and that strategies are developed. External agencies are utilised to provide additional support.

There is a clear approach to substance misuse (drugs and alcohol). Any issues of drugs and substance misuse are recorded and there are strategies to educate children appropriately delivered throughout our schools and curriculums.

We use the mechanisms and services available to understand the range of issues which may make a child vulnerable and ensure children and young people receive the most appropriate support or referral and access to other provision; actively supporting multi agency planning for those children and, in doing so, providing information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's personal experiences and perspectives as evidenced by observations or information provided.

Our schools' arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to students are that we make sure that our children know that members of staff are always prepared to listen to them. Children are made aware that they can report any concerns verbally to any member of staff, and we will act upon this.

Our schools will use an anonymous questionnaire annually and Student Voice that specifically asks children how safe they feel in their school.

In addition members of our staff are mindful of the need to actively listen to children at all times during the school day. Staff members are asked to report the content of these conversations to senior leaders through established meeting structures in school, whether or not there are concerns expressed by the children. We do this to ensure that we have a constant overview about how our children are feeling in school throughout the year.

Our schools' arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to parents/carers are that we keep channels of communication open at all times. None teaching Heads of Year and senior staff with much reduced teaching timetables are always available to listen and respond to parents/carers, either in person at the school, or by telephone or email.

There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regard to safeguarding training:

- All staff access training annually with regular updates across the academic year.
- We undertake SSCP 'endorsed' Basic Awareness training and all new staff, as part of their induction, access safeguarding training within the first term of their employment/placement.
- The Designated Lead and/or deputy attends DSL safeguarding training on bi-annual basis in line with the requirements set out in KCSIE – at least every other year

DEFINITIONS

Staff are trained and supported to understand the types of abuse that some children experience and work to the following definitions:

All schools are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues may overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact

activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Children and young people who harm others (also referred to as Child on Child abuse):

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child- on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child- on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child on Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal- whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive.

Reintegration and Support Strategies

When an incident of bullying is reported the victim will be given time to reflect and consider their feelings on this incident and they will be reassured that they have been listened to and action taken. Parent/Carers will be informed of any incidents.

Following an incident of bullying the victim will be offered reintegration and support strategies, together with their parent/carer, that they are comfortable with, e.g. Head of Year support, Head of House support, School Counselling, SEND support and/or appropriate external agencies.

Complex safeguarding: is used to describe criminal activity (often organised) or behaviour associated with criminality, involving often vulnerable children where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern.

Domestic abuse has been included within this definition in acknowledgement of the similarities between the process of grooming and controlling victims of domestic abuse and those subject to complex abuse and the need for a specialist and sensitive approach to working with children and families at highest risk of all these areas of concerns to reduce risk and effect positive outcomes. Stockport family have agreed that the following areas are encompassed within complex safeguarding:

- Domestic Abuse including honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Serious Organised Crime – including Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Modern slavery and Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Radicalisation and Extremism

Harmful Sexual Behaviours

“Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as those it is directed towards” (NSPCC 2016)

HSB includes (but is not limited to):

- Sexist jokes and comments
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment and violence
- Gender based violence
- Emotional harm
- On and offline bullying
- Teenage relationship abuse
- CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)

See full Harmful Sexual Behaviours policy on the Trust website

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): is a form of child sexual abuse, it involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money) as part of a grooming process. Ultimately, this results in them engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

All staff are alert to possible indicators and will raise concerns as appropriate via CPOMS.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

(Child Sexual Exploitation, DfE, Feb 2017)

Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting

Safer culture- As part of our approach to safeguarding, the School has created and embedded a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour as set out in our code of conduct/safer working practice are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) and where all concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. This includes where concerns may be felt to be deliberately invented or malicious; such allegations are extremely rare and as such all concerns should be reported and recorded.

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding we work to ensure we have a culture where everyone has a voice. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

If there are concerns about a colleague, or any other adult in our setting then these should be shared with the Head, or the Deputy in their absence.

If there are concerns about the Head, then these should be shared with the Chair of the Academy Committee.

How the Trust will respond:

- The Trust will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting them or rejecting them.
- Where appropriate the matter raised may be investigated within the school
- Be referred to the Chair of the Academy Committee
- Be referred to the Trustees
- Be referred to the police
- Be referred to the LADO
- Form the subject of an independent enquiry

If the matter is dealt with within school, the Head of School (or another member of the management team nominated by the Head of School) or Governing Body will respond to the concern. Where there is a concern regarding a Head of School, the CEO or Executive Head, as appropriate, will respond

The Whistleblowing policy can be found on the Trust website.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue within our setting, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [advice on whistleblowing](#)
- the NSPCC's [what you can do to report abuse](#) dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have anxiety about doing so- 0800 028 0285.

Where school/college has a statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) it will do so ensuring that the LADO and the Senior Advisor for Safeguarding in Education are aware

Where a teacher's employer, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency). Details about how to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency can be found on GOV.UK. Child-on-child abuse

Equality Impact Statement

Names and titles of people involved with this assessment	Dr Mark Sackville-Ford – Trust Director of Inclusion
Title of Policy – LT Safeguarding Policy	
Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics	<div>Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Sex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Religious belief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Sexual orientation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Gender Reassignment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div>
Summary of any issues/proposed changes	n/a
Date	September 2024
Date of next review	September 2025