



“Our vision is to work together to provide the best schools and outcomes for our children”

Overarching Statement for Safeguarding

Introduction

This Safeguarding Statement has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes the DfE “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (KCSIE), September 2024, the DfE’s Statutory Framework for “Early Years Foundation Stage”, January 2024, and “Working Together to Safeguard Children” December 2023. Pickwick Academy Trust is committed to working with the Safeguarding Children Board of each Local Authority in which it operates. The Trust refers to, and follows the policies and procedures developed by each Local Authority’s Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

Because of our close day to day contact with children, we acknowledge that Trust staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse and neglect at an early stage.

Ethos

Pickwick Academy Trust recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within each of its schools that will help children to feel:

- Safe and secure
- Respected
- Able to talk openly
- Listened to
- Trusted

Our statement relates to all members of the Trust’s community including pupils, staff, governors, visitors, contractors, volunteers and trainees working within our schools. It is fully incorporated into each school’s ethos and is underpinned throughout the teaching of the curriculum, within PHSE and the safety of the physical environment we provide for our pupils.

We believe that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of everyone within the Trust community. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in considering, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Policy and Procedures

All policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding children are up to date and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024. The policies are accessible to all staff through the Pickwick Academy Trust web-site and school intranets. Policies and procedures are reviewed and revised by each Trust school’s Local Governing Committee annually.

Please visit each individual Trust school’s website to read their full Safeguarding Policy.

All Trust schools are expected to use *CPOMS* which is an online record keeping system where all staff can log safeguarding concerns on. It enables safeguarding leads in every school to monitor child protection concerns, keep ongoing records of actions and store relevant paperwork.

Board of Trustees Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has a nominated Trustee who oversees safeguarding as well as its own Trust Designated Safeguarding Leads for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (TDSL). The TDSL role is carried out by the Directors of Education; they have an oversight of each Trust school's Safeguarding Policy and supporting procedures. The TDSL's are expected to regularly report to the Board on all safeguarding matters. The Trust expects any issues related to safeguarding children to be discussed at each Local Governing Committee meeting and then be reported to the TDSL's who will keep the Trust Board informed.

Disclosure and Barring Checks

Pickwick Academy Trust meets statutory requirements in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service – all staff and volunteers who work within Trust schools who meet the 'regulated activity test' (Freedoms Act 2012) are required to undergo an enhanced DBS check prior to employment. A Central Record is also held for members of the Trust Board and central Trust staff.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding matters. Operationally, this responsibility is currently delegated to the Local Governing Committees and the TDSLs who lead on policy issues in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk across the Trust on behalf of Trustees. Within each school there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who takes responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They are clear about their responsibilities, have sufficient time and receive relevant support, and training, to undertake their roles. This includes close contact with outside agencies including social services, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in which the school is based and relevant health care organisations.

Training

The Trust has delegated responsibility to Local Governing Committees to ensure all eligible governors, staff and volunteers undertake relevant safeguarding training and this is regularly reviewed by each Designated Safeguarding Lead and Governor Lead in individual schools to ensure it is up to date. *CPOMS* and *SSS Learning* can be used by Trust schools as a training tool as it provides up to date training modules and documents on a range of safeguarding topics. The TDSL's, on behalf of the Board, will review each Trust school's central training database ensuring training needs are identified and appropriate courses are offered. Each Trust school Designated Safeguarding Lead and the TDSL's will undertake Prevent Awareness Training to enable them to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

Audit

The TDSL's, on behalf of the Trust, keep an audit checklist to assure that safeguarding systems and processes are working effectively in each school.

The audit includes the monitoring of each:

- School's Single Central Record
- Child Protection Records
- Adults at Risk Policies and Procedures including:

Allegations against Professionals

The monitoring of training for all employees and volunteers, guidance and support

A Pickwick safeguarding audits will take place in terms 3, the results of these will be reported to the Trust School Improvement Committee and the LA will carry out a safeguarding audit in each school annually

Partnerships with Others

Schools do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is the corporate responsibility of the entire Trust, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector, service users and carers. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families, and have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion.

The Trust recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Pickwick Academy Trust follows all Local Authority Child Protection Procedures and has links with the Local Authority, the School Health Service, the local police, Children's Centre's and Social Care Services.

Where it is believed a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, Trust schools will follow the procedures as outlined on the Local Safeguarding Children Board website and within the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Professional Confidentiality

All schools have a clear policy on confidentiality which forms an important part of their Professional Behaviour Expectations and Standards Policy. This approach is in line with the DfE guidance document 'Information Sharing – Guidance for Safeguarding Practitioners' May 2024.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

The Trust pays full regard to the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2024) and the supporting guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education – Information for all School and College Staff" (September 2024). The Local Governing Committee will prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to carry out appropriate checks on staff or others who work (paid or unpaid) unsupervised with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring those without full checks are appropriately supervised. The Trust has a Recruitment Policy in place. Each Local Governing Committee is responsible for ensuring there is at least one person any appointment panel with safer recruitment training. Part of the Trust safeguarding audit will include a review of each school's recruitment strategy.

Intended Impact of our Trust Wide Safeguarding Ethos

At child level:

- Children tell us they feel safe and enjoy both school and learning
- Children have a voice in matters that involve them
- Children know what to do if they are being bullied, witness bullying or experience any form of child on child abuse
- Relationships between adults and children are strong, supportive and nurturing
- Relationships between children are kind and caring
- Every child is noticed and their needs are responded to
- Children are listened to and their concerns responded to promptly
- Children are kept as safe as possible and risks are well managed at all times
- Children know how to keep safe on online
- Children are aware of UNICEF Rights of the Child

At School level:

- A safe environment is maintained in which children can learn and develop confidently ○ Some schools promote UNICEF Rights of the Child
- At least one member of staff is trained to act in the absence of the school DSL i.e. deputy DSL and they have received appropriate training and support ○ Appropriate supervision is in place to support the DSL and deputy DSL's to feel confident in their role and to raise any issues
- Single Central Record is kept up to date, this includes training records in line with KCSIE ○ Appropriate staff personnel files are maintained following the Trust Recruitment Policy and procedures
- All staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers and self-employed individuals such as peripatetic teachers, sports coaches and instructors complete an annual declaration to confirm they have not been disqualified from caring for children
- There is a designated area on school websites for safeguarding documentation and information including contact names and details of designated safeguarding leads and their deputies
- All members of staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) know the name of the school designated safeguarding lead and any deputies and understand their role in ensuring a safeguarding culture
- The school designated safeguarding lead and/or their deputy are always available during school hours and have made adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term time activities
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on school devices and school networks is in place ○ Staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead in a timely manner and are aware that they may also raise concerns directly with the Trust executive/safeguarding leaders and local authority children's social care services if they believe their concerns have not been listened to or acted upon
- All staff receive an annual refresh of KCSIE and Trust safeguarding policies, they confirm that they have read and understood them and this is recorded on the Trust SCR, this includes the Staff Behaviour Policy ○ All staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities and are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, including the specific issues of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Children Missing Education (CME) and Radicalisation and Extremism and maintain an attitude of it could happen here at all times
- Teaching, support staff, temporary staff and governors new to school are fully inducted about safeguarding and provided with personal copies of important child protection and safeguarding information and documentation following the Trust Induction Policy
- School leaders use both Trust and LA safeguarding audits to accurately evaluate the culture of safeguarding in their school, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement
- Safeguarding is an agenda item on every school Local Governing Committee meeting ○ Community users/lettings organising activities for children are aware of and understand the need for compliance with Trust and school child protection and safeguarding guidelines and procedures and compliance is monitored by individual schools as appropriate

At Trust level:

- Policies relating to safeguarding are compliant and updated annually to include any changes to statutory guidance in KCSIE
- TDSL's and the nominated Trustee who oversees safeguarding have received appropriate training and support for the role
- The Single Central Record (SCR) at Trust and school level is up to date, this includes training records in line with KCSIE
- All Trust staff receive an annual refresh of KCSIE and Trust safeguarding policies, they confirm that they have read and understood them and this is recorded on the Trust SCR
- Members and trustees complete an annual declaration to confirm they have not been disqualified from caring for children. They confirm that they have read and understood KCSIE and the Trust's Professional Expectations and Standards Policy ○ The Trust has an appropriate trust-wide secure system (CPOMS) for the recording of safeguarding and child protection incidents and issues
- TDSL's are informed of any safeguarding or child protection issues or concerns relating to adults or where staff feel there is significant risk to a child

- Trust Whistleblowing Policy and associated procedures are understood by all staff
- Trust Recruitment Policy and procedures are followed when recruiting staff
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on Trust devices and Trust networks is in place

- Trust staff, trustees and members have received statutory and recommended training on safeguarding and child protection issues, they are aware of the indicators and types of abuse and what action to take if they have a concern
- Trust staff, trustees and members new to the Trust are fully inducted about safeguarding and provided with personal copies of important child protection and safeguarding information and documentation following the Trust Induction Policy
- TDSL's and Directors of Education monitor school SCR's and scrutinise school audit responses ensuring procedures are being followed and a culture of safeguarding is being maintained
- Safeguarding is an agenda item on every Trust Board and School Improvement Committee meeting

Date of next review: September 2025 - a review will be done annually in September alongside schools reviewing their own safeguarding policies