



INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR TRUSTEES: SAFEGUARDING

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding includes the actions required (and taken) to protect people from harm and the procedures in place to manage incidents and complaints.

Safeguarding is a governance priority for the Trust, a fundamental part of our operations as a charity for the public benefit.

The Charity Commission describes safeguarding as 'the range of measures in place to protect people in a charity, or those it comes into contact with, from abuse and maltreatment of any kind.'

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (everyone under the age of 18) as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- 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; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding adults (18+) means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This includes having an outcomes approach and supporting individuals in making choices and having control in how they choose to live their lives.

WHAT MUST TRUSTEES DO?

The Charity Commission expects Trustees to make sure their charity:

- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place and that these are followed;
- Checks that people are suitable to act in their roles;
- Knows how to spot and handle concerns quickly, appropriately and in a full and open manner;
- Has a clear system of promptly referring or reporting concerns to appropriate organisations;
- Sets out risks and how they will be managed in a regularly reviewed risk register;
- Follows statutory guidance, good practice and legislation;
- Does not ignore or downplay failures;
- Has a balanced Board and does not let one trustee dominate work – trustees should work together;
- Makes sure protecting people from harm is central to its culture;
- Has enough resources, including trained staff for safeguarding and protecting people;
- Conducts periodic reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: Never keep concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult to yourself

REPORT CONCERNS TO:

School Designated Leads (DSL), School Head or the Trust's CEO

Out of hours/school holidays contact: Oxfordshire MASH:
0345 050 7666 or (out of office hours) 0800 833408

If you think a child is in immediate danger call the Police on 999

WHAT DOES THE BOARD DO?

The Abingdon Learning Trust Board sets four core expectations relating to safeguarding:

- Set an **organisational culture** that prioritises safeguarding
- Work to provide a **safe and trusted environment** to safeguard everyone in our organisation
- Establish and regularly review **policies and procedures** to keep our learning community safe
- Establish clear procedures for **listening, dealing with, reporting and learning** from incidents

WE DO THIS BY working with our schools to:

- ⇒ Clearly delegate and define roles and responsibilities through the scheme of delegation, role descriptions and codes of conduct;
- ⇒ Ensure that all staff and volunteers are appointed with appropriate checks, that they receive the training they need to carry out their roles and to understand their responsibilities, including for safeguarding;
- ⇒ Put policies in place, informed by good practice, customised to reflect local context and regularly reviewed to ensure compliance and effectiveness;
- ⇒ Keep safeguarding high on our agenda, rigorously evaluating our procedures with regular monitoring, reporting, reflection and external review;
- ⇒ Maintain a vigilant (*'it could happen here'*), open, transparent, listening culture that encourages early identification and sensitive handling of concerns and enables us to continually improve our practice;
- ⇒ Holding ourselves to account (individually and as a Board) for ensuring that we follow KCSIE and Charity Commission guidance, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) advice and Trust codes of conduct.

Safeguarding forms part of the work of all Trust Committees

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Safeguarding Trustee is: **Lynn Fathers** lfathers@abingdonlearningtrust.org

The Committee with oversight of safeguarding is: **Compliance Committee**

The Executive lead for safeguarding is: **Chief Executive Officer** CEO@abingdonlearningtrust.org

The Trust Board has delegated responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for each school to: the **Local Academy Board (LAB)** of each school. LAB oversight provides assurances that risk assessments, action plans and approaches are responsive and reflect local context. Each LAB is expected to appoint a safeguarding governor to lead on this work.

SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust Board appoints a Safeguarding Trustee to:

- Act as the key link between the Trust Board, LABs and their nominated safeguarding governor including supporting the induction of new trustees/governors and chairing the Trust's Safeguarding Group meetings;
- Meet regularly with the CEO to facilitate rigorous oversight e.g. to
 - ⇒ Support and ensure the completion and circulation of statutory reports
 - ⇒ Review safeguarding arrangements and emerging risks
 - ⇒ Keep safeguarding issues on Board and Committee agenda
 - ⇒ Alert trustees to risks arising in the area of safeguarding
- Participate in policy and scheme of delegation reviews to ensure governance arrangements are working effectively

In the event of a significant incident, the Safeguarding Trustee will liaise closely with the Chair of the Trust and the CEO, supporting the Trust in making any public statement or media response.

KEY READING FOR TRUSTEES

- **Essential:** Keeping Children Safe in Education: Part 2 as a minimum (Part 3 if involved in recruitment)
- Trust Safeguarding Policy
- Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Academy Trust Handbook (formerly Academies Financial Handbook)
- Trust Local Governance Handbook