

Leading Learners Multi Academy Trust



Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Approved by:	Trust Board	Date: August 2025
Last reviewed on:	17 September 2025	
Next review due by:	September 2026	

We in Leading Learners are committed to ensuring our own ‘gold standard’ safeguarding supervision.

The commitment is based on ensuring a high quality integrated approach that goes beyond compliance and reflects a true culture of safeguarding. There are four broad principles that underpin this standard:

1. School leaders will have a **clear strategic overview of safeguarding provision** in their schools with an associated action plan to develop practice. The strategic overview will be underpinned by **focussed self-evaluation procedures** including the systematic review and evaluation of key information and indicators.
2. A **responsive, explicit curriculum** (age appropriate), that is reflective of national, local and community issues and help keep children safe beyond the school gate. This includes a focus on promoting and understanding of protected characteristics embedded within lessons and within the schools’ equalities duties.
3. A commitment to **support systems leadership beyond the school** and fulfil the duty to cooperate by working with partner agencies, local authorities and any local safeguarding children board (LSCB) to support local alignment and provision.
4. **Communication** and engagement with parents, families and children is highly visible and accessible (including those on school websites) and reflect our commitment to keeping children safe in a clear, parent/child user friendly format.

To ensure the quality of provision and to maintain a focus on the quality of safeguarding provision the trust will carry out a regular external review to ensure compliance with this policy. This will form part of all headteacher/heads of school performance management objectives.

Cross-reference policies/documents:

Documents:

- Children Act 1989 (as amended 2004 Section 52)
- Education Act 2002 s175/s157
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The Teachers Standards’ 2012
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (section 26 The Prevent Duty)
- Serious Crime Bill 2015
- What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – March 2015
- Information sharing - Advice for safeguarding practitioners May 2024
- Children Missing Education – Guidance for Local authorities (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Preventing and tackling Bullying (DfE 2017)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE 2021)
- Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide (ESCB 2018)
- Searching, screening, confiscating (DfE 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Statutory guidance)

- Working Together to improve school attendance (applies from August 2024)
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults – county lines guidance (Home Office 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, 2025
- Teaching online safety in schools (DfE 2023)
- When to call the Police Guidance for schools
- Safer recruitment consortium safer working practices April 2020
- Relationship's education relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education guidance 2025.

Policies:

- Safeguarding, Child Protection
- Whistle blowing
- Anti-Bullying
- British Values
- Prevent Policy
- Behaviour
- Serious Incidents
- Attendance/exclusion
- SEND
- Disability access plan
- Equalities duty
- Curriculum
- Children who go missing
- Safer recruitment
- Complaints
- Physical restraint
- Lockdown
- Intimate care

Beyond compliance – creating a safeguarding culture in schools

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025*)

Definition of Abuse

'Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect 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. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.'*(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025)*

School leaders, trustees and all staff are committed to creating a culture of vigilance and mind-set where children's and learners' welfare is promoted and timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children or learners who need extra help or who may be suffering or likely to suffer harm and referrals where necessary will be made to the local authority. In reflecting on the effectiveness of the culture of safeguarding and identifying aspects for development school leaders will ensure that:

- Leaders and governors fulfil statutory requirements, such as those for disability, safeguarding, safer recruitment and health and safety, including online searches on shortlisted candidates. (Who will be notified).
- Child protection/Safeguarding and staff code of conduct and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed to keep all children and learners safe.
- Staff, leaders and managers recognise that children and young people are capable of abusing other children and this risk is covered adequately in the **safeguarding and child protection policy** and the **whistleblowing policies**.
- **The child protection and safeguarding policy and the whistleblowing policy** reflect the additional barriers that exist when recognising the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specialist organisations for children with special educational needs and disabilities are accessed where appropriate.
- Children and learners feel safe.
- Staff, leaders, governors, trustees and volunteers receive appropriate **training on safeguarding at induction** that is updated regularly. In addition, they receive information (for example, via emails, e-bulletins, scenario briefings and newsletters) on safeguarding and child protection at least annually.
- All staff demonstrate knowledge of their responsibilities relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the thresholds at which rapid action is required. Staff should expect to support social workers, Early Help and other agencies following a referral.
- Staff are supported to have a good awareness of the signs that a child or learner is being neglected, abused or exploited, as described in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.
- A designated senior member of staff in charge of safeguarding arrangements has been trained to the appropriate level and understands their responsibilities relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the safeguarding of all learners.
- Designated members of staff undertake safeguarding training every two years and their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals, but at least annually.
- During term time, or when the school is in operation, the designated safeguarding lead or an appropriately trained deputy should be available during opening hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- The school identifies children or learners who may be at risk and this is reviewed regularly.
- The school has clear **policies** and procedures for dealing with **children who are absent from education**, particularly those who go missing on repeat occasions. Leaders, managers and staff are alert to signs that children and learners who are missing might be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. School understand the difference between children missing education and children absent from education.

- The school must work with children services when absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- The school will refer to and use the DfE 'working together to improve attendance' when making decisions re: attendance, to ensure they follow Government guidance.
- Appropriate action is taken when children and learners stop attending the school or do not attend regularly; for schools, this includes informing the local authority when a pupil is going to be deleted from the register.
- Action is taken to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding risks, including online risks and DSLs take appropriate action to prevent any cybercrime.
- There is a clear approach to implementing the **Prevent duty** and keeping children and learners safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- The school takes effective action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory **language** – this **includes language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic and racist language**.
- Children and learners are able to understand, respond to and calculate risk effectively, for example risks associated with child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, Homelessness, modern slavery, mental health, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism, and are aware of the support available to them such as Channel, child line, Barnardo's etc.
- Staff, leaders and managers understand the risks posed by children, adults or young people who use the internet to bully, groom or abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults; there are well-developed strategies in place to keep children safe and to support them in learning how to keep themselves safe online, including teaching about content, contact, conduct, commerce, misinformation, disinformation (fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- Schools reference the DfE 'Plan technology for your school' guidance (2024), meet cyber security standards, and consider new Generative AI guidance (2025)
- Teachers understand their mandatory duty to report to the police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.
- Staff, leaders and managers oversee the safe use of electronic and social media by staff and learners and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying, criminal or risky behaviour.
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect learners from potentially harmful online materials.
- Staff training includes all staff understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Schools adhere to the published filtering and monitoring standards as well as cyber security standards.
- Appropriate arrangements are made with regards to health and safety to protect staff and learners from harm, including those in out-of-school settings.
- The setting's premises provide a safe learning environment with secure access.
- Leaders ensure that their school's culture addresses harmful sexual behaviour online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) through a whole-school approach to address them.
- Leaders and staff identify children, pupils and students who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by other children), grooming or exploitation, children who have experience multiple suspensions, has a parent/carer in custody, is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care etc.

- Children and Learners will have opportunities to learn how to be safe and healthy in relationships, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), which was compulsory from September 2020 and revised in 2025.
- Leaders manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members and low-level concerns (including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and any organisations or individuals using school premises). Allegations from staff about another member of staff including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and any organisations or individuals using school premises posing a risk of harm to children, leaders will act following our Whistle Blowing policy or the Safeguarding policy if this is a low-level concern. All staff to be fully aware of the Whistle Blowing Policy and low-level concern procedures through induction.

The trust 'gold' standard for successful safeguarding arrangements

For schools that have a secure safeguarding culture, we expect the four key principles to underpin and inform the following:

- Children and learners are protected and feel safe, including if they are accessing alternative provision or a pupil referral unit. Staff continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of these pupils and should be satisfied the placement meets the pupil's needs. Staff will have visited the alternative provision and know where the child/learner is during all hours of and how often the child/learner attends. This will be reviewed half-termly.
- The school will obtain written confirmation that full safer recruitment checks have been undertaken for all staff in Alternative Provision. The AP will inform the school of any staff changes whilst the pupil is in the provision.
- Those who are able to communicate know how to complain and understand the process for doing so.
- A strong, robust and proactive response from adults working with children and learners reduces the risk of harm or actual harm to them.
- Adults working with children know and understand the indicators that may suggest that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse (Emotional, physical, sexual, neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation) or harm and they take the appropriate and necessary action in accordance with local procedures and statutory guidance.
- Leaders and managers have put in place effective child protection and safeguarding and codes of conduct that are well understood by everyone in the school.
- **All staff and other adults working within the setting are clear about procedures and how to make referrals where they are concerned about the safety of a child or learner.**
- There is a named and designated lead who is enabled to play an effective role in pursuing concerns and protecting children and learners. All staff and visitors are aware who the DSL is.
- Children and learners can identify a trusted adult with whom they can communicate about any concerns.
- Children know that adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously.
- Where children or learners have been or are at risk, the trusted adult has been instrumental in helping them to be safe in accordance with agreed local procedures.

- Children who are unable to share their comments, for example very young children, form strong attachments to those who care for them through the effective implementation of the key person system.
- Written **records are made in an appropriate and timely way and are held securely** where adults working with children or leaders are concerned about their safety or welfare. Those records are shared appropriately and, where necessary, with consent. Written information is kept in a separate child protection file (paper based or using CPOMs).
- Any child protection and/or safeguarding concerns are shared immediately with the relevant local authority. Where the concern is about suspected harm or risk of harm to a child, the referral should be made to the local authority for the area where the child lives.
- The DSL will keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care.
- Where the concern is an **allegation about a member of staff** in a school, or another type of safeguarding issue affecting children and young people, the matter should be referred to the local authority in which the school is located or through the low-level concerns procedures if this is deemed a low-level concern.
- A record of all referrals about staff to the local authority is retained and there is evidence that any agreed action following the referral has been taken promptly to protect the child or learner from further harm.
- There is evidence that staff have an understanding of when to make referrals when there are issues concerning sexual exploitation, FGM, radicalisation and/or extremism or that they have sought additional advice and support.
- Children and learners are supported, protected and informed appropriately about the action the adult is taking to share their concerns. Parents are made aware of concerns and their consent is sought in accordance with local procedures unless doing so would increase the risk of harm to a child.
- There is a written plan in place that has clear and agreed procedures to protect a child. For children who are the subject of a child in need plan or child protection plan or who are looked after, the plan identifies the help that the child should receive and the action to be taken if a professional working with the child has further concerns or information to report.
- **Children who go missing** from the setting they attend receive well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them such as criminal exploitation, mental health problems, FGM etc. Risks are well understood and their impact is minimised. Staff are aware of, and implement in full, local procedures for children who are missing from home and/or from education. Local procedures for notifying the local authority and parents are available, understood and followed.
- **Comprehensive records are held and shared between the relevant agencies** to help and protect children. In relation to early years they implement the requirements of the
- 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' when children go missing while in the care of the provider.
- Any risks associated with children and learners offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being vulnerable to radicalisation or being sexually exploited are known by the adults who care for them and shared with local authority children's social care service or other relevant agency.

- There are plans and help in place that are reducing the risk of harm or actual harm and there is evidence that the impact of these risks is being minimised. These risks are kept under regular review and there is regular and effective liaison with other agencies where appropriate.
- Children and learners are protected and **helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination**. There is fair treatment of all regardless of age, colour, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religious or spiritual beliefs, and responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support are given to children about how to treat others with respect.
- Adults understand the risks posed by adults or learners who use technology, including the internet, to bully, groom, radicalise or abuse children or learners.
- Adults have well-developed strategies in place to keep children and learners safe and to support them to develop their own understanding of these risks and in learning how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Leaders oversee the safe use of technology when children and learners are in their care and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or children's well-being. Leaders of early years implement the required policies with regard to the safe use of mobile phones and cameras in settings.
- Leaders and staff make clear risk assessments and respond consistently to protect children and learners while enabling them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their learning, growth and development.
- Young children demonstrate their emotional security through the attachments they form with those who look after them and through their physical and emotional well-being.
- Staff respond with clear boundaries about what is safe and acceptable and they seek to understand the triggers for children and learners' behaviour. They develop effective responses as a team and review those responses to assess their impact, taking into account the views and experiences of the child or learner.
- Positive behaviour and relationships are promoted consistently. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the individual needs of children and learners.
- Reasonable force, including restraint, is only used in strict accordance with the legislative framework to protect the child and learner and those around them. All incidents are reviewed, recorded and monitored and the views of the child or learner are sought and understood.
- Monitoring of the management of behaviour is effective and the use of any restraint significantly reduces or ceases over time.
- Staff and volunteers working with children and learners are carefully selected and vetted according to statutory requirements. There is monitoring to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children and learners or place them at risk.
- There are clear and effective arrangements for staff development and training in respect of the protection and care of children and learners. Staff and other adults receive regular supervision and support if they are working directly and regularly with children and learners whose safety and welfare are at risk.
- The physical environment for children and learners is safe and secure and protects them from harm or the risk of harm.

- All staff and carers have a copy of and understand the written procedures for managing allegations of harm to a child or learner.
- Staff know how to make a complaint if they have concerns that other adults in the school may pose a risk to the safeguarding of children and learners, and understand policies on whistleblowing.
- Staff and leaders recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health in both our children and their parent/carers. All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Staff will ensure the curriculum informs and empowers children to be able to safeguard themselves and to keep others safe. School staff will help children to develop the skills to respond to and effectively calculate risks associated with various forms of abuse (e.g. child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism).

Appendix 1: Safeguarding and Trustees Responsibilities

1. Trustees aim is to ensure safe and secure provision for children and learners across all schools through effective monitoring and evaluation. Safeguarding the welfare of children and learners is part of the trust's core business for all staff, who are expected to be aware of their responsibilities in this regard.
2. All trust schools should be safe environments where children, young people and adults can learn and develop. Trustees will consider how well leaders and managers in schools have created a culture of vigilance where children's and learners' welfare is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children or learners who need extra help or who may be suffering or likely to suffer harm.
3. Trustees will evaluate how well schools fulfil their statutory and other responsibilities and how well staff exercise their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe in a strong culture of safeguarding.
4. It is essential that trustees are familiar with the content of the following key documents:
 - The Department for Education's (DFE) statutory guidance for schools and colleges, '**Keeping children safe in education**', which sets out the responsibilities placed on schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - The statutory guidance '**Working together to safeguard children**' which applies to organisations and professionals who provide services to children.
 - **Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter Terrorism and Security act 2015** to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' HM Government, 2015, including specific guidance with respect for further education.
 - The DFE has provided additional guidance for school and childcare providers '**The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers**'.
5. Trustees should be familiar with the content of the following additional key documents:
 - **Statutory framework for early years foundation stage for school based providers:** setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five'
 - '**Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006**. Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools'
6. Staff, governors and trustees should use the DfE's data protection guidance for schools to help:

Comply with data protection law
Develop data policies and processes
Know what staff and pupil data to keep
Follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches

Appendix 2: Definition of safeguarding

1. In relation to children and young people, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in working together to safeguard children 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.

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.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

2. Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and learners from different abuse, neglect and exploitation/signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation:
 - Neglect / physical abuse/ sexual abuse/ emotional abuse
 - significant change in behaviour
 - extreme anger or sadness
 - aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
 - suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
 - lack of self-esteem
 - self-injury
 - depression
 - age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
 - bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
 - racist, disability and homophobic or gender questioning abuse
 - gender-based violence/ violence against women and girls
 - radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
 - child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation
 - trafficking
 - the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example 'sexting' (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and accessing pornography
 - teenage relationship abuse
 - child on child abuse
 - up skirting
 - Sexual harassment

- substance misuse
- deliberately missing education
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity (including county lines) and youth violence
- domestic abuse
- initiation/hazing
- So-called Honour Based Violence (HBV)
- female genital mutilation
- Vulnerability to radicalisation or extreme viewpoints
- Belief in Spirit Possession
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- mental health
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

Other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, learners and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- children's and learners' health and safety and wellbeing, including their mental health
- meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- children who are young carers
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate care and emotional well-being
- online safety and associated issues

Appropriate arrangements to ensure the children's and learners' security, taking into account the local context.

Appendix 3: What does safeguarding look like in a Leading Learners school?

- Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at each weekly briefing and safeguarding scenarios and questions are shared and discussed, keeping messages of safeguarding alive constantly.
- At Local Governing Board meetings, Safeguarding is a standing agenda item. There is a named governor for safeguarding who visits school at least termly and where else appropriate e.g., for absence meetings with families deliberately missing education.
- SLT/Governors review Safeguarding systems in school, ensure they are robust and effective, and ask the question- Are we good enough in our establishment?
- Schools know their thresholds for a serious incident- and refer to their school's local authority Threshold guidance document:
- For Wigan schools this is **Threshold of Needs guidance** document found on LA website.
- For Bradford schools this is **Bradford's Continuum of Need document** found on LA website.
- For Wirral schools this is **Threshold Matrix document** found on LA website.
- School leaders and staff are aware of and understand priorities for their Local Safeguarding Children's Board. They use this information to gain a strategic overview of case reviews in the area, which empowers school to learn lessons so that these failings do not happen again.
- Pupil voice in school about safeguarding is carried out termly, findings acted upon, and practice/curriculum improved where necessary.
- Pupils confidently articulate safeguarding procedures in their school.
- Site manager and Headteacher ensure site safety both internally and externally and carry out weekly site walks. Notes are kept and disseminated to staff so that they are aware of strengths and areas for development.
- Risk assessments are written and evaluated where appropriate and signed off by HT/DHT in HT absence. Any training staff require in this area is delivered.
- In collaboration with an outside agency or body school leaders carry out regular file audits and ask the question- What lessons do the school learn from this?
- Single central record is updated to include training, safer recruitment, reference checks, DBS, updated personal details etc.
- Procedures around when a member of staff returns to work are taken into account and they are fully briefed on what they have missed during their absence.
- Regular training is delivered and staff are then given quizzes after the training to elicit their understanding and highlight any potential misconceptions.
- Any community-based issues that are ad-hoc are addressed through the curriculum, which shows a responsive and fluid curriculum.
- Schools consolidate links with the Police, School Nurse and Fire service etc so that safety sessions are delivered to the appropriate age groups in school.
- Schools celebrate Safeguarding week each year and highlight the importance of issues such as NSPCC campaigns.
- Key performance indicators – i.e., serious incidents, attendance, experience multiple exclusions, at risk of being permanently excluded from school, case reviews, physical restraint, racist, homophobic bullying etc. – impact on

achievement are tracked and reported to Local Governing Boards. Any patterns/ trends that emerge are identified and acted upon using a solution focussed approach.

- Parent/family friendly paper work is used and considered when reporting things such as serious incident review or restraint. These include the voice of the child and parents/carers.
- School website displays the trust policy and school policy.
- The school website has a three-click rule so that parents/carers can find information easily as and when they need to.
- A charter for parents/carers on how we keep their children safe is included on the school website.
- The school website contains useful phone numbers/ contact details for agencies etc should any parents/carers be distressed and need support.
- The school website contains a link for adults and children to access to report concerns or seek support from school staff.