



**LAURUS**

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TRUST

## **Safeguarding Policy**

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## 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-centred. 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 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 for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's 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.

*("Working Together to Safeguarding Children" DfE 2015)*

### CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITION:

Child Protection is a part of the safeguarding agenda. It refers to the action that is required to be undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

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 or neglect 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 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.

## 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 is 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

Emerging issues and themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the [Local Authority \(LA\)](#) and local Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) to ensure a multi-agency awareness and that strategies are developed.

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 SSCB 'endorsed' Basic Awareness training and all new staff, as part of their induction, access safeguarding training within the first term of their employment/placement.

## 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 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 or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**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:** the detriment caused to children by the harmful and bullying behaviour of other children can be significant. This may involve single incidents or ongoing physical, sexual or emotional (including verbal) harm perpetrated by a single child or by groups / gangs of children. Such harm or abuse will be referred to the Multi-agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) or Police and other agencies as appropriate and further advice and guidance sought.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust will ensure that every member of staff and person working on behalf of the Trust:

- Knows the name of the DSL and any deputies in their school and understands his/her role and responsibilities.
- Understands they have an individual responsibility to refer safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Will receive training at the point of induction so that they know:
  - their personal responsibility / code of conduct / teaching standards
  - SSCB child protection procedures and how to access them
  - the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse at the earliest opportunity
  - how to support and respond to a child who discloses abuse/ significant harm
  - their duty concerning unsafe practices of a colleague.
  - the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff **only** on a need to know basis
  - the school will undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement with other agencies wherever this is appropriate.
  - the school will ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of their obligations re: Child Protection by intervention as and when appropriate.
  - to develop effective links with relevant agencies in relation to safeguarding (child protection)
  - to ensure that, where there are unmet needs, an assessment of early help is initiated
  - to send appropriate representatives to case conferences, core groups, child protection review meetings and LAC reviews and PEP Meetings.

WE will notify any Lead Social Worker if:

- a student subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) is excluded (fixed term or permanent)
- there is an unexplained absence of a student on a CPP of more than 2 days or 1 day following a weekend, or as agreed as part of a CPP.
- if a child is missing and there is a need to follow Stockport's policy and any statutory guidance on Children Missing Education (CME).
- We will also notify the Virtual School if a LAC student is excluded.

## SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS

### Vulnerable Students

Particular vigilance will be exercised in respect of students who are the subjects of Child Protection Plans and any incidents or concerns involving these children will be reported immediately to the lead Social Worker. If the student in question is a Looked After Child (LAC), this will also be brought to the notice of the Designated Teacher with responsibility for LAC. If a student discloses that they have witnessed domestic violence or it is suspected that they may be living in a household, which is affected by family violence, this will be referred to the DSL. The Trust acknowledges the additional needs for support and protection of children who are vulnerable by virtue of disability, homelessness, refugee/asylum seeker status, the effects of substance abuse, mental health and learning disability within the family, those who are young carers, mid-year admissions and students who are excluded from school or subject to a managed transfer. We acknowledge that children who are affected by abuse or neglect may demonstrate their needs and distress through their words, actions, behaviour, demeanour, schoolwork or other children. The Trust has a strong commitment to an anti-bullying policy and will consider all coercive acts and inappropriate child on child behaviour and sexual activity within a safeguarding context.

The Trust will endeavour to support vulnerable students through:

- Its ethos and culture which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; giving students a sense of being valued.
- Its behaviour policy -aimed at supporting vulnerable students in school. All staff will agree a consistent approach, working to support children in developing positive behaviour.
- Liaison with other appropriate agencies which support the student.
- Developing supportive relationships.
- Recognition that children living in difficult home environments are vulnerable and are in need of support and protection.
- Monitoring student welfare, keeping accurate records and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary.
- Ensuring designated safeguarding staff and their team have the opportunity to attend face to face SSCB training and network updates. (For example safeguarding child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs / alcohol substance misuse, Female Genital Mutilation-FGM, etc.)
- Ensuring information is transferred safely and securely when a student with a child protection record transfers to another school. Also notifying Key Workers or Social Workers where a child leaves school (as appropriate)

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING NEEDS

The Trust acknowledges the findings of Serious Case Reviews, local learning reviews and audits. Findings are shared with all staff as part of a culture of improvement and learning. The DSL ensures s/he has information from SSCB in relation to learning reviews and ensures this information is passed on to staff to promote improvement in respect of safeguarding. As part of our ongoing culture of vigilance and development we will share learning and responses from any other relevant issues to ensure we are offering the safest environment for our students and staff.

In the Trust we have staff that are trained and can support colleagues to identify and respond to:

- Neglect
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both student and parent)
- Child sexual exploitation / trafficked children
- Children missing education
- Domestic abuse
- Peer relationship abuse
- Peer abuse
- Risky behaviours
- Sexual health needs
- Obesity/malnutrition
- On line grooming
- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying, including homophobic, racist, gender and disability. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010.
- Self-Harm
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Young carers
- The potential additional needs of some learners such as- Looked After Children (LAC), previously LAC, those who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and children whose families are seeking asylum.
- How an Education Health Care (EHC) plan links with other safeguarding processes

The DSL and their deputy, in line with local and national guidance, receive regular training and updates to equip them with the skills and knowledge to deliver in this role. A DSL is always available to school staff when school is open including before and after school activity.

Laurus Trust staff contribute to assessments and actively support multi- agency planning for children. Staff have an understanding of the Stockport Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Intervention model and make decisions based on a child's development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors to support referrals.

In contributing to meetings, in addition to information about the child's academic functioning, the school provides information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's experiences of life as evidenced by observations or information provided through the multi-agency forum.

## EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

Laurus Trust seek to protect children and young people from the influences of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to;

- Extremist Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology
- Islamic extremist ideology
- Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups
- Extremist animal rights movements.

The current threat from terrorism and extremist groups in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people. Groups may seek to influence vulnerable children and involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

The Laurus Trust is clear that where there is concern in respect of exploitation of this kind it will be treated as safeguarding concern.

Prevention work and reductions of risks will include the SMSC, PSHE curriculum, SEND policy, assembly policy, integration of students by gender and SEN, the application of the anti-bullying policy and a commitment to building and maintaining an inclusive and fair school environment and community. We will apply an appropriate schools letting policy. Whilst the education of children is the prime purpose of our schools it is recognised that our schools operate in the wider community. Its facilities are therefore only available to local groups when this does not conflict with either the interests of its students or the wellbeing and workload of its staff.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

The Trust pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016 and with reference to the 'Position of Trust' offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the Trust is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

We do this by:

Operating safer recruitment practices including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and reference checks, verifying identity, academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history and ensuring the person has the right to work in the UK. Our practices also includes undertaking interviews and checking if individuals are barred or prohibited from working with children in accordance with DBS and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. In line with statutory guidance we maintain a single central record to evidence checks completed for staff and volunteers working in our schools community. This document is reviewed termly by a senior member of staff and the Safeguarding Governor.

Every member of staff (including supply staff) has a 'safeguarding induction' and we ensure that staff and volunteers adhere to a published code of conduct and other relevant professional standards at all times. This extends to before and after school activities. Staff and visitors are aware of the requirements for social media/ on-line conduct. Other professionals and visitors to our schools are made aware of the requirement and expectations we have in respect of safeguarding our children.

We ensure that:

- Any disciplinary proceedings against staff related to Child Protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016" and SSCB, LADO and HR Policy, procedures and guidance.
- All staff and other adults on school sites are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with students and parents/carers, following the Code of Conduct.
- Adequate risk assessments are in for volunteers and holiday activities (directly related to school).
- Staff are clear how to raise a concern, where to find 'whistleblowing policies' and are confident to report concerns of misconduct.

## GOVERNING BODY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Governing Bodies fully recognise their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with Government guidance and pays particular regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016).

The Governing Bodies have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the school:

- Have robust safeguarding procedures in place.
- Operates safer recruitment procedures and appropriate checks are carried out on newly appointed staff and other adults working on the school site.
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site.

- Has appointed a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and Child Protection issues.
- Will take steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to safeguarding arrangements.
- Is supported by the Governing Body nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Head of School; this is the Chair.
- Carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Carries out an annual safeguarding Audit in consultation with the Governing body.

As the safeguarding of students is a function of the Local Authority (LA). The Trust requires all schools to have their own Safeguarding Policy which details the relevant local referral procedures.