



BEACON EDUCATION
AMBITION RESPECT EXCELLENCE

Overarching Safeguarding Statement

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1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age.

Wherever the term 'parent' is used, this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carer, legal guardian etc.

Wherever the term 'Headteacher' is used, this also refers to any Manager with the equivalent responsibility for children.

Wherever the term 'school' is used, this also includes any wrap around care provided by the school.

In the case of academies, the proprietor is Beacon Education.

2. INTRODUCTION

All those working in education can contribute to the safeguarding and protection of the welfare of a child in need. According to the DfE, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring 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 outcomes.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. 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.

The DfE statutory guidance, "Keeping Children Safe in Education", is our first point of reference for child protection and child welfare issues in school. The guidance has been issued to read and be followed by:

- School Senior Leadership Teams
- Parent and Community Group members
- Members of the Academy Improvement Board
- Trust Board Directors

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

This Child Protection statement must be read in conjunction with the Trust's Overarching Safeguarding Statement and other relevant policies and procedures.

3. ETHOS

Within Beacon Education the health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work or volunteer here. All our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or disability. They have a right to be safe in our academies. This is enhanced by the implementation of various learning and safeguarding policies.

We are also committed to establishing a safe physical environment in which children can learn and develop, both personally and academically, and achieve success in the following, as stated in the Children Act 2004:

- Be healthy (physically, mentally and emotionally);
- Stay safe (protection from harm and neglect);
- Enjoy and achieve (via education, training and recreation);
- Make a positive contribution to the academy community and general society;
- Achieve social and economic well-being.

Beacon Education regards Child Protection as an essential task of all its staff, Directors, Members and visitors/volunteers who come into its academy communities. We are committed to protecting our children.

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in Beacon Education, whether from internal sources – pupils, staff, visiting adults, PCG or AIB members etc, or external sources – school community, external agencies or individuals.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by pupils, staff, visitors or parents will always be challenged and, where appropriate, dealt with. Where misconduct by a teacher is proven, the matter will be referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) (formerly NCTL) for their consideration. Misconduct by other staff will be dealt with under normal Trust Disciplinary Procedures.

We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject within our academies and, where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils, reasonably practicable steps are taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

We will ensure the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning and that child protection is included in the curriculum (including online) to help children stay safe, recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they can go to for help and advice. We provide a curriculum that will help to equip our children with the skills they need, including materials and learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills and protective behaviours. We recognise that a more personalised or contextualised approach may be required for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children. The PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) curriculum and, where relevant, Sex and Relationships Education, will include elements of how children can recognise different risks in different situations and how to behave in response.

It will equip children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe and empower them to feel safe.

Beacon Education recognises the importance of creating and promoting a positive, supportive, neutral and secure environment where pupils can develop a sense of being valued and heard, and where they feel safe, secure and respected.

We are aware that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age, which originate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet; and at times pupils may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language. It is imperative that our pupils and parents see the academies within the Trust as a safe place where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way and where our teachers and other adults encourage and facilitate this.

Where a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we recognise that, as the host school, we remain responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will work closely with the alternative provision provider to ensure the needs of the pupil are appropriately met.

Every effort will be made to work in partnership with other agencies and seek to establish effective working relationships with parents and other colleagues. This will enable the Directors to fulfil their duty to have arrangements about safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children introduced by the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) in place.

4. STATEMENT AIMS

There are three main aims to our Child Protection Statement:

- Prevention:** By creating a positive atmosphere and providing high quality teaching and pastoral support to pupils;
- Protection:** By following agreed procedures and ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns;
- Support:** By providing support for pupils and Trust staff and for children who may have been, or are being, abused.

5. ENTITLEMENT

We accept and embrace our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments). Each child in our family of academies, regardless of their background or home circumstances, could be the victim of child abuse, whether it is by a parent, another child or peer, an adult known to them or a complete stranger.

They are, therefore, all entitled to the same degree of protection and support. Each child in our community will also develop the skills appropriate to their age and understanding which could enable prevention of abuse by learning about keeping safe, and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

We implement a Single Equality Scheme (SES) with objectives to promote equality of opportunity for children in our care, including support for children with special educational needs or disabilities, those identified as 'carers' and children who are deemed "looked after".

6. CHILD PROTECTION DURING PANDEMICS

During periods of uncertainty, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is particularly important to safeguard children who may be at an increased risk of abuse, harm and exploitation from a range of sources. The procedures which follow the statement will be adhered to at all times. However, we recognise that amendments or additions may be required in order to support those directly affected by the pandemic. All children are vulnerable, but some may be especially so during periods where they or their households are self-isolating. It is equally important to safeguard families, with parents facing significant pressures to continue to protect and promote the welfare of their children. These parents may already be struggling, and so with additional pressure the likelihood of harm or significant harm may increase. In all known or emerging Child Protection cases, staff (with safeguarding responsibilities) will be mindful of the effects a pandemic may have on families and children.

Additional issues which may need consideration or action include:

- Poverty – where families are unable to meet the basic needs of children, this can, in some cases, lead to an increased likelihood of abuse, neglect and harm.
- Reduced access to support networks – resulting in children who are abused and harmed being unseen and unheard.
- Accommodation – vulnerable children and families can often face challenges with their accommodation. They may have temporary accommodation or a lack of space which is exacerbated by the fact that the whole family may be self-isolating and unable to leave the family home for exercise and social contact, which leads to an increase in neglect and abuse.
- Domestic abuse – a pandemic situation can disrupt routines and behaviours, both positively and negatively, and it is important to be aware of how tension can escalate to violence and abusive behaviours between family members.
- Substance abuse – Unhealthy coping mechanisms can involve a reliance on substances that provide relief and escapism by adults and children alike. Substances alter the behaviour of parents and create a lack of safety for children and young people. It is important to understand how families manage stresses faced during a pandemic – with associated worries around living costs, employment and health.
- Neglect – self or household isolation can place children at a greater risk of neglect. This is compounded by the increased economic challenges and poverty that families may be facing, and by the increased exposure of children to neglectful environments.
- Children with additional needs – children and young people with additional needs and disabilities are more likely to be abused or neglected than non-disabled children, and less likely to disclose harm due to communication or other difficulties. With localised outbreaks that may affect the opening of schools or require self-isolation, families may find increased time at home and additional caring responsibilities a strain.

We will consider how to seek the voice of the child during these times and whether online or telephone contact is sufficient to safeguard their wellbeing and safety. This is especially important where communication difficulties make these means less effective.

7. THE ROLE OF THE TRUST BOARD (DIRECTORS)

The Trust, Local Governing Body and the Senior Leadership Team, in particular the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies, will make themselves aware of, and follow, the new local partnership arrangements. Locally, the three safeguarding partners (health, Police and school) will make arrangements to work together with appropriate agencies (including schools) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

Beacon Education has a nominated Director, associated with the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, who will liaise with the designated officer(s) from the relevant Local Authority and partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse made against any Headteacher or member of the Academy Improvement Board.

The Trust Board is accountable for ensuring that their Academies:

- Contribute to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' – July 2018;
- Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contribute to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children with Child Protection Plans;
- Have effective policies and procedures in place for child protection and staff behaviour (part of the Whole School Behaviour/Learning/Relationships Policy) and the Staff Code of Conduct, which are provided to staff and appropriate volunteers on induction;
- Have safeguarding arrangements which take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP);
- Actively promote fundamental British Values as part of the Trust's broad and balanced curriculum to ensure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development;
- Assesses the risk, taking local context into account, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology;
- Have a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff and other adults who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers not in 'regulated activity' are appropriately supervised;
- Have a written Recruitment & Selection Policy in place;
- Have at least one person on any appointment panel who has undertaken Safer Recruitment training;
- Have procedures in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers that comply with DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'; SSCP local partnership arrangements;
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations against other children. This will generally be in accordance with the school specific policy in the first instance. Other more serious allegations will be dealt with following advice from the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership;

- Have a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding with the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff, liaising with the Local Authority and working with other agencies;
- Have a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after or previously looked after and to ensure that this person has appropriate training;
- Ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after or previously looked after children safe and have the information they need in relation to a child's 'looked after' legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full Care Order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility;
- Operate a whistleblowing procedure and will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to its attention without delay;
- Have appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education settings, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future;
- Ensure the child's wishes or feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children, through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback;
- Ensure staff members do not promise confidentiality to the child and always act in the best interests of the child;
- Child Protection will be a standard agenda item at both Local School Councils and Trust Board meetings;
- Undertake a full audit of the safeguarding systems and procedures in place at each academy, on an annual basis.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

This statement and supporting procedures apply to all who come into contact with children in the school, including:

- Teachers
- Supply teachers
- Learning Support staff
- Teaching Assistants
- Midday Supervisors
- Admin staff
- Meals Supervisors
- Caretakers
- Cleaners
- Visiting students
- Parent helpers/volunteers
- Governors
- Other visitors, including contractors.

This statement should be read in conjunction with other related school policies and procedures.

9. REVIEW

This statement will be reviewed annually (as a minimum) and more often should legislation or statutory guidance change.

