



Focus Learning Trust

Safeguarding Governance

2018

What it means to Trustees, Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In order to assist those with specific responsibility in the governance of safeguarding this short guide has been prepared. It is intended to be a useful aide-mémoire, assist in generating good conversation and detail the structured approach we will adopt as a Trust in our safeguarding arrangements. It is not intended to replace legislation or statutory guidance most notably Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

2. What is Safeguarding?

- 2.1. The key statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018' details safeguarding 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;
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 2.2. On the basis of this definition it is clear that safeguarding is much wider than just child protection and involves a school adopting a holistic approach to the wider safety of children. KCSIE (2018) now describes contextual safeguarding and that it is important for professionals to understand the wider social sphere beyond school in any decision making.
- 2.3. In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales the term safeguarding is also used in its widest sense to include the promotion, prevention and protection of children.
- 2.4. Truly effective safeguarding occurs when it is a transparent part of everyday school life, is supported by strong leadership and inquisitive governance with all of the school family knowing and understanding their role.

3. What does good Focus Learning Trust campus governance look like?

- 3.1. Focus Learning Trust strives to have truly effective governance arrangements with an honesty and approach that supports all our people to deliver quality safeguarding; this is entirely consistent with our strategic approach and the OneSchool Global vision.
- 3.2. As a Trust we will look to a positive two-way relationship between those with specific responsibility for safeguarding at campus level and those at National Support Office. It is also very important that campuses build and maintain relationships with their Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Authority so that best practice and learning is quickly understood and acted upon both locally and shared nationally.

4. Safeguarding Trustee

- 4.1. The Safeguarding Trustee (ST) is a vital component of the overall effectiveness of the safeguarding response in the school. They must understand the relevant guidance and legislation and be confident in challenging senior leaders on how the school monitors and improves the safety and behaviour of pupils.
- 4.2. The ST will;
 - Understand educational safeguarding arrangements;
 - Have a strong relationship with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and be a critical friend to that individual;
 - Report back to the trustees on how effective safeguarding is – this will include scrutiny of the annual safeguarding audit, bi-monthly reporting and safeguarding section on the School Improvement Plan;
 - Make sure that there are effective systems in place to keep vulnerable children safe;
 - Check that the school is compliant with statutory guidance ;
 - Check whether there is a consistency of practice in safeguarding across the entire school.
- 4.3. The ST must ensure safeguarding is discussed at the Trustees Board with trustees being inquisitive as to the safeguarding agenda. It would be useful for the Board to maintain four important questions during any such discussion:
 - Are we as a campus compliant with legislation and best practice?
 - Are we constantly improving?
 - Is there evidence to support constant practice?
 - Is there evidence that what we are doing is making a difference?

5. Head Teacher

- 5.1. The Head Teacher as the senior leader on the campus sets the tone and importance of the safeguarding agenda; that it is a constant thread and not a bolt on is important. They must ensure that all staff and volunteers feel able and confident to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with children and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. Such a culture is vital to consistent safe practice. It is important that parents too understand the cultural direction, expectations and how it is to be delivered.
- 5.2. It is the Head who must ensure that policies and procedures are implemented and followed by staff. This will include any initial safeguarding induction with no member of staff working with children without such induction.
- 5.3. The Head must ensure that the DSL has the time and capacity to discharge their duties.
- 5.4. The Head will ensure that the FLT campus bi-monthly safeguarding report is completed and submitted to the National Support Office (NSO). Practically this may well be completed by the DSL. The report itself should be discussed with the Board of Trustees with dedicated time on the agenda for safeguarding issues to be considered.
- 5.5. The Head will ensure there is a specific section in the school improvement plan for safeguarding ensuring that any campus learning is considered within the context of its value and importance to all schools in the Trust. Such learning will be shared via the monthly report with the NSO for dissemination Trust-wide.

- 5.6. Although not a statutory requirement the Head will ensure that their Campus completes any annual safeguarding audit for schools led on by their Local Authority. This will provide base line and consistency, build local professional relationships and further enhance any Trust-wide learning.

6. Designated Safeguarding Lead

- 6.1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is critical to the safeguarding response at campus level. They must work well with the Safeguarding Trustee to ensure that both strategic and operational activity is effective. The DSL must meet regularly with the ST and would be expected to consider the bi-monthly campus report, safeguarding issues on the School Improvement Plan, key safeguarding activity, training, new/emerging issues and referrals.
- 6.2. Key aspects of the DSL role include;
- a) Working with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure safeguarding is at the heart of the school ethos with all staff supported in knowing how to recognise and respond to potential concerns
 - b) Managing referrals liaising with the Local Authority and police where appropriate
 - c) Updating their knowledge and connections with the Local Authority
 - d) Raising awareness of safeguarding across the whole school family and reviewing the safeguarding policy at least annually
 - e) Keeping accurate and timely records of safeguarding issues/concerns
 - f) Delivering regular training and updates to staff and trustees.

7. National Support Office

- 7.1. The National Support Office (NSO) have a number of staff with safeguarding experience able to support and advise. The National Safeguarding Advisor will be able to help both strategically and operationally with any support required.
- 7.2. NSO is responsible for a number of strategic aspects. These will include;
- a) Publishing a Safeguarding Strategy consistent with our values and ethos
 - b) Developing and maintaining Trust Training Strategy
 - c) Holding a national Safeguarding Improvement Plan drawing on issues highlighted by campuses that require wider organisational change as well as reflecting the national landscape
 - d) Providing templates for key policies that can be adopted locally; these will be reviewed regularly
 - e) Holding a national Safeguarding Risk Register. Trustees, Heads and DSLs are encouraged to share campus risks with the NSO for consideration of wider implication.
 - f) Holding a national Communications Strategy
- 7.3. NSO will also work with campuses to support DSLs, Trustees and Heads in the free flow of safeguarding updates and changes to practice.

8. National Safeguarding Committee

- 8.1. The National Safeguarding Committee (NSC) reports to the National Leadership Team and is where strategic safeguarding issues are discussed.
- 8.2. The NSC will publish both a terms of reference and recorded minutes of meetings; these minutes might on occasion be redacted to remove sensitive issues.

9. Appendices

i. Key documents

Focus Learning Trust

- 1 - FLT Safeguarding Strategy
- 2 - FLT Half-termly Safeguarding Report for campuses
- 3 - FLT National Safeguarding Continuous Improvement Plan
- 4 - FLT National Safeguarding Training Strategy
- 5 - FLT National Safeguarding Communication Strategy
- 6 - FLT National Safeguarding Risk Register

England

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Governance Handbook \(DfE 2017\)](#)
- [School Inspection Service \(SIS\) – Handbook for Inspecting Independent Schools](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

Ireland (Northern)

- [DoE NI Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools](#)
- [Protocol for joint investigation by social workers and police officers of alleged and suspected cases of child abuse – Northern Ireland](#)
- [UNOCINI Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland \(SBNI\) Procedures Manual November 2017](#)

Scotland

- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#)

Wales

- [All Wales Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Keeping Learners safe in Education Jan 2015](#)

ii. FLT Governance Chart

- [Click here to access your Governance Structure](#)