



FOCUS  
SCHOOL

Focus Learning Trust

# Safeguarding Communications Strategy

2018

# Safeguarding Communications Strategy

## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the approach, guiding principles and protocols for safeguarding communications by Focus Learning Trust (FLT). It applies to both schools and the National Support Office.

It is intended to complement the national FLT Safeguarding Strategy and provide a framework for effective and consistent messages of a safeguarding nature.

## 2. Background

The safeguarding and protection of children is the responsibility of the whole school family and sits at the heart of our schools. There is a statutory and moral duty to protect our children and that they feel safe.

FLT is committed to:

- Complying with legislation and regulation.
- Offering best-practice and professional advice in an authentic environment with knowledgeable confident staff and volunteers empowered to deliver safeguarding practice.
- Working with and in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Promoting a culture where safeguarding is a golden thread throughout our schools and not the specialist function of a few.

## 3. Communications Objectives

- To raise awareness and support for safeguarding children who may be at risk of abuse in whatever form within our school community.
- To ensure that everyone understands their role in relation safeguarding, in particular the responsibility and accountability for safeguarding at a local level including the interaction with Local Authorities.
- To make it as easy as possible for our schools to navigate constantly changing legislation, policies, procedures and DBS requirements and provide clear and easy-to-understand guidance and access to resources.
- To share best-practice with our schools around approaches to safeguarding and specific learning from past cases/investigations.

- To enhance our school community understanding of preventative practice and early help around safeguarding issues.
- To respond effectively and in a timely manner to media enquiries related to safeguarding matters. With all due regard to the legal framework and confidentiality.

## 4. Strategy

The strategy is built on communications relating to two distinct aspects;

- Live safeguarding cases
  - Our safeguarding approach (support for schools, new initiatives, training, governance/compliance etc).
- a) Live safeguarding cases**
- FLT schools will engage with the Local Authority and other key stakeholders to ensure, particularly if media engagement is necessary, there is a constant message and approach for responding to all live safeguarding cases.
  - It may be appropriate to convene a core group to advise on any significant safeguarding concerns from a Trust perspective. A member of the National Leadership Team, the National Safeguarding Advisor, a Regional Principal and/or Head Teacher should be part of any such group. How, and in what capacity, that group will interact with wider statutory partners will be determined including identifying the role of media lead.
- b) Our safeguarding approach**
- Opportunities to pro-actively promote the work of schools and the Trust should be sought in this area. Campus activity, explaining to the wider school community what is expected, actually happening and why, should be encouraged.
  - Through Canvas, a safeguarding office function will be available to store/reference relevant material for staff.

## 5. Guiding Principles

The following overarching principles guide our safeguarding communications:

- Openness and transparency.
- Survivor-informed responses and communications.
- The importance of apology and acknowledgement that the effects of abuse are life-long.
- Justice and fairness – when dealing with both the survivor and alleged perpetrator.

Specifically, when working with the media on live safeguarding cases:

**FLT and campuses will:**

- Treat the matter in confidence, as a priority, with openness and with the seriousness that it warrants.
- Plan the media response through the core group process. This may well include the option of an on-demand statement.
- Respond to media enquiries helpfully, on a factual basis and in a timely manner
- Respond to media enquiries with due reference and regard to the statutory partner response.

**FLT and campuses will not:**

- Pro-actively offer any comment or statement on any case.
- Be defensive.
- Undermine any formal proceedings.
- Speculate.

## 6. Potential Target Audiences

**a) Live safeguarding cases**

- Victim
- Local Authority
- Police
- Probation
- Media
- School family
- Local community and public

**b) FLT and campus**

**Primary:**

- School Trustees
- Head teachers
- Teaching staff
- Volunteers
- Decision making bodies: National Safeguarding Committee, National Leadership Team
- Local Authority

**Secondary:**

- Wider school family
- The public (via media)