South Pennine Academies

An excellent education for everyone

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Date of Implementation	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2027
Approval by Trustees	September 2026
Policy Reviewer	Head of Safeguarding

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1. Policy Statement

South Pennine Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people.

We expect all staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, contractors, agency staff and visitors to share this commitment, and play their part in protecting students from harm and working in the best interests of the child.

We maintain an open, positive and child-centred safeguarding culture where:

- Children are listened to.
- Children's wishes and feelings are taken into account.
- Concerns are identified and acted upon promptly.
- Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Children feel safe and know who they can talk to.
- Appropriate support is provided at the earliest opportunity.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, providing support, and protecting children from harm.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Agency and supply staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Governors
- Contractors
- Apprentices
- Students on placement
- Visitors working with children

This policy applies at all times, including:

- During the school day
- Educational visits
- Alternative provision
- Extended school provision
- Remote learning
- Online and digital environments

We are committed to multi-agency working in line with the relevant local safeguarding partnership.

Kirklees Safeguarding Partnership
Calderdale Safeguarding Partnership
Oldham Safeguarding Partnership

3. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support 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 children grow up in safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to activity undertaken to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Safeguarding includes protecting children from risks occurring:

- At home
- In school
- In the community
- Online

At South Pennine Academies we recognise that some children face an increased risk of abuse and may face additional barriers in respect of recognising or disclosing abuse. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We strive to ensure that children are afforded the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

4. Safeguarding Culture

South Pennine Academies Trust is committed to creating a strong safeguarding culture.

We will:

- Place children's welfare at the centre of decision making.
- Take all concerns seriously.
- Listen to children and act on what they tell us.
- Maintain professional curiosity.
- Challenge poor practice.
- Work collaboratively with families where appropriate.
- Share information effectively and lawfully.
- Support children to understand how to stay safe.
- Promote attendance and engagement in education.

- Ensure safeguarding is embedded throughout the curriculum and daily practice.

Everyone working within the Trust has a responsibility to contribute to this culture.

5. Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Cathryn Reynolds-Browne
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs): Naznunnisha Ismail, Sarah Barlow, Serann Thornton & Nicole Robinson.
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Sophie Walker.
Safeguarding Link Governor: Luke Ricketts.

Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead:
- Lindsey Curry, Head of Safeguarding

Trust Director Responsible for Safeguarding:
- Alison Black, Chief Executive Officer

Trust Inclusion Lead:
- Debbie Kelly, Director of Inclusion

Safeguarding Trustee:
- Claire Hewitt

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 All Staff

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of everyone and all staff have a role to play in identifying concerns early, providing help and support and preventing concerns from escalating.

All staff will undergo safeguarding training at induction, this training will be updated regularly, at least annually, and will be provided with regular updates to ensure that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All staff must:
- Read and understand Part One of KCSIE.
- Undertake safeguarding training on induction and annually thereafter.
- Know the identity of the DSL and DDSLs.
- Recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Understand indictors of potential mental health issues.
- Understand the academy's procedures for recording concerns and passing information to DSLs.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Record concerns accurately and promptly.

- Understand local safeguarding referral procedures, including the Family Help process.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Never ignore concerns.
- Reassure children who disclose abuse.
- Never promise confidentiality to a child.
- Maintain a professional curiosity and speak to the DSL about any concerns they may have about a child.

All staff will understand that children may:
- Not recognise abuse.
- Be unable to explain concerns.
- Delay disclosure.
- Never make a direct disclosure.
- Professional curiosity must always be exercised.

Teachers, including the Principal, have a responsibility to:
- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties, as outlined in the 'Teacher's Standards'.
- Personally report any cases to the police where it appears that an act of FGM has been carried out as soon as possible.

6.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The DSL will:
- Manage safeguarding concerns and referrals.
- Liaise with Children's Social Care.
- Work with safeguarding partners.
- Make appropriate referrals to external agencies including Children's Social Care, The Channel programme, and the Police.
- Attend multi-agency safeguarding meetings including child protection conferences, strategy meetings and core groups.
- Maintain safeguarding records.
- Respond to domestic abuse notifications providing support to children and families as appropriate.
- Monitor vulnerable pupils.
- Coordinate support plans.
- Promote Family Help and early intervention.
- Lead safeguarding training ensuring that staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates.
- Oversee online safety arrangements.
- Oversee filtering and monitoring systems.
- Support staff and provide safeguarding advice.

DSLs and Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same standard and will update their formal training at least every two years, they will ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated regularly in addition to this training.

During term time the DSL (or deputy) will be available during school hours to discuss any safeguarding concern.

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in KCSIE 2026.

6.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy and will:

- Ensure safeguarding is effective.
- Ensure there is an effective induction process for all staff (including volunteers) which includes safeguarding training.
- Support the DSL, ensuring that they have adequate training and resources and there is adequate cover if the DSL is not available.
- Ensure staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates.
- Ensure safer recruitment requirements are met.
- Manage allegations against staff.
- Ensure policies are implemented consistently.

6.4 Local Academy Board and Trustees

Governors and Trustees will:

- Ensure statutory compliance.
- Monitor safeguarding effectiveness.
- Receive safeguarding reports.
- Ensure appropriate challenge and scrutiny.
- Promote a culture of safeguarding.
- Ensure effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are adequately resourced.

6.5 Trust Safeguarding Lead

The Head of Safeguarding has oversight of safeguarding and child protection across the Trust and will:

- Support academies in dealing with safeguarding and child protection incidents.
- Conduct quality assurance reviews.
- Provide continuous professional development and training for DSLs.
- Support DSLs in their role, providing supervision, case discussion and advice.

7. Recognising Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Staff are aware of the four categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Deliberately causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse
Persistent emotional maltreatment including:
- Humiliation
- Intimidation
- Threats
- Verbal abuse
- Persistent criticism
- Name-calling
- Rejection

Sexual Abuse
Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity.
This may occur:
- Face to face
- Online
- Through technology
- Through AI-generated content

Neglect
Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs.

Staff are aware that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, at home or in a community setting and that children can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.

Parental behaviour may also indicate concern; staff will be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviour.

8. Children Who May Be More Vulnerable

Some children face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline, and understand that further barriers may exist when determining abuse, neglect or exploitation for these children.

This includes:
- Children with a social worker.
- Children subject to Child in Need plans.
- Children subject to Child Protection plans.
- Looked After Children.
- Previously Looked After Children.
- Care leavers.
- Children with SEND.
- Children with medical needs.
- Young carers.
- Children missing education.
- Children attending Alternative Provision.
- Children experiencing domestic abuse.

- Children with mental health difficulties.
- Children affected by parental substance misuse.
- Children with family members in prison.
- Pregnant pupils and teenage parents.
- Children who are gender-questioning.
- Children displaying harmful behaviours themselves.

Additional support and monitoring may be required in any of the above circumstances and staff will be particularly alert to identify the potential need for support.

When children are placed in Alternative Provision the academy retains responsibility for safeguarding and must ensure that the provider meets the needs of the pupil, has acceptable safeguarding processes in place.

Arrangements will be made to ensure that staff are aware of the locations of any child placed in Alternative Provision throughout the school day.

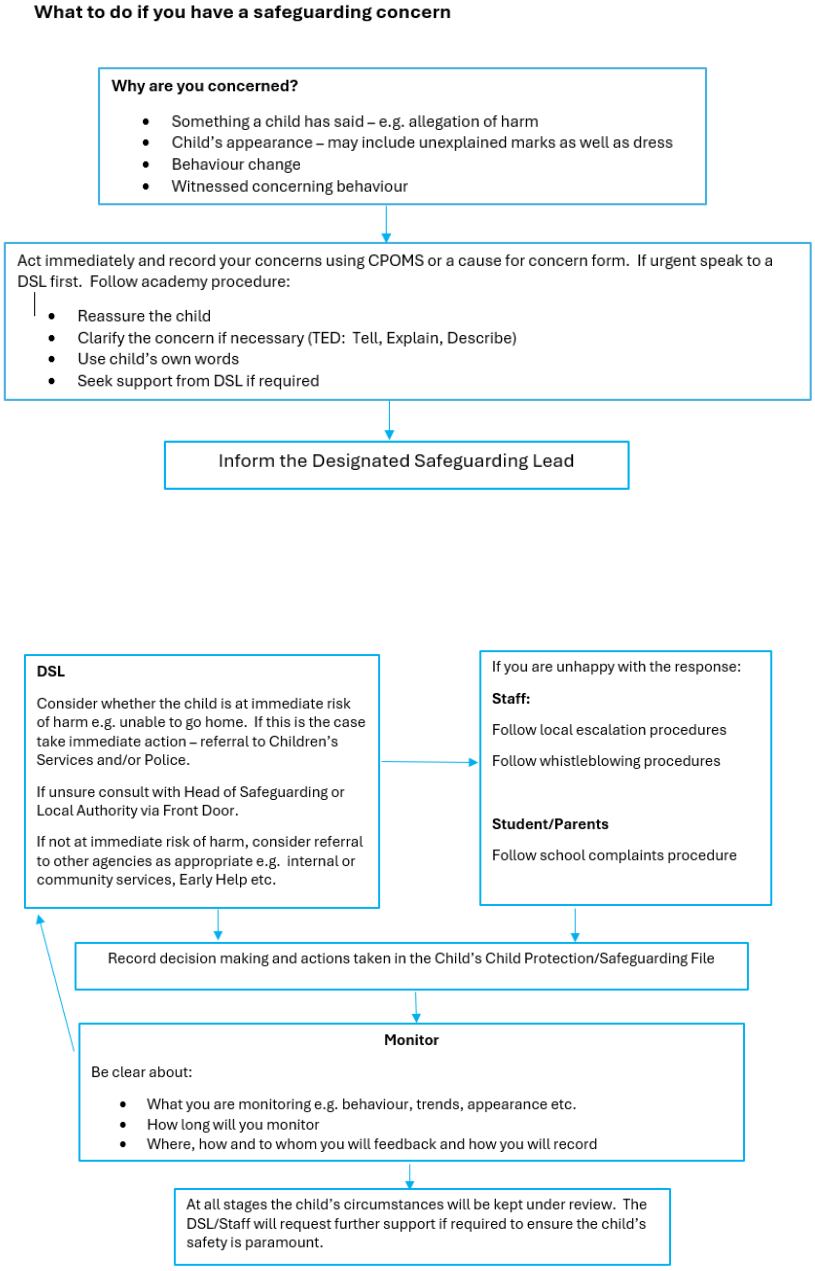
9. Child Protection Procedures

If a child is in immediate danger:
- Call 999.
- Contact Children's Social Care immediately.
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.

If a member of staff has a safeguarding concern:
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child.
- Do not investigate.
- Record the concern.
- Report immediately to the DSL or DDSL.
- Continue to support the child.

Staff must not:
- Promise confidentiality.
- Delay reporting.
- Conduct their own investigation.

Where appropriate, the DSL will:
- Refer to Children's Social Care.
- Refer to Police.
- Make a Family Help request.
- Seek professional consultation.
- Escalate concerns where progress is not made.



10. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible after an event/incident. If there is an immediate concern the DSL must be notified immediately. Visitors to the academy or staff without access to CPOMS will make a written record of the concern and pass this to the DSL without delay – this will be scanned onto CPOMS and actioned.

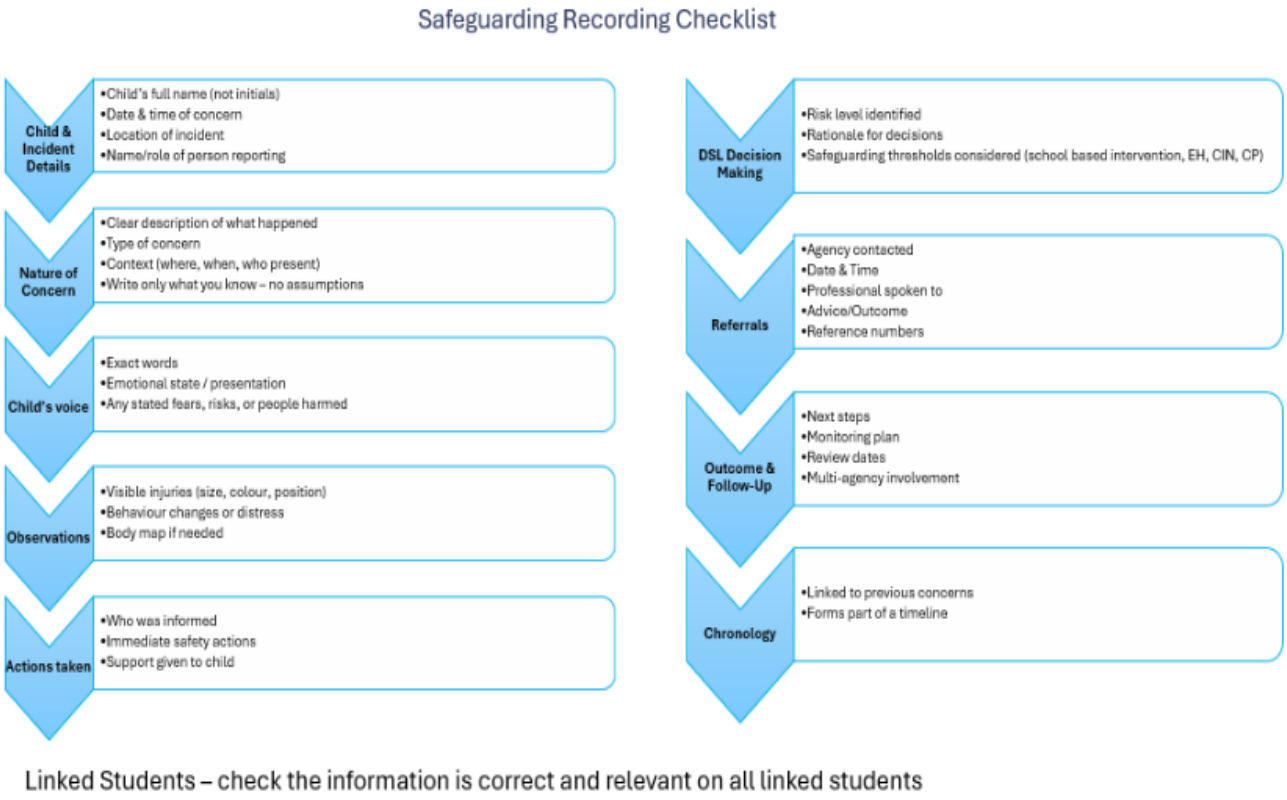
Records must:

- Be factual.
- Be accurate.

- Be completed promptly.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Include actions taken and outcomes.
- Include the rationale for decisions.

Safeguarding records will:
- Be stored securely.
- Be accessible only to authorised staff.
- Be retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Child protection records will transfer securely when a pupil moves school.



11. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information sharing is essential to safeguarding.

The Trust will:
- Share information lawfully.
- Follow UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation.
- Share information when necessary to safeguard children.
- Ensure information is proportionate and relevant.

The DSL will ensure that when a child is leaving the academy their child protection file is transferred securely as soon as possible, and within 5 days for

an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives.

In addition, the DSL will consider sharing appropriate information in advance of a child leaving particularly if the information would support an assessment of risk to others as well as the pupil concerned.

Where such information has been shared with the DSL in advance of a pupil arriving at the academy the DSL will assess the risk and determine whether support plan or risk assessment is required when the pupil arrives at the academy.

Fear of sharing information must never prevent professionals acting to protect a child.

The DfE Guidance on Information sharing provides further detail

12. Family Help and Early Intervention

The Trust is committed to identifying concerns early.

Staff are aware of:

- Universal support services.
- Community-based support.
- Targeted Family Help services.

The DSL will coordinate support and referrals where children or families require additional help.

Support will be considered before concerns escalate wherever possible.

13. Child-on-Child Abuse

The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse.
Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue, and staff are aware and will respond to behaviours and indicators of risk early to prevent escalation of risk or abuse.

Both the victim and the alleged perpetrator may require safeguarding assessment and support.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying.
- Cyberbullying.
- Prejudice-based abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Physical abuse.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.

- Image-based abuse.
- Sharing nude or semi-nude images.
- Up-skirting.
- Hazing or initiation behaviours.
- Abuse within intimate relationships.
- All incidents will be:
- Taken seriously.
- Recorded.
- Investigated.
- Risk assessed.
- Managed appropriately.

Victims will be supported and protected.

14. Specific Safeguarding Concerns

Staff will remain vigilant to all forms of safeguarding risk including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic Abuse
- Missing Children
- Honour-Based Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Prevent and Radicalisation
- Serious Violence
- Online Abuse
- Mental Health Concerns
- Homelessness
- Substance Misuse
- Youth Violence

Staff will report concerns immediately.

Staff and in particular the DSL will follow current operational guidance in relation to these issues and be aware of the additional information in KCSIE Annex A.

15. Online Safety

The use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside the school environment. At South Pennine Academies we strive to empower, protect and educate in the use of technology.

Online safety is a safeguarding issue.

The Trust recognises risks associated with:

- Social media.
- Gaming.
- Online exploitation.
- Cyberbullying.
- Grooming.
- Live streaming.
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images.
- Deepfakes.
- AI-generated abuse.
- Nudification applications.
- Image-based sexual abuse.
- Online misogyny.
- Misinformation and disinformation.
- Radicalisation.
- Financial scams.

The Trust will:
- Provide online safety education.
- Operate effective filtering systems.
- Operate effective monitoring systems.
- Respond appropriately to online safeguarding concerns.
- Review filtering and monitoring arrangements regularly.

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safeguarding (including oversight of filtering and monitoring systems) within the academy but will liaise, as necessary, with other staff.

The academy has filtering and monitoring in place to limit children's exposure to harmful content from the academy IT system. The DSL will conduct a review of the system annually to ensure it is working across all internet-connected devices and will make a record of this review.

16. Prevent Duty

The Trust will fulfil its statutory Prevent Duty.

Staff will:
- Complete Prevent training.
- Be alert to indicators of radicalisation.
- Report concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will make referrals to Prevent or Channel where appropriate.
- Calderdale – prevent@calderdale.gov.uk
- Kirklees – prevent@kirklees.gov.uk
- Oldham – Oldham Prevent online referral form - 0161 770 4196

17. Attendance and Children Missing Education

The Trust recognises that children missing education may be at increased risk of harm.

Attendance concerns will be:

- Monitored carefully.
- Investigated promptly.
- Escalated where necessary.

The Trust will comply with statutory Children Missing Education guidance and local authority requirements.

18. Safer Recruitment

The Trust is committed to developing and providing a safe culture ensuring that all steps are taken to recruit staff who are safe to work with our pupils and staff.

We will:

- Obtain enhanced DBS checks.
- Obtain barred list checks where required.
- Verify identity.
- Verify qualifications.
- Complete prohibition checks where required.
- Complete overseas checks where required.
- Obtain references.
- Maintain a Single Central Record.

At least one member of each interview panel will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

We expect all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children, and staff are reminded of the Staff Code of Conduct Policy, understanding that their behaviour and practice must be in line with this.

19. Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

The Trust will address all concerns regarding adults working with children. All staff must raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the academy safeguarding regime. All concerns or allegations will be taken seriously. This includes:

- Allegations meeting the harm threshold.
- Low-level concerns.
- Concerns about volunteers.
- Concerns about contractors.
- Concerns about supply staff.
- Concerns must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.
- Where concerns relate to the Headteacher, they must be reported to the CEO.
- Referrals to the LADO will be made where required.

The Trust operates a separate:

- Managing Allegations Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Staff can access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (Monday to Friday 8.00 am to 8.00 pm) or email help@nspcc.org.uk. All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) have an obligation to act if they are concerned that this policy does not reflect practice in the academy.

This should be done by notifying the DSL in the first instance and escalating these concerns to the Principal or the Trust Central Team if they feel that their concerns have not been acted upon.

20. Training

All staff will receive:

- Safeguarding induction.
- Annual safeguarding training.
- Regular safeguarding updates.
- Online safety training, including the expectations and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Prevent awareness training.

DSLs and Deputy DSLs will undertake enhanced safeguarding training and maintain ongoing professional development.

Pupils will receive training about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. This will be delivered via the RSHE programme and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

21. Use of Academy premises for non-school activities

If the academy premises are used outside of normal school activities by a community or third-party organisation assurance will be sought to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place.
This will follow the guidance in Keeping Children safe in out of school settings.

22. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following legislative changes.
- Following serious incidents.
- Following safeguarding reviews.
- Following local or national learning.

The Trust Board, Governors, DSLs and Trust Safeguarding Lead will monitor implementation of this policy and evaluate its effectiveness.

The DSL and Principal will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the Local Academy Board and the Head of Safeguarding will report to the Trustees.