Educate Together Academy Trust

Safeguarding Policy

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Version	Date	Summary of changes	Author
23.1	September 2023		CEO
24.1	September 2024	Ethos updated and document streamlined	CEO
25.1	October 2025	Updated links to most recent documentation	CEO
26.1	September 2026	KCSIE 2026, Working Together 2026 and related safeguarding updates; first page summary and revised policy wording.	CEO

1. Rights Respecting

1.1 In line with our ethos, we are a UNICEF Rights Respecting Trust. We uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the rights to protection from discrimination, abuse and exploitation, to be heard and to receive education and support. The child's best interests guide our decisions.

2. Introduction

2.1 Educate Together Academy Trust and the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) of all our schools recognise and enact their responsibilities under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We work with local safeguarding partners and other agencies to identify, assess and support children at risk of harm or experiencing harm.

2.2 This policy provides the overarching Trust principles and minimum arrangements for safeguarding and child protection. It applies to trustees, governors, employees, supply and trainee teachers, volunteers, visitors and contractors. Parents and carers are informed of relevant school procedures.

2.3 This policy must be read with each school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which sets out local procedures, named DSL and deputy contacts, cover arrangements, referral routes, LADO contact, local safeguarding partner arrangements and emergency response.

2.4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in contact with children and their families has a role to play. The Trust will safeguard and promote welfare by:

- **Protecting** children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental or physical 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**.
- Providing a safe environment in which **all** children and young people can learn and flourish.
- Acting promptly on any concern about a child's welfare, including online harm.
- Identifying children who may benefit from universal services or community based early help, targeted Family Help, or statutory intervention, and acting without delay where a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

3. Statutory guidance

- Working together to safeguard children (2026) sets out multi agency safeguarding arrangements, local assessment and referral pathways, universal services and community based early help, targeted Family Help and statutory intervention. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2C
- Keeping children safe in education (2026), effective 1 September 2026, is the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges. All staff must read Part One in full; leaders and governors must apply the relevant remaining parts. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school based providers (2026), section 3, applies alongside KCSIE where children aged 0 to 5 attend school based nursery or Reception.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

4. Core principles

4.1 Educate Together Academy Trust has four core principles that guides all of its work:

1) Equity-based
2) Aspirational
3) Collaborative
4) Child-centred

4.2 In our approach to safeguarding, Educate Together Academy Trust recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our general and specific duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. General duties include:

a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
c. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

4.3 We recognise that racism, discriminatory behaviour, misogyny and other prejudice-based harm can be safeguarding issues. We address incidents and patterns promptly and challenge systemic, institutional and individual discrimination.

4.4 We believe our role and responsibility as educators is to provide a **child-centred** education which ensures inclusion, not by treating all pupils in exactly the same way, but through the process of identifying and understanding individual needs and finding solutions to remove or reduce barriers.

4.5 Understanding the whole child includes physical and mental health, SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, young caring responsibilities and circumstances beyond school. Staff must recognise additional barriers to disclosure and avoid assumptions that a child's behaviour or communication is explained by a diagnosis or identity.

4.6 Our **child-centred** approach means:

a. Everyone working within Educate Together Academy Trust should always consider what is in the best interests of the child.
b. Children at risk of harm or reporting harm must never be given the impression that they are creating a problem. They will be listened to, taken seriously and supported without shame or blame.
c. Educate Together Academy Trust is committed to ensuring the voices of our children and young people are always heard, taken seriously and acted upon.

4.7 Through being **aspirational** for all of our children, we strive to:

a. Proactively develop anti-discriminatory practice within all our schools.
b. Create an environment, culture and curriculum which empowers our staff and children to challenge stereotypes and inequalities as well as actively promote and celebrate diversity in all its forms.
c. Equip our children and young people with the knowledge and understanding to keep themselves and their peers safe and healthy.
d. Promote a culture of respect, tolerance and reflection where each child's individual and unique characteristics are recognised and celebrated. We aim for everyone to understand that racism is a safeguarding issue wherever it occurs.

4.8 Our **collaborative** approach ensures:

a. Educate Together Academy Trust schools do not work in isolation. We promote strong collaborative practice and liaise closely with children, parents, external professionals and members of the local community, in order to establish safe and Inclusive learning environments and safeguard our children and young people.

b. We actively encourage children and young people in our schools to discuss, reflect and help decide on important issues that affect them in and outside of school through our Learn Together curriculum and pupil voice initiatives.
c. We build strong teams around individual children who are vulnerable and in need through effective communication and collaboration with all involved.
d. We value the contributions made by all members of our Trust community and all who we work in partnership with to ensure the safety, welfare and best outcomes for all children.

5. Trustees Responsibilities

5.1 All Trustees will understand their safeguarding duties and statutory legislation, regulation and guidance.
5.2 The Trust Board will approve this policy at each review and hold the CEO to account for its implementation.
5.3 A lead Trustee for safeguarding monitors the effectiveness of this policy with local governors. The designated Trustee will act as case manager for an allegation against the CEO, with LADO advice in line with KCSIE Part Four.
5.4 The Trust Board has strategic responsibility for safeguarding throughout the Trust. It assures itself that each school has effective policies and practice, trained staff, appropriate DSL capacity, safer recruitment, online safety arrangements and local multi agency links.
5.5 The Trust Board will do this by:
- Commissioning independent safeguarding audits of ETAT and its schools.
- Receiving regular updates and reports from Trust leaders.
- Delegating operational responsibilities to LGBs as set out below.
- Receiving and approving this policy at regular reviews.

6. Governor Responsibilities

6.1 Each school will have a named safeguarding governor who seeks assurance that safeguarding and child protection practice, policy, safer recruitment and online safety are effective and comply with legislation, current statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.
6.2 The appointed safeguarding governor will:
- Follow the Trust safeguarding audit framework, within the agreed timeframe;
- Liaise with the Headteacher and the DSL to produce an annual report for governors and complete the S. 175 (annual safeguarding) audit for their local authority;
- Ensure that the school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- Ensure that the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are publicly available, reflects KCSIE 2026 and local arrangements, and is reviewed at least annually and following material changes;
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of setting's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively;
- Ensure that the training and learning for the school community is robust and effective;
- Ensure children are taught age-appropriate safeguarding, respectful relationships and online safety throughout the curriculum, with clear routes to report concerns;
- Seek assurance that staff, supply and trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors receive the checks and induction required by KCSIE Part Three and the EYFS framework where applicable;
- Ensure the school has procedures for allegations and low-level concerns involving staff, supply and trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors, with appropriate LADO advice and shared responsibilities with third party organisations;

- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.

6.3 These responsibilities are further outlined in KCSIE 2026 Part Two. The named senior leader, supported by the DSL and IT staff, reviews the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring at least once every academic year, including documented checks on relevant internet connected devices and locations.

7. Staff responsibilities

7.1 All Educate Together Academy Trust staff will read and understand Part One of the current KCSIE 2026 guidance in full. The former condensed Annex A is no longer an alternative.

7.2 All staff will read and understand their school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7.3 All staff will adhere to statutory guidance and school policies and procedures pertaining to safeguarding arrangements.

7.4 Where staff are not clear on any item in statutory guidance or local safeguarding policies, they must seek clarification from a senior member of the leadership team.

7.5 Staff must complete all assigned safeguarding training and seek clarification for any aspects they are unclear about.

7.6 Staff must be alert to abuse and neglect; child on child abuse, sexual harassment and violence; criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines and modern slavery; domestic abuse, serious violence, FGM, radicalisation and overlapping harms. Mental health concerns may indicate abuse or neglect and must be passed to the DSL.

7.7 Staff will know the school's Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, online safety and acceptable use rules, anti bullying arrangements, attendance and absence response, whistleblowing route, and how to report concerns about children or adults.

7.8 Staff will know how to contact the DSL and deputies, Headteacher, safeguarding governor, local authority children's social care and LADO through the school policy.

7.9 Staff will recognise that SEND, disability, medical conditions, young caring responsibilities, being in care or having a social worker, and other circumstances can affect risk and disclosure. Staff will listen to the child and make reporting accessible.

7.10 Concerns and disclosures must be reported to the DSL or deputy promptly, ordinarily on the same day, and accurately recorded. If a child is in immediate danger, staff contact police or children's social care without delay and inform the DSL as soon as safe. Staff may refer directly and must follow up if the response does not improve the child's situation.

7.11 Be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable children and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.

7.12 Staff will raise concerns about safeguarding practice with leaders, use the Trust whistleblowing route where appropriate, and escalate externally when a child remains at risk.

8. Responsibilities of named persons

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

8.1 The DSL is named in each school's policy, with trained deputies and clear cover arrangements during absence and out of hours activities. A confidential monitored route for urgent concerns must remain available.

8.2 Details of each DSL and Deputy DSL are available on each of our school's website.

8.3 The DSL in each school will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their role.

8.4 The DSL is an appropriate senior leader with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This responsibility cannot be delegated, although deputies may carry out activities.

8.5 The DSL works with the Headteacher, and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learner's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

8.6 The DSL will:

- Be available during school hours for staff to discuss concerns, with effective deputy and cover arrangements;
- Manage referrals to children's social care, police, Prevent or other agencies, and coordinate early help and targeted Family Help according to local thresholds;
- Work effectively with others, including with external agencies, always in the best interest of the child and in line with statutory guidance;
- Ensure child protection files in CPOMS are accurate, timely, confidential and secure; record concerns, decisions and reasons, and transfer information securely and promptly when a child changes school;
- Raise awareness and ensure policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection are understood by all staff, especially new and part-time staff;
- Complete DSL training at least every two years, maintain Prevent awareness and refresh knowledge and skills at least annually;
- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding induction and regularly updated training, including child on child harm, online safety and reporting concerns about adults;
- Provide support to staff;
- Understand the views of children;
- Understand lawful, timely information sharing, including risk assessments, and work with children, families, safeguarding partners and other agencies while listening to the child's wishes and feelings;

8.7 The full duties of the DSL and deputy DSL are in KCSIE 2026 Annex B.

Headteachers

8.8 The Headteacher of each school is responsible for implementing its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensuring that it reflects this Trust framework and local safeguarding arrangements.

8.9 Headteachers will:

- Ensure that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of the policy as part of their induction;
- Communicate their Child protection and Safeguarding policy to parents/carers via the school website;
- Ensure the DSL and deputies have sufficient time, funding, training, resources and authority, and that effective cover arrangements are communicated and tested;
- Ensure that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly;
- Act as case manager for allegations about staff, supply and trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors, with LADO advice and cooperation with employing or supplying organisations; and
- Ensure the relevant staffing ratios are met.

LADO

8.10 A Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) operates in each Local Authority area and is there to support staff across all organisations who work with children and young people if any concerns arise regarding any practitioner who works with children and young people.

8.11 Each school within our Trust will have the name and contact details of the LADO for their Local authority clearly set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8.12 The LADO must be consulted promptly about allegations or concerns that meet the KCSIE harm threshold, including where a person who works with children has:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child.
- Behaved in a way that suggests they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including conduct outside school.

8.13 A concern about the conduct of an adult working with children must be reported to the Headteacher or appropriate case manager under the school policy. The case manager consults the LADO as required before investigating. Staff may approach the LADO directly if necessary. Low level concerns are recorded and reviewed for patterns under the Staff Code of Conduct.

8.14 If the concern is about the Headteacher or DSL, it must be reported to the CEO, who will take appropriate LADO advice.

8.15 If the concern is about the CEO, the Chair of Trustees must be contacted via the Trust Governance Officer. The designated safeguarding Trustee acts as case manager with LADO advice.

8.16 Anyone may contact the LADO for advice or support, particularly if the concern involves senior leaders, the CEO, governors or trustees or internal action is inadequate.

9. Responding to concerns about a child

9.1 Any staff member receiving a disclosure or noticing a concern must listen without leading questions, avoid promising secrecy, record the child's words and relevant facts, and report to the DSL promptly. Staff do not investigate. Immediate danger requires emergency services or children's social care without delay.

9.2 The DSL assesses risk with the child's circumstances and local thresholds and coordinates universal services, community based early help, targeted Family Help, referral to children's social care or emergency action. The DSL seeks advice where needed and records the reasons for referrals or decisions not to refer. Staff may refer directly and follow up if action is insufficient.

9.3 Parents or carers should normally be involved unless doing so would increase risk or compromise action. The child's wishes and feelings are considered. The school works with social care, police, health and other agencies and shares relevant information lawfully and securely.

10. Child on child abuse and sexual harm

10.1 Child on child abuse can include bullying, physical violence, coercion, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or violence, abuse in intimate relationships and online abuse. It is a safeguarding issue for the child who has experienced harm and the child alleged to have caused it. Incidents are not dismissed as banter or mutual conflict without assessment.

10.2 The DSL safeguards all children involved, assesses continuing risk, considers children's social care and police referrals, records decisions, and arranges proportionate support and safety measures. The school does not prejudge allegations and follows KCSIE 2026 Part Five.

10.3 Every incident involving the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images receives a safeguarding response, whether described as consensual or non consensual. Staff do not view, copy, print, save or share images outside the limited circumstances in current UKCIS advice; they report promptly to the DSL.

11. Online safety and filtering

11.1 Each school addresses online content, contact, conduct and commerce risks, including grooming, exploitation, harmful material, cyberbullying, image sharing and safe use of

mobile phones and generative AI. Technology use, acceptable use agreements and reporting arrangements reflect children's age and needs.

11.2 A named senior leader, supported by the DSL and IT staff, reviews filtering and monitoring effectiveness at least once every academic year and after significant change or incident. Checks cover all relevant internet connected devices and locations, monitoring alerts and response processes. The school records checks, actions and governance assurance.

12. Alternative provision and wider activities

12.1 Where a child attends alternative provision, the school retains responsibility for safeguarding and education, obtains written assurances about checks and arrangements, agrees information sharing and attendance reporting, and monitors welfare and placement. Sport, premises, lettings, visitors and residential activity arrangements follow relevant safeguarding requirements.

12.2 Use of reasonable force or restrictive intervention follows current DfE guidance and the school Behaviour Policy. Staff consider individual needs, use the least restrictive lawful response, record and review incidents, and raise safeguarding concerns.

13. Whistleblowing procedures

13.1 If staff believe a safeguarding concern is not being taken seriously, they must escalate it through the Trust whistleblowing policy or to children's social care, police or LADO as appropriate. A child's safety takes priority over internal hierarchy.

13.2 There are additional whistleblowing advice resources available:

- General guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available to staff who do not feel able to raise child protection failures internally.

14. Safer recruitment

14.1 Educate Together Academy Trust follows KCSIE 2026 Part Three for recruitment, identity, qualifications, references, prohibition, right to work, DBS and barred list checks as applicable, overseas checks, the single central record and risk decisions. From 1 September 2026, the supervision exemption from regulated activity with children is removed; volunteer roles and checks must be assessed under the revised law. In EYFS settings, staff and volunteers must not begin work until the enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information has been received. The Trust makes DBS and professional regulator referrals where the legal criteria are met, including in relation to volunteers.

15. Confidentiality

15.1 The Trust has a data protection policy and follows the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and current DfE information sharing guidance. Data protection law does not prevent proportionate, necessary sharing to safeguard a child. Information is recorded securely and shared on a need-to-know basis, including with a receiving school, local safeguarding partners and other agencies where appropriate.

15.2 Each school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy set out local arrangements for confidentiality, recording, secure transfer and information sharing. Decisions to share or withhold information, and the reasons, must be recorded.