



Meadowdale Academy

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2018-2019

Date of Ratification:	<i>*waiting to be ratified</i>	Signed: <i>Joy Finn</i> Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher) <i>Derek Alcraft</i> Mr Derek Alcraft (CHAIR OF TRUSTEES)
Review date:	<i>1st Sept 2019</i>	Signed: <i>Joy Finn</i> Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher) <i>Derek Alcraft</i> Mr Derek Alcraft (CHAIR OF TRUSTEES)

Safeguarding Statement

At Meadowdale Academy we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all academy activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Meadowdale Academy. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access the academy and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Principles of best practice

Best practice dictates that academies:

- Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
- Work with parents/guardians to build an understanding of the academy's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- Are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so the information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
- Monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping in a secure place clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences and attending case conferences;
- Provide and support Child Protection training regularly to academy staff and in particular to designated named persons to ensure their skills and expertise are up-to-date, and ensure that targeted funding for this work is solely used for this purpose;
- Contribute to an inter-agency approach to Child Protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
- Use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils develop a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others;
- Provide clear policy statements for parents/guardians, staff and pupils on this and on positive behaviour policies and the academy's approach to bullying;
- Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the academy's position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
- Take particular care that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills;
- Have a clear policy about handling allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures;
- Have a written whole academy policy regularly reviewed that clearly outlines the academy's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards.

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health

by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. We wish our pupils to remain safe and free from harm. We are committed to playing a full and active part in the multi-agency response to Child Protection.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. We believe in open and honest communication with parents and guardians and will always share with them any information or concern about their children at the earliest opportunity. The only exception to this would be where it is felt that such a communication might compromise a pupil's safety. If a pupil is felt to be in need of protection and becomes the subject of a Child Protection Plan, parents/guardians should regard the academy as a source of help and support.

All children have an absolute right to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. All members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) have a responsibility to be mindful of these issues related to children's safety and welfare and a duty to report and refer concerns, however minor they may appear to be. NB: it is not the role of academy staff to undertake an investigation.

If the academy receives information about a pupil which suggests he/she has been abused, neglected or that it is likely, we have a duty to refer these concerns to Social Care/Family Services or the Police. The academy has no discretion in this matter. The Child Protection Procedures for Meadowdale Academy are in accordance with central government and Local Authority Safeguarding Board multi-agency procedures.

Situations may not always be clear cut, in which case staff may consult with colleagues from an appropriate agency which will usually, but not always, be Social Care/Family Services. Advice and guidance will be sought in this case, meaning that those working with children have ready access to consistent information and advice from suitably qualified and experienced staff, in order to explore a situation and to decide together on an appropriate course of action. This should not be seen as a way of transferring ownership of a "problem", but as an agreed outcome of a discussion, when a referral will be made.

Children are best protected when professionals work effectively together and share responsibility for protective action. It is important to remember that a referral or consultation with Social Care/Family Services is an expression of concern about a child's welfare. It is not an accusation or a presumption of responsibility about a parent or guardian.

In the course of an investigation, social workers or the Police may wish to speak with a child, without parental knowledge or consent. Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher), acting in "loco parentis", has the discretion to agree to allow this to enable the authorities to explore concerns and determine whether there are grounds for further action. In these cases the Principal will ensure that the pupil's welfare is secured and he/she has access to a trusted adult.

Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher) will not allow a pupil to be removed from the academy premises without either:

- Parental consent
- or
- An Order of the Court or a Police Protection Order

Meadowdale Academy has a statutory duty to work to the guidelines stated in Keeping children safe in education (DFE, 2014) Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF, 2007) including the recruitment of anyone who will work in the academy. This policy has been developed following the latest DFE guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (2014) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', (2013) and Ofsted guidance 'Inspecting Safeguarding' (2013). DBS (formerly CRB) vetting checks are carried out for all employed staff and regular volunteers prior to commencement of working in the academy. The academy reserves the right of entitlement to request a standard or enhanced DBS disclosure certificate (without the barred list check) for supervised volunteers. (Please also refer to the section titled Recruitment within this policy).

In addition, the academy has a duty to safeguard and protect the well-being of pupils and is committed to act in accordance with the locally agreed Child Protection procedures in cases where there is concern of significant harm. Significant harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development of a child or young person. Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health includes physical and mental health. This is viewed from the perspective of expected behaviour for a child of a similar age and understanding.

Meadowdale Academy is constantly vigilant to deter possible abusers and will manage effectively any allegations or concerns about abuse when they arise.

When a child makes an allegation about abuse or neglect they will be listened to, have their comments taken seriously and, where appropriate, the allegations will be investigated thoroughly. It is not the role of academy staff to undertake any such investigation.

Meadowdale Academy fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support the pupils in our academy. The following categories of abuse are recognised:

1. Neglect: persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold, starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of child care. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic physical and emotional needs resulting in a failure to thrive.
2. Physical injury: actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child.
3. Sexual abuse: actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child and/or their involvement in inappropriate sexual activities which includes all forms of media exposure e.g. internet, photography.
4. Emotional abuse: actual severe adverse effect on emotional behaviour of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy:

PREVENTION:

- Through the creation of an open culture which respects all individual's rights and discourages discrimination and bullying of any kind;
- Through a positive academy atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils. Pastoral support is the responsibility of all staff working in the academy;
- By identifying a member of staff - Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher) - with overall responsibility for Child Protection who is supported by other designated child protection staff, Mr Steve Horsfield - known as named persons;
- Through our pastoral care e.g. Form Tutors, Inclusion staff offering all pupils an opportunity to talk and discuss any worries or concerns;
- Through PSHCE, SSEAL and an ongoing programme of support, at an age-appropriate level to promote self-esteem and social inclusion and address the issue of Child Protection in the wider context of child safety in general.

PROTECTION:

- By following agreed procedures ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns;
- Through fostering an ethos of "collective responsibility" within the academy where staff communicate concerns timely and through appropriate academy systems.

SUPPORT:

- By working to support any pupil or member of staff who may have been abused and by working to support parents or guardians.

This policy applies to teaching and non-teaching staff, and to all others working within the academy.

Academy Commitment

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering, abuse.

We will therefore:

- Work hard to establish and maintain an ethos where our pupils feel safe, secure and are encouraged to talk and be listened to;
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults in the academy who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Include in the core and enhanced curriculum activities opportunities for PSHE and SEAL which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe and develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life;
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working

relationships with parents/guardians and colleagues from other agencies.

Framework

We do not operate in isolation. The welfare of pupils is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies and the voluntary sector. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion. Child Protection is the responsibility of everyone.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard children, however there are key people within schools, academies and Northumberland LEA that have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. As stated earlier there are designated named staff responsible for Child Protection during academy time. The named trustee for Safeguarding and Child Protection is Mrs Doreen Conliffe whose role is to liaise with named persons and academy staff on all matters relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection, participate in the annual review of policy and procedures and make an annual report to the full Trustee Board. All named staff and trustees have had access to Safeguarding and Child Protection training and are aware of our safer recruitment procedures.

In the event of any concern by any member of staff, or if any member of staff is approached by a pupil regarding any matter concerning abuse, they must sensitively explain to the pupil that they are duty bound to share the information. All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions. In the first instance this should be one of school's designated named persons or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Because of the day-to-day contact with pupils, academies are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Parents/guardians will be made aware that, where it appears to a member of staff a pupil may have been abused, the academy is required to report their concern to Social Care/Family Services.

Procedures

Where it is believed a pupil is suffering from, or is at risk of significant harm we will follow the procedures below which are guided our Local Authority Safeguarding Board directives.

Staff responsibilities:

- To be vigilant in order to identify potential incidences of abuse;
- To report immediately to a designated named person;
- To complete documentation for external agencies as appropriate;

It is not staff's role to investigate suspected abuse but rather to recognise it and refer it as appropriate to a designated named person.

Designated named person's responsibilities:

- To co-ordinate actions in the academy and liaise with agencies over suspected or actual cases of child abuse;
- Identify the signs and symptoms of suspected or actual abuse and when to make a referral;
- To ensure that staff observe and implement the academy's agreed procedures;
- To facilitate training for all staff and trustees;
- To authorise and support referral to the relevant and appropriate authority;
- To keep full and accurate records of concerns, reports and referrals made which are stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

Professional Confidentiality

Meadowdale Academy's training and induction processes ensure the context of confidentiality is fully understood by all those working with our pupils, particularly in the context of Child Protection. All information should be treated as confidential and particular care taken with sensitive information. Sharing information will be treated on a "need to know" basis. Relevant factors include:

- The purpose of the disclosure;
- The nature and extent of the information to be disclosed;
- The appropriateness of the professional to whom is the disclosure to be made;
- If disclosure is a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of a pupil.

The academy will not undertake an investigation but may seek clarification from the pupil. Care will be taken not to ask leading questions. Regular Child Protection training ensures our staff understand they should not promise confidentiality to a pupil.

In the unlikely event that an incident happens outside core hours, e.g. on an educational visit or during an after academy activity, and none of the academy's named person/s are available the teacher/staff member will contact the relevant agency as soon as possible if they feel the safety of the pupil may be compromised. The designated named person/s should be informed as soon as possible afterwards. Relevant information will be recorded at the time with full details of the concern.

Protecting Staff

All staff are required to attend Child Protection/Safeguarding training with regular practice updates. This is to ensure best practice is maintained and that staff are aware of measures designed to support their safety and protection together with those pupils in their care. Staff should:

- Always avoid inappropriate physical contact with pupils;
- Avoid being left alone in a room with a closed door with just one pupil;
- Be aware of the academy's Intimate Care policy. When a pupil needs intimate care staff will ensure that another member of staff knows they are about to undertake the task. Wherever possible an additional member of staff will be present e.g. assisting a pupil to wash/change clothing or to be changed due to them wetting or soiling. Such tasks should be carried out with consideration of the academy's Intimate Care Policy and, where a pupil has complex health needs, in line with the pupil's care plan. Staff will inform parents/guardians that such tasks have been carried out.
- Avoid discussing, counselling and/or giving advice to pupils about sexual matters except in the agreed context of planned SRE lessons where parental permission will have been obtained. All staff should be aware of the academy's SRE policy ratified by the Board of Trustees and the statutory requirements of delivering such education. (Guidance is available on the DFE website).

Allegations made against staff

Sometimes allegations of abuse may involve a member of the academy staff. In these circumstances the allegations must be reported to Mrs Joy Finn (Head teacher) immediately. On receipt of such an allegation the Principal will contact the Local Authority Designated Person (LADP). If the allegation concerns the Principal, the member of staff receiving the allegation must contact one of the other named persons, Mr Derek Alcraft (Chair of trustees) and LADP as a matter of urgency. (Contact details are held in the office.)

Training and Support

We will ensure that the Principal, Named Persons, Chair of Trustees and Safeguarding Trustee attend Child Protection training relevant to their role. Academy staff will also receive basic Child Protection awareness training and be kept informed through dissemination of information / updates and our INSET programme.

Recruitment

As stated earlier Meadowdale Academy operates safe recruitment procedures in line with Central Government policy and Northumberland LEA guidelines to ensure that vetting checks are carried out on all new staff and volunteers who undertake unsupervised work with our pupils. This includes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (formerly known as CRB) and enhanced checks for regulated activity (barred list checks). Anyone who is not prepared to cooperate with these procedures will not be considered for employment or unsupervised voluntary work capacity within the academy.

Please note that as a result of the passage of the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), some of the requirements (particularly around volunteers) have changed (from September 2012). The Act has removed the requirement for schools/ academies to routinely carry out DBS checks on all volunteers, even when they work regularly with pupils. **If supervised by a suitably checked person**, the academy is not required to request any DBS checks on the volunteer and **are not entitled** to request a barred list check (known as an enhanced check for regulated activity). The academy is entitled to request a standard or enhanced DBS disclosure certificate without the barred list check. The academy can only request a barred list check for volunteers working regularly with pupils in an **unsupervised** capacity.

The Act has also removed the requirement for DBS checks to be carried out for governors/ trustees simply because of their office. If trustees volunteer in academy activities the above measures for volunteers apply. The Department For Education and Ofsted have published key documentation detailing all revised vetting requirements and the academy will include any further revisions as necessary within our annual review process. (The requirement to keep a Single Central Record has not changed as a result of the passage of the Protection of Freedoms Act).

All childcare organisations, which includes schools and academies, have statutory duties under the Protection of Children Act 1999. As such the academy will:

- Refer names to the DBS if there are concerns that a person has caused harm, or poses a future risk of harm to our pupils;
- Complete DBS vetting checks as previously stated;
- Not employ or allow a person to volunteer in an unsupervised capacity if the enhanced check for regulated activity informs they are registered on a barred list;
- Cease to employ a person if it is later discovered that the individual is registered on a DBS barred list.

From January 2010 it became mandatory that at least one person on any appointments committee should have completed the Safer Recruitment training. Details of all staff and trustees who have completed this training is documented in the academy's training records.

The Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act (2010, 1998) regulates the handling of personal data. Essentially, this is information kept about an individual on a computer or in a manual filing system. The Act lays down requirements for the processing of this information which includes obtaining, recording, storing and disclosing it.

If making a decision to disclose personal data the Data Protection Act must be complied with. This includes eight data protection principles. There should not be an obstacle if:

- There are particular concerns about the welfare of the pupil.
- If information is disclosed to Social Care/ Family Services or to another professional organisation e.g. Police
- The disclosure is justified under the common law duty of confidence.

As previously stated professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information by the academy to others (including Social Care departments), will always, however, have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information. Wherever possible, consent will be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a pupil dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a pupil. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case according to the particular facts of the case and legal advice will be sought if the academy is in doubt.

The academy's trustees are aware of the current Children and Families (Information Sharing) Bill and will make any necessary amendments to this policy on enactment.

Records and Monitoring

Well kept records are essential to good Child Protection practice. Staff have been informed about the need to record any concerns held about a pupil or pupils within our academy, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

As stated earlier electronic records concerning Child Protection are kept securely on the academy's computer system with restricted access and written records are stored in a separate securely locked cabinet. The Principal / Senior Leadership Team will ensure that staff are informed of the contents of reports and other confidential issues on a need-to-know basis, although the overriding principle is the safety of pupils. All records are confidential. Anyone requesting access to records must first consult with the Principal / Senior Leadership Team who will allow access only if it is deemed appropriate. A record of all access to paper and / or electronic records will be maintained to provide an audit trail.

Attendance at Child Protection Conferences

A Child Protection conference may be convened by Social Care/ Family Services to which all involved agencies would be invited. Where a case involves a pupil in our academy a representative is usually invited to attend the meeting. The Principal or one of the other designated named persons may attend – the choice of this representative will depend on the circumstances of each individual case.

Staff may be requested to provide a report for a Child Protection meeting. Any report should be relevant, concise and professional. All reports will be submitted in the first instance to the Principal or, if not available, one of the other named persons with designated responsibility for Child Protection in the academy.

All staff that are required to attend such meetings, prepare reports and maintain relationships with parents during and after a referral has been made will be fully supported by our staff that have completed specialist Child Protection training.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other related policies such as:

Safeguarding policy

Behaviour management policy

Inclusion policy

Anti-bullying policy

Health & Safety policy

Care & Control policy

Single Equality policy

SRE Policy

PSHCE Policy

SEN Policy

Intimate Care policy

and related protocols such as:

Pupil Missing in the Academy

Pupil Absconding from the Academy

Pupil Missing / Abducted on Educational Visit

Pupil Absconded from an Educational Visit

Serious Injury on an Educational Visit