Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust

Safeguarding Statement

September 2023

Introduction

TTMAT aims to make explicit the Trust's commitment to the development and dissemination of good practice and sound procedures. TTMAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their students and expects all staff, volunteers, and visitors to share this commitment.

TTMAT fully adopts the DfE statutory guidance for schools and colleges, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2023). This document details information for schools, colleges, and academies, setting out their legal duties.

Whilst Local Authorities have an overarching statutory responsibility and play a lead role for safeguarding, as well as promoting the welfare of children and young people in their area, TTMAT recognises their duty of collective responsibility and their position as a 'relevant partner' to safeguard and protect children and young people (Independent School Standards) guidance September 2022. TTMAT will fully cooperate with the Designated Local Authority Lead to protect the vulnerable from harm. These values and principles underpin TTMAT and assume a strategic responsibility to ensure that safeguarding practice is of a high quality.

All schools/academies will have:

- An approach that ensures the fulfilment of all statutory responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead who will have the responsibility for the day-to-day management of safeguarding.

- A Designated Safeguarding Governor, who will report termly to the Local Governing Board on all safeguarding matters.

- Safeguarding procedures in place to deal effectively with safeguarding issues including Child Criminal Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), County Lines, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Preventing Radicalisation, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, Child on Child abuse, Serious Violence/Domestic Abuse.

- A developed culture of listening to children with a robust reporting and recording systems.

- A clear procedure, in line with government guidance, of the transfer of children confidential information.

- A teaching and learning programme embedded into the curriculum teaching children about safeguarding themselves and staying safe online.

- Secure IT monitoring with clarity of expectation around filtering systems. The Designated Lead, all staff and Governors will have knowledge of systems. All systems will be reviewed regularly.

- Clear procedures for promoting positive Mental Health and Wellbeing.

- A clear procedure, that all children have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious belief, or sexual identity.

- Protocols and procedures in place to support children who experience harm outside their families.

- Establish close liaison between the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the SENCO.

- Protocols and procedures in place to work collaboratively with outside agencies and the sharing of information.

- Professional links and a commitment to responding, in accordance to Local Authority's procedures and practices established by the Local Safeguarding Partnerships (combined with a willingness to comply with any requests from that Board/Partnership in all cases where there is a concern about significant harm.

- A consistent approach in place to ensure all staff and Governors receive appropriate Child Protection/ Safeguarding training with regular updates in line with government guidance.

- Effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Polices, available on individual school web sites which comply with Section 175 The Education Act 2002, Section 11 of Children's Act 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children (last update July 2022) and Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023.

- A consistent approach to disseminate the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy to ensure all staff review the policy at least annually.

- Staff Code of Conduct protocols in place.

- Clear procedures in place to handle Low Level Concerns and allegations of abuse with a coordinated response.

- Clear whistleblowing procedures.

- An appointed designated Lead for Children in Care (CIC). The teacher will have responsibility for liaising with Local Authorities and monitoring the educational achievement and welfare of these children through termly Personalised Educational Plan (PEP) meetings and Child in Care meetings.

- Robust safeguarding responses for children who go missing from education with clear procedures for following up absences in relation to safeguarding concerns. Work in partnership with schools/academies and Local Authorities to support Elective Home Education (EHE) when required.

- All schools/academies will be compliant with legal requirements for Safer Recruitment.

Supporting and Reporting Role of TTMAT

TTMAT have a strategic leadership responsibility for the schools/academies safeguarding arrangements and they will comply with their duties under legislation. The arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children must be compliant with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023. TTMAT hold ultimate accountability for those safeguarding arrangements, by assurances from their local governing body, Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads across the schools/academies.

The Trust understands and is committed to the vital contribution that Trustees, Staff, Parents and Students can make to the safeguarding of children. Every member of staff has a collective recognition of the importance of providing an environment that helps students to feel safe and respected, whilst also providing a culture that encourages students to talk openly and have the confidence that they will be listened to.

TTMAT will:

- Promote a consistent approach to monitoring safeguarding procedures. All schools will receive an external support visit to audit safeguarding procedures and protocols once a year.

- Monitor the quality of safeguarding practices and their impact on outcomes for children across the Trust and provide regular reports to the Executive Advisor and the TTMAT Board.

- Work with Head Teachers to ensure that the performance of vulnerable children is effectively monitored, and that appropriate support is available for children who are the subject of a Common Assessment Framework or Children's Social Care intervention and are at risk of achieving poor outcomes.

- Report on the outcomes of children subject to Child Protection plans (S47) or who are Children in Care.

- Liaise with Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership lead professionals with regard to safeguarding issues, Ofsted and other agencies as required.

- Produce an annual Safeguarding Report as part of the TTMAT's business planning arrangements.

- Commission external challenge and support where appropriate to ensure all schools meet their statutory responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- Ensure that the level of training staff is consistent across TTMAT.

- Provide regular collective opportunities for the Designated Safeguarding Leads to reflect and promote effective outcomes of good practice and develop action points to improve practice which will benefit TTMAT as a whole.

TTMAT's safeguarding service ensures adherence to national and local policy in the interests of vulnerable children and young people. It is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and young people in their schools and expects all staff to share this commitment.

September 2023

<u>**Updates made to Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance – Update September 2023**</u>

Keeping Children Safe in Education has been updated, **while currently in its draft form the changes will come into effect from 1 September 2023.** There are **several important changes**, <u>with a particular focus around Online Safety and Attendance,</u> the changes coming into effect are detailed below.

<u>**Change made:**</u>

Added statutory guidance on keeping children safe in education for 2023. This is for information only and does not come into force until 1 September 2023.

<u>**Attendance:**</u>

<u>**A renewed focus is being placed on the development of school's approach to responding too and supporting pupils and their families in relation to attendance as a safeguarding concern**</u>. Some of the key developments include:

- **Children missing from education** (CME) language to be changed to 'children who are absent from education'.
- **Clear focus on absence being viewed as a safeguarding concern.**
- **Appropriate safeguarding arrangements** in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods.
- **Strengthening approaches to responding to non-attendance**: Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority. Children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

<u>**Elective Home Education:**</u>

An increased focus on children who have an EHCP where Parents have expressed a desire to home educate, KCSIE guidance is that consultation with the Local Authority is required and that the best interests of the child must be considered. In part KCSIE reads:

"*Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, ……………..*

……… Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan local authorities will need to review the plan, working closely with parents and carers."

* Emphasis on ensuring best interests of the child.

<u>**Online Safety:**</u>

Some of the most significant changes are in relation to expectations for online safety, with a focus on the role of governance, DSL's and all school staff.

- In relation to **DSL's their job description must reflect that they have lead responsibility for online safety and have a sufficient understanding of filtering and monitoring systems in place within their setting, not relying simply on IT services or IT leads to provide assurance.** As a result <u>Governance and DSL's will need to consider if this has any implications on your settings compliance from September.</u>

<u>**The responsibilities with regards to online safety include:**</u>

- **Clarity of expectation around filtering and monitoring systems** and DSL, all staff and **governor knowledge of these.**

- Expectation that **staff have clear understanding of the expectations**, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Expectation that the **designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). T**his should be explicit in their job description.**
- **Child Protection Policy** should **include the approach to online safety** and should also include appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks.
- **Expectation that schools and colleges should use the DFE published filtering and monitoring standards and should:**
- **Identify and assign roles and responsibilities** to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- **Review filtering and monitoring** provision at least annually.
- **Block harmful and inappropriate content** without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- **Have effective monitoring strategies in place** that meet their safeguarding needs.
- **Governing bodies and proprietors should review the standards** and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needs to be done to support schools and colleges in meeting this standard.
- **Consider meeting the Cyber security standards** for schools and colleges.
- **Reference to CEOP replaced with NCA's CEOP Safety Centre.**

Safer Recruitment:

- Clarification that Schools and colleges should inform **shortlisted candidates that online searches** may be done as part of due diligence checks.
- Confirmation that **copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept on their personnel file.**
- Confirmation **DBS certificates do not need to be copied and kept on file.**

External providers using or hiring school premises:

As an increasing number of schools are involved in hiring out their facilities it would be prudent for schools to reflect on their current systems in place, particularly around the management of **concerns, allegations and any incidents including how you would be notified.**

KCSIE makes note of the following:

- Need to refer to "The guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Out-Of-School Settings" **details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect providers [hirers] to have in place.**
- **Managing allegations** to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their **school premises for the purposes of running activities for children**: Schools and colleges should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

Other Changes:

Some further **amendments are in relation to key terminology** used but there is also a reminder for schools and their staff to have embedded a practice of a trauma informed approach, recognising and responding to children's mental health needs.

- **Recognising the impact of negative Mental Health**: staff awareness of how children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress at school.
- **Preventing Radicalisation**: Change in language from '**vulnerable' to 'susceptible.**
- **Channel**: Some terminology changes – **including replacing 'vulnerable' with susceptible and clarifying that consent will be required before support** can be delivered through the channel programme.
- **Forced Marriage**: **new links included for support and advice.**

- **Equalities Act:** The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people. Word '**discipline' replaced with 'sanction'.**
- **Removed reference to schools having an obligation to schools preserving records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the IICSA.**