



## **Stone Soup Academy Child Protection and Staff Training Policy**

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>K.Henton</b>
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## **Child Protection and Staff Training Policy**

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## **1 Roles and responsibilities**

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy and provision rests with the Principal. On an operational basis, the management, responsibility and evaluation of this policy is undertaken by the Head of Business and Operations or the Deputy DSL's.

### **1.1 All staff and visitors:**

- Must be familiar with the Stone Soup Academy's Child Protection Policy including issues of confidentiality.
- Must be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- Must record concerns on 'CPOMS' if staff or visitors cannot access this - then the principal (DSL) must be made aware of any immediate safeguarding concerns verbally.
- Deal with a disclosure of abuse from a student in line with the recommendations in this policy. These must be passed to one of the DSL's immediately, followed by a written account.
- Will be involved in ongoing monitoring and recording to support the implementation of individual education programmes and inter-agency child protection and child support plans.
- Will be subject to Safe Recruitment processes and checks whether new staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers etc.
- Will be expected to behave in accordance with the school's code of conduct and / or Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and KCSIE September 2024.

### **1.2 Designated Lead**

1.2.1 The designated safeguarding Lead is: Kerrie Henton (Principal)

1.2.2 The main role of the Designated Lead is to refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant county safeguarding children Partnership as appropriate.

The Designated Lead will ensure that there is always cover for the Designated Lead role and that arrangements for cover are communicated clearly to all staff.

1.2.3 The Designated Lead will:

- have a working knowledge of how Integrated Children's Service operates; have received training on how to identify child abuse and local referral protocol and how to contribute effectively to a child protection conference.
- Act as a source of advice and support within the school and coordinate action regarding referrals regarding both students and allegations against staff.
- Should liaise with the relevant agencies and record all contacts.
- Ensure that staff have relevant training in child protection, including induction training, enabling them to identify and report any concerns.
- Ensure staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role in the child protection procedures, particularly part-time staff, peripatetic staff, qualified staff, newly appointed staff, before/after school care staff and volunteers and gap year students.
- Ensure that when a student moves to another school, that a copy of the student's confidential pupil welfare / child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible and is transferred separately from the main pupil file as it contains sensitive personal data.
- Ensure that the Stone Soup Academy's Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually.

1.2.4 Where the academy has concerns about a student, the DSL will refer to relevant agencies and discuss where necessary to Deputy DSL's

1.2.5 Child Protection information needs to be dealt with in a confidential manner. A written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Lead feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual student and /or family

1.2.6 Child Protection records are stored electronically via CPOMS.

All confidential information regarding students (including those subject to a child protection plan) is stored securely on CPOMS.

1.2.7 Access to confidential information about students is restricted. Only the Designated Lead and Deputy DSL's will have access to confidential records. Information will only be shared with staff if authorised by the Designated Lead.

1.2.8 Parents/carers should be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents/carers should be in line with any home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility

1.2.9 Information will **not** be disclosed to a parent/carer if it will put the student at risk of harm or further harm to do so

1.2.10 If a student moves from Stone Soup Academy, child protection records will be forwarded onto the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature. Contact between the academy/school may be necessary. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed, and the date

### **1.3 Governing Body**

The Governing Body will ensure that the Stone Soup Academy:

- Has a Child Protection policy, a safeguarding policy and procedures in accordance with KCSIE / Working together to safeguard children guidance.
- Operates safe recruitment procedures and ensures appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and volunteers
- Has at least one senior member of the school's leadership team designated to lead on Child Protection issues and at least one Designated Lead.
- That the Designated safeguarding Lead has appropriate refresher training every two years
- Staff who work with children undertake training yearly. Also that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for Child Protection and their responsibilities
- The Governing Body remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers
- A member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair) is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the Trust/partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal

### **1.4 Nominated Governor**

- The Nominated Governor for child protection will be nominated Annually.
- The Safeguarding governor is: Barnaby Mulholland
- They are responsible for liaising with the Principal over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils

- The nominated governor should liaise with the DSL to produce an annual report for governors.

1.5 Suggested Audience for this policy: All staff

### 1.6 Related policies

This policy is part of a suite of policies which should also be referred to:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour policy Guidelines
- The Prevent Duty
- Safer Recruitment
- Safeguarding

## 2 Responding to allegations/causes for concern: Pupils at risk of harm

2.1 Staff and volunteers should make themselves available to listen and demonstrate to the student that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism.

2.2 Staff and volunteers must be aware that the way in which they talk to a student can have an effect on the validity of evidence which can be brought in any subsequent criminal proceedings. Staff and volunteers should therefore respond to students disclosing concerns or allegations of abuse (including allegations about a member of staff) in a supportive, calm manner and avoid asking detailed questions.

2.3 In responding to students, staff should note carefully any external signs of possible injury or neglect but should not undress the student or examine clothed parts of the student's body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/ neglect. Staff must also make a note of the injury and outline the area using CPOMS.

2.4 If a student confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, staff/volunteers **must not make promises about confidentiality**. Staff must tell the student sensitively that they have a responsibility to tell the Designated Lead so that the student can be helped to stay safe and feel better. It is important for all students that they are reassured that the matter will *only be disclosed* to people who *need to know*.

2.5 Stone Soup Academy will work with the student and with parents/carers to ensure that the student receives proper advice, support and protection.

2.6 All incidents about concerns in relation to significant harm must be reported immediately to the Designated Lead. If a member of staff is working outside normal Stone Soup Academy hours, the Designated Lead must be informed as soon as possible. If the DSL is not available, the concern must be reported to one of the Deputy DSL's and followed up with a report on CPOMS.

### **3 Recording**

3.1 All confidential records will be recorded and logged on CPOMS.

Child protection records must:

- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion
- Contain name(s), date, the event, any action taken
- Record what was said and any action taken in cases of suspected abuse or when the student is placed on a child protection register

3.2 In the event of a student moving to another school, a copy of any information which will assist the new school in promoting the pupil's welfare should be sent to the Principal of that school. The DSL will arrange for the school to collect the files. The documents must be signed for and given directly to the relevant staff member.

3.3 All records may be used in criminal proceedings.

### **4 When is it appropriate to refer to Social Care?**

4.1 Any decision to call Social care will be made by the Designated Lead in discussion with the safeguarding team. Any member of staff concerned about a student's welfare should consult the Designated Lead immediately and well before the end of the school day, if at all possible. It is not the responsibility of the school to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social care. No referral to social care is required if it is felt that the student's needs can be adequately met within the education service, unless the student already has a social worker, is subject of a court order or is registered on a Child Protection Plan

4.2 Consultation with Social Care is appropriate when action is required to meet the needs of individual students outside of the education services or when the student's needs are unclear. The permission of the student and their parents/carers should normally be obtained *unless* to do so would place the student at risk of harm from them.

4.3 Concerns about student welfare can be complex and may cause anxiety. It is possible to discuss concerns with Social Care without necessarily identifying the student. This can help to establish whether or not a referral to Social Care would be appropriate in complex situations. In addition, advice can be sought from other local statutory agencies. This advice can also be sought without revealing the student's identity and can help the Designated Lead decide whether or not to make a formal referral and if so, how to approach gaining the consent of parents/carers and the student concerned, as appropriate to their age and understanding.

4.4 The decision to make a referral which could activate a child protection investigation and the issue of gaining parental consent are serious decisions and require careful judgement. These decisions need to be taken in consultation with the local child protection agencies. The Designated lead or Deputy DSL's will liaise with the relevant agencies.

### **5 Making a referral to Social Care**

5.1 The final decision for making a referral to Social Care will be made by the DSL(s).

5.2 The DSL will contact Social Care and agree with the recipient of the referral, what exactly the student and parents will be told, by whom and when. This will be in liaison with Social Care and possibly the Police.

5.3 Any staff member who needs to know should also be informed of any subsequent results that might affect the student's progress or emotional stability in school but not any specific details of the case.

## **6 Historical Abuse**

Reports of abuse, which happened in the past, still need to be reported in accordance with Stone Soup Academy procedures. A student reporting 'historical abuse' will benefit from family support and may need specific therapeutic or professional help. In addition Child Protection Agencies will need to consider whether or not to conduct a child protection investigation, as a crime may have been committed and other children with whom the alleged abuser is (or has been) living or working with may have been abused or be at risk of significant harm.

## **7 Allegations against staff and volunteers**

7.1 **All** allegations or concerns raised about misconduct or child abuse by staff must be reported to the Principal unless the Principal is the person about whom the allegation is being made (see Responding to allegations about the Principal).

7.2 Allegations or concerns about a member of staff using physical punishment or restraint other than permitted by law should also be considered under the Stone Soup Academy's Disciplinary Procedures.

## **8 Considering the substance of an allegation**

8.2 Immediately an allegation made against a member of staff is reported to the Principal he/she will consider whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant an investigation and:

- Decide how the substance of the allegation will be explored
- Liaise with the child protection agencies as necessary.

8.3 The Principal **will not** speak with the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation at this point.

8.4 Action will be taken promptly by the Principal and in such a way that it does not prejudice any subsequent investigation by the Social Care or Police. There will be no interference with the evidence.

## **9 Communicating with students about their concerns**

9.1 When speaking to the student making the allegation, the Principal may decide to do so along with another suitable member of staff who he/she believes the student would be comfortable with and not feel intimidated by. In order to avoid any interference with evidence, the accompanying teacher must act in the capacity of an observer and not discuss the allegation with the student. There is no need to involve parents at this stage.

9.2 The Principal will have due regard for the student's individual needs in terms of their gender, age, racial, cultural, religious background, disability or any special needs or characteristics when planning and conducting her/his conversation with the student.

9.3 Students who report that they have been abused by a member of staff will be listened to and heard. The Principal will approach the meeting with the student with an open and inquiring mind, taking care to avoid making assumptions about the student (e.g. allowing previous knowledge about the student's behaviour to affect their capacity to objectively establish whether there is any

substance to the allegation). The Principal will avoid minimising the student's account or offering any alternative explanation for the student's account.

9.4 Details of the meeting will be recorded immediately afterwards.

### **10 Considering the substance of the allegation: Next Steps**

The Principal will then consider, in consultation with the Child Protection Agencies, whether the allegation:

- Is a child protection concern and needs further investigation by the Child Protection Agencies
- Amounts to unprofessional practice,

Or is

- Demonstrably false.

### **11 Demonstrably False**

Only if the allegation were trivial or demonstrably false would a further investigation not be warranted. In these circumstances the Principal will consider:

- Whether the student might have been abused by someone else
- Whether to inform the member of staff of the allegation and that no further action will be taken
- The student's need for informal guidance or support
- Whether to inform the student's parent/carer of the allegation made and the outcome
- Whether or not to prepare a report concluding that reasons why the allegation is without foundation.

### **12 Unprofessional Practice**

12.1 In the case of unprofessional practice, the Principal will then need to establish whether or not this requires disciplinary action, performance management and/ or support and guidance for the staff member or volunteer, against whom the allegation has been made.

12.2 In order to do this, the Principal will need to consult with the LADO to ensure that the Principal's actions will not prejudice any child protection and/ or criminal investigation, whilst also ensuring that the staff member or volunteer's need for a quick and fair response to any allegation made against them is properly upheld.

### **13 Child Protection Concern**

13.1 The Principal will need to agree an outline communication plan with the LADO and follow their advice and guidance.

13.2 The Principal will keep the Stone Soup Academy Governing Body informed at each stage of the development of the case. This should not cause any delay in following local child protection procedures (Nottingham city safeguarding children Partnership)

13.3 Irrespective of action by the LADO, Social Care or the Police, Stone Soup Academy will follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended or removed from work with students, pending investigation.



## **14 Suspension of Staff and Alternatives to Suspension**

14.1 The decision to suspend is the responsibility of the Principal. Suspending a member of staff is always a serious decision to aid the investigation process. It is not in itself a disciplinary action.

14.2 Consideration can be given to the staff member remaining in the academy. **In all situations, the welfare needs of the student making the allegation and other pupils will be the paramount consideration.** However, there is also a duty of care to staff, and therefore when considering suspension it is important to have regard to:

- The nature of the allegation
- The assessment of the presenting risk
- The context in which the allegation occurred
- The individual's contact with students
- Any other relevant information
- Alternatives to suspension.

14.3 Suspension should be considered if the following grounds apply:

- A student or students would be at risk
- The allegation is so serious that summary dismissal for gross misconduct is possible
- It is necessary to allow any investigation to continue unimpeded.

14.4 The disciplinary process and a criminal investigation have different objectives and should not be confused. A police and/ or child protection investigation takes priority over internal disciplinary investigation by an academy; the police/ child protection investigator will be able to advise what, if any, internal disciplinary action can be taken pending the outcome of the police/ child protection investigation.

14.5 The Principal will also need to carefully balance the needs of other staff and indeed the care and protection of the staff member against whom the allegation has been made.

14.6 Alternatives to suspension include:

- Leave of absence
- Undertaking different duties which do not involve direct contact with the individual student or students (this will rarely be possible in an academy)
- Providing a classroom assistant or other colleague to be present throughout contact time

14.7 The rationale for whatever decision is reached should be recorded and kept secure .

## **15 Communication**

In the event of a staff member being suspended the Principal will need to agree the communication plan as regards keeping in touch with a suspended member of staff during the course of the investigation and any subsequent period before the staff member returns to work in the academy. It is particularly important to ensure that a clear statement is prepared for use by the board of governors, HR and the Principal.

## **16 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure**

Staff members who feel that they have been treated unfairly in relation to suspension of any disciplinary action should use the Stone Soup Academy Disciplinary Procedure. Staff who have any other complaint in relation to an allegation and/ or investigation under these Procedures should use the Stone Soup Academy Grievance Procedures.

## **17 Allegations against the Principal**

17.1 A Stone Soup Academy member of staff receiving an allegation of abuse or physical punishment or the use of restraint (other than that permitted in law), against the Principal should report this to the chair of Governors. Staff also have the option to report to one of the Deputy DSL's for advice (please refer to 17.2)

17.2 The Deputy Designated Lead must report this immediately to the Chair of the Governing Body. In the absence of the Deputy Designated Lead, the staff member must report immediately to the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair should obtain details of the allegation, in writing, signed by the person who received the allegation, not the student who is subject of the allegation. The account of the allegations should be countersigned and dated by the Deputy Designated Lead.

17.3 The procedures above relating to allegations against staff will then be led by the Chair of the Governing Body replacing the role of the Principal.

## **18 Work Experience**

18.1 Students will be informed about the correct procedures to use by the relevant staff prior to their placement and be given the opportunity to discuss how to identify and respond to situations that may give rise to concern in the workplace.

18.2 Students must contact the Designated Lead if they have concerns. The Designated Lead, in discussion with the Principal, will decide whether or not to take the concerns further.

## **19 Staff Recruitment and Selection**

Stone Soup Academy will pay full regard to Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. Safe recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and, where appropriate, undertaking to check List 99 (or the equivalent list of barred people when new arrangements are made) POCA and Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks (see Safeguarding policy).

19.3 All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Stone Soup Academy staff, including the Principal and one governor will participate in safer recruitment training. One of the above will be involved in all staff / volunteer appointments.

## **20 Safe Practice**

All staff and volunteers work within the guidance of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)'

## **21 Staff support**

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work. Supervision is available for any member of staff who requests it.

## **22 Staff Training**

22.1 The Designated Lead(s) will attend a recognised refresher training for Designated Safeguarding Lead every two years.

22.2 The academy will aim to ensure all staff receive an induction and updated CPD appropriate to their roles and responsibilities, especially staff new to the school.

22.3 All staff will access refresher Safeguarding and Child Protection training annually using Educare online training half termly. Allocated training modules are set each half term for staff to complete.

22.4 The Principal will attend the Designated Lead's training every two years.

22.5 Governors, including the Nominated Governor, will aim to have attended specific training on their role, updated at least every three years.

22.6 Training completed will be recorded by Stone Soup Academy; a print out of the Stone Soup Academy's training history can be obtained from [admin@stonesoupacademy.org.uk](mailto:admin@stonesoupacademy.org.uk)

## **23 Governing Body Approval and Review Date**

23.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed when there are changes in legislation, or in accordance with the schedule drawn up by the Principal and agreed by the Governing Body.