CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Academics are committed to ensuring their work is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All staff, tutors, contractors and associates working via Academics are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are alert to possible child abuse, neglect and exploitation and to familiarise themselves with arrangements for safeguarding children in the schools where they are placed. This guidance applies to all staff, contractors and associates working with children and young people.

People working with children should be guided by these four principles:

- children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect;
- safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility;
- it is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging; and
- children and families are best supported and protected when there is a co-ordinated response from all relevant agencies.

A glossary of some key terms used in the policy is included at Appendix 1.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Academics policies and procedures:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy**

Together, these documents form Academics' safeguarding framework.

Further details of recruitment checks, vetting procedures, safeguarding suitability assessments, references, DBS requirements, online searches, risk assessments, induction arrangements and ongoing compliance monitoring are contained within the separate Academics Safer Recruitment and Compliance Policy, which should be read alongside this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

When placed in a new setting you should take the following steps as soon as possible:

- Find out who the designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection is in the school.

- Ask to see a copy of the school's child protection policy and procedure. Although policies often give similar messages, there may be local variations you need to know about, so it is important that you read and understand it.
- Find out whether the school has a Code of Conduct for staff. Similarly, it is essential that you have read and understood it.
- Ask whether there is specific information that you should have about any of the children you may be working with.
- You should also have read and signed this policy, and read the government guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.
- Where tuition is delivered online, additional safeguarding controls are applied, including secure platforms, session logging, and clear professional boundaries.
- Understand that safeguarding responsibility remains with Academics when delivering home tuition, online provision or alternative provision services.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times, including when communicating online or delivering provision in community or home environments.
- Follow lone working procedures and immediately report safeguarding, welfare or environmental concerns identified during tuition sessions.
- Empower children and young people to raise concerns, discuss worries and understand how to seek help if they feel unsafe.

Confidentiality, Consent and Information Sharing

All staff must treat safeguarding information as confidential and share it only with those who need to know in order to protect a child or young person. Information is shared in line with statutory guidance, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Consent should be sought where appropriate; however, safeguarding concerns must be shared without consent where a child is at risk of harm. Staff must not promise confidentiality to children or young people.

Decisions about sharing information with parents/carers are made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents/carers will not be informed where doing so may place the child at further risk, compromise an investigation, or where advised by statutory agencies.

Working with Other Agencies and Information Sharing

- We work with placing schools, CSC/MASH, Police, and LADO as required
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis in line with statutory guidance
- DSL oversees external liaison and decisions

Safeguarding Information for Children, Young People and Families

Academics is committed to ensuring that children, young people, parents, carers and representatives understand how safeguarding concerns can be raised and responded to.

Safeguarding information may be shared through:
· Induction discussions
· Referral and onboarding processes
· Policies and procedures
· Direct communication with tutors and managers
· Website information and safeguarding contacts

Children and young people are encouraged to:
· Speak to a trusted adult if they feel unsafe or worried
· Report concerns about inappropriate behaviour

· Discuss worries relating to online safety, bullying, exploitation or abuse
· Seek support where they feel uncomfortable or at risk

Parents, carers and representatives are encouraged to raise concerns immediately if they believe a child or young person may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Mental Capacity and Informed Consent
Where safeguarding decisions involve young people aged 16 or over, Academics will consider the young person's ability to understand, retain, weigh and communicate information relevant to the decision being made. Decisions regarding consent and information sharing will take account of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 where applicable.

Staff should presume that a young person has capacity unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise. Where there are concerns about a young person's capacity to make an informed decision, advice must be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, where appropriate, from relevant health, social care or other professionals involved with the young person.
Where a young person is assessed as lacking capacity to make a specific decision, any safeguarding action or information sharing will be undertaken in their best interests and in accordance with statutory safeguarding duties and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Concerns regarding staff, volunteers, tutors or contractors may be reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or through the organisation's complaints or whistleblowing procedures.

WHEN MIGHT YOU BE WORRIED?

Concerns about child abuse, neglect and exploitation
You may become worried about child abuse during the course of your duties. For example, a child might tell you something directly that indicates the possibility that they have been abused or neglected. Sometimes child abuse comes to light when a child tells a friend that they are being harmed, who then tells a member of staff.

Alternatively, you may become concerned about the behaviour of another member of staff or a volunteer. This could be as a result of something that could be poor practice, or a child protection concern. Although the overwhelming majority of staff strive to work safely and professionally, there have been instances where staff have behaved harmfully towards children.

If you are worried about possible child abuse you should always talk your concerns through with the designated Safeguarding Lead. You should do this as soon as possible, the same day you become concerned. This is key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. Similarly, if you are worried about the behaviour of a member of staff, whether this is about possible poor practice or abuse, you should talk through your concerns with the designated Safeguarding Lead. If she/he agrees with you that there is a possibility abuse may have happened or is likely to take place, they will contact Children's Social Care and the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) the same working day.

You should make an accurate, detailed record of your concerns as soon as possible.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Steve Dixon – Regional Manager and DSL
Email: steve@academicsltd.co.uk
Telephone: 020 8106 0400

Rebecca Morris – Deputy Compliance Manager and DSL
Email: rebecca.morris@academicsltd.co.uk
Telephone: 0203 973 0202

Safeguarding Communication and Information Sharing
Safeguarding information is shared within the organisation through secure, controlled channels. This includes email communications, which are password protected and secured through two-factor authentication (2FA), and the organisation's secure database, which is also password protected and 2FA enabled.
The database is used to store safeguarding policies, updates, and key information, with access restricted to authorised staff only. Safeguarding updates, changes in guidance, and key learning are communicated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead through these channels to ensure staff receive timely and consistent information.

Policy Dissemination, Training and Compliance Assurance

All staff, tutors, contractors and associates are required to read and acknowledge safeguarding policies as part of induction and ongoing compliance processes.

Safeguarding policies, updates and guidance are disseminated through:
· Safeguarding induction
· Policy circulation and updates
· Safeguarding training
· Management briefings
· Secure organisational systems

Staff are required to complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role and maintain awareness of statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Academics maintains assurance processes to ensure safeguarding procedures are understood and followed, including:
· Safeguarding supervision and oversight
· Compliance monitoring
· Training records
· Safeguarding audits
· Incident reviews
· Management oversight by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Where concerns arise regarding compliance with safeguarding expectations or professional boundaries, these will be addressed through safeguarding, disciplinary or capability procedures where appropriate.

OUTLINE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

Initial action by Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care will decide whether the referral information warrants investigation as possible child abuse. If so, they will seek information from other organisations that may have knowledge of the child.

Strategy Meeting / Discussion
This is a key stage in the process. Children's Social Care will meet with the other relevant professionals, including the school, to confirm whether the situation requires (or continues to need) investigation, and if so, plan the next steps. Where the allegation involves a possible crime, the Police will take part in the meeting. In urgent cases, this process can take the form of a strategy discussion by telephone.

Investigation
The strategy meeting (above) decides on the nature and timing of an investigation. The investigation may involve one or more of the following processes, depending on the circumstances:

- Investigation of suspected abuse, which may concern physical, sexual or emotional abuse, exploitation or neglect. Children's Social Care have lead responsibility.
- Investigation of a possible crime. The Police have responsibility for investigating crimes, such as suspected physical or sexual assault.
- Disciplinary process. This may be used when the person who is thought to have harmed a child is a paid worker or volunteer in a position of trust.

It may also be necessary for the child to be medically examined, and/or interviewed jointly by the Police and Children's Social Care.

Child Protection Conference
The Child Protection Conference brings together the professionals who have knowledge of the case. The aim is to share information and form a view about the level of risk to the child. If the child is thought to be at continuing risk of significant harm, she/he becomes the subject of a child protection plan. The conference agrees the outline of the child protection plan, and the core group.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Academics recognises its responsibility to respond appropriately to any allegation or concern that a member of staff, tutor, volunteer, contractor or associate may have:

· Harmed a child or young person
· Behaved in a way that may have harmed a child
· Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children
· Behaved in a way that may constitute a criminal offence against a child
· Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

All allegations or concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Where required, Academics will make direct referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Police, Children's Social Care or other statutory agencies and will not rely solely on schools or commissioning organisations to make referrals on the organisation's behalf.

No internal investigation will commence until advice has been obtained from the LADO or relevant safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

Concerns regarding the behaviour or conduct of staff may also be raised through the organisation's Whistleblowing Policy.

APPENDIX 1: SOME KEY DEFINITIONS

Child
A child is defined in law as any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This policy applies to all children and young people under the age of 18, whether living with their families, in state care, placed in alternative provision, receiving home tuition, or living independently.

The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in custody, or is disabled does not change their status or entitlement to protection under safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Designated Safeguarding Lead
Governing bodies, proprietors and management committees should appoint an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection. This should be explicit in the role-holder's job description. This person should have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children.

Children's Social Care
This term is used in current government guidance to describe the part of the local authority with responsibility for making assessments of children 'in need' and leading and investigation when there are reasonable grounds for believing a child is at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect. This is commonly called 'Children's Services' in many local authorities, and was formerly known as 'Social Services'.

KEY TERMS IN KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION

Child Protection
Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
Defined for the purposes of from the guidance as:
• protecting children from maltreatment;
• preventing impairment of children's health or development;
• ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
• taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Types of abuse and neglect

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of

witnessing ill treatment of others. For example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. 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. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children s a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child on child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Child sexual and criminal exploitation Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Some indicators:

- Appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- Associate with other children involved in exploitation
- Suffer from changes in emotional well being
- Misuse of alcohol and other drugs

- Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.
- Have older boyfriends or partners and
- Suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

County Lines: This is a terms to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This can happen locally or across the UK. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media, and a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units and Childrens homes/care homes. Specific indicators that may be present:

- Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- Are exposed to techniques such as "plugging", where rugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- Are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a "trap house or cuckooing" or hotel room where there is drug activity
- Owe a "debt bond! To their exploiters
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) ; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) ; or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to; a child's basic emotional needs. **Young carer** A young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except generally where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work).

Parent carer A person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility.

Education, Health and Care Plan A single plan, which covers the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). See the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 (2014).

Specific safeguarding issues
Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example, information for schools and colleges can be found on the TES, MindEd and the NSPCC websites. Schools and colleges can also access broad government guidance on the issues listed below via the GOV.UK website:

- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic violence
- child on child abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- honour based violence
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation
- sexting
- relationship abuse
- trafficking
- missing children and adults
- hate
- child missing from home or care
- unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education

Further information on Honour based violence and Female Genital Mutilation
So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour or the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and

should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV. If a Teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, The Teacher must report this to the police.

Forced Marriage Forcing a person into marriage is a criminal offence in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. Multi-agency guidelines: Handling case of forced marriage.

Child on Child abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- abuse in intimate personal relationship between children (sometimes known as teenage relationship abuse~).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim, humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Serious violence

Be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Preventing radicalisation

From 1 July 2015, specified authorities, including all schools (and, since 18 September 2015, all colleges) as defined in the summary of this guidance, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies. Bodies to which the duty applies must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015. Paragraphs 57-76 of the Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales are specifically concerned with schools (but also cover childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: Risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

• Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being

able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies. It is not necessary for schools to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty.

• The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Effective engagement with parents / the family should also be considered as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. It is important to assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms. Schools should also discuss any concerns in relation to possible radicalisation with a child's parents in line with the individual school's safeguarding policies and procedures unless they have specific reason to believe that to do so would put the child at risk.

• The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism. As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

• Schools should ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools.

The department has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

There is additional guidance: Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales that applies to colleges.

The Government has launched educate against hate, a website designed to equip school and college leaders, teachers and parents with the information, tools and resources they need to recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. The website provides information on training resources for teachers, staff and school and college leaders, such as Prevent e-learning, via the Prevent Training catalogue.

Where concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism arise during home tuition, online provision or alternative provision delivery, staff must report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Academics may make direct referrals to Prevent or Channel processes where appropriate and will not rely solely on schools to initiate safeguarding action.

Online safety

Academics recognises that children and young people receiving online tuition or alternative provision may be particularly vulnerable to online exploitation, grooming, bullying, radicalisation and harmful online content.

All tutors delivering online provision must:

- Use approved communication platforms
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Avoid personal social media contact with pupils
- Report online safeguarding concerns immediately
- Follow session monitoring and safeguarding procedures

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incident where appropriate.
The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users;
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm and
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Filters and monitoring

Governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place. Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should consider the age range of their pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks.
The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" might look like:
• UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring

Guidance on e-security is available from the National Education Network-NEN. Buying advice for schools is available here: buying for schools.

Whilst filtering and monitoring are an important part of the online safety picture for schools and colleges to consider, it is only one part. Governors and proprietors should consider a whole school approach to online safety. This will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G and 4G in particular and the school and college should carefully consider how this is managed on their premises.

Whilst it is essential that governing bodies and proprietors ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, they should be careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.

Staff training
Governors and proprietors should ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undergo regularly updated safeguarding training (paragraph 64) and the requirement to ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online (paragraph 68), that online safety training for staff is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.

Information and support
There is a wealth of information available to support schools and colleges to keep children safe online. The following is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.saferinternet.org.uk
www.internetmatters.org
www.pshe-association.org.uk
https://educateagainsthate.com/
www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation

APPENDIX 3: SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following lists are intended as a guide of some of the common signs that can indicate that a child is being abused or neglected. A child may, however, show none of these signs, yet still have been abused, or, conversely, display one of these symptoms yet not have been abused. If you have concerns that a child may have been abused, or are in any doubt about whether a child is being ill-treated, you should consult with your manager or designated Safeguarding Lead and if necessary follow the child protection procedures for your agency.

Physical Abuse

- Injuries that are not adequately explained by the child
- Contradictory or inadequate explanation of the injury by the child's parent or carer
- Current bruising/injury, with a long history of bruises and accidents
- Injuries getting progressively worse, or occurring in a time pattern (for example, every Monday, or after visits to…)
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-destructive tendencies
- 'grip' marks on arms (may include severe shaking) or 'slap' markings (especially cheeks, buttocks, arms or legs)
- Long marks which could be from a belt or cane
- Stub marks that might be from a cigarette
- Bruising on both side of the ear

- Any 'symmetrical' bruising or suspicious teeth marks from a bite
- Scalding to both soles of the feet which may suggest deliberate 'dipping'
- Bruised eyes, especially if both at once. (A doctor can usually tell whether the bruised eye is spread bruising from an accidental bump to the nose, or if it is more likely to have been caused by the result of a punch)
- Constant attention seeking
- Over-pleasing/compliant behaviour/ 'frozen watchfulness'
- Chronic running away
- Reluctant to go home at the end of a session, especially at weekends.

Bruises – some new research

A bruise should never be interpreted in isolation and must always be assessed in context

Bruising that suggests the possibility of physical child abuse includes

- Babies or children who are not independently mobile
- Seen away from bony prominences
- To the face, back, abdomen, arms, buttocks, ears or hands
- Multiple bruises in clusters
- Multiple bruises of uniform shape
- Carry and imprint- of and implement or cord.

Welsh Child Protection Systematic review group, April 2005

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development delays
- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons
- Difficulties concentrating or coping at school
- Admission of punishment appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear or new situations
- Inappropriate behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted extremes of passivity or aggression
- Alcohol/drug/solvent misuse
- Chronic running-away
- Compulsive stealing
- Scavenging for food or clothes.

Sexual Abuse

- What the child tells you
- Young children who 'act out' by behaving in a sexualised way with others (e.g. simulating intercourse, grabbing genitals)
- Repeated open masturbation

- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse, or write about sexual matters
- Use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or lay sexual games
- Have terrifying dreams
- Start wetting themselves
- Have poor self-image, self-mutilate
- Act in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults
- Running away
- Unhappy, isolated
- Aggressive eruptions/tantrums (still occurring after the age of three)
- Urinary infections
- Vaginal discharge
- Pregnancy
- Presence of sexually transmitted disease on genitals or throat (N.B. cannot be caught from sharing sheets with an infected adult)
- Anorexia, bulimia, or excessive 'comfort eating'
- Dislike of specific foods which may remind the child of bodily fluids, or genitals
- Reluctant to go home at the end of a session or respite, especially at weekends.

Neglect

- Looks extra thin and poorly
- Well below average in height and weight; 'failure to thrive'
- Poor diet (NB this includes over feeding as well as under feeding)
- Complains of hunger, lacking energy
- Has untreated nappy rash or other condition/injury which is left untreated
- Has repeated accidents, especially burns
- Left alone at home inappropriately
- Repeatedly unwashed, smelly
- Speech delay
- Destructive tendencies
- Chronic running away
- Inability to play
- No social relationships
- Neurotic behaviour (for example; rocking, hair twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- Living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence
- Fail to receive basic health care
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured
- Reluctant to go home at the end of a session, especially at weekends.

THE NEGLECTED CHILD

Sometimes one becomes worried that a child's appearance indicates that they are being physically neglected. In deciding what action should be taken it helps to consider the impact and suboptimal care is having on the child together with what else one knows about the family.

Are the children showing signs of distress?
Is their appearance or smell causing other children to avoid or bully them?
Are they coming to school hungry and/or late?
Has there been a recent change in the quality of care?
Does the mother also look neglected?
Could it be that the parents have learning disabilities and are in need of support and guidance?

Margaret Lynch, 2007

SOME POINTERS ON RESPONDING TO CHILDREN

- Accept what is being said without showing shock, or disbelief. Try to remain as calm as possible, particularly with the child.
- Do not 'interview' the child in detail
- You should avoid leading questions that could point the child towards giving a particular answer
- Sometimes children make ambiguous statements and you may need to clarify basic information. It is helpful to clarify what, if anything, the child is saying, and then if appropriate who was involved, as well as when and where did the alleged harm take place.
- Don't promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer. Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
- Make sure you have someone you can talk through things through with. Remember to make sure that the person you speak to should be someone from within your organisation or another agency which has direct involvement with the case, who will maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Ask the child is they have any questions or concerns
- Make an accurate written record as soon as possible. This should clearly distinguish what you saw and heard from your opinion about this information. You should also keep any rough notes you may have made.

MAIN REFERENCES

Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government, 2023

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused HM Government, 2015

London Safeguarding Children Procedures and practice guidance (7th Edition) London Safeguarding Children Board, 2022

Keeping children safe in education – Department for Education – September 2025
Please familiarise yourself with this guidance: HERE

ANNEX A (Hillingdon and London) – Thresholds of Need & Local Procedures

1. London Continuum of Help and Support

Academics follows the London Continuum of Help and Support when considering levels of need. Threshold levels include:

- **Level 1:** Universal
- **Level 2:** Early Help
- **Level 3:** Children in Need
- **Level 4:** Child Protection / Section 47

All staff must consult the DSL when deciding whether a referral meets Level 3 or Level 4 thresholds.

2. Hillingdon Local Thresholds

Where a child is located in the **London Borough of Hillingdon**, the following apply:

- Hillingdon adopts the London Continuum of Help & Support.
- Hillingdon expects practitioners to contact the **Stronger Families Hub** for:
    - Threshold enquiries
    - Early Help requests
    - Child protection concerns
- Local templates (Early Help Assessment, referral forms) must be used.

Refer to Annex B for key contact numbers and links.

3. When to Refer to Hillingdon MASH / Stronger Families Hub

A referral **must** be made when any of the following apply:

- The child is at risk of significant harm.
- There are concerns around physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- There are concerns of exploitation, county lines involvement, gang association, or serious youth violence.
- A professional believes the child's needs meet Level 3 or 4 thresholds.

Referrals must be made **by telephone first**, followed by written confirmation the same working day.

ANNEX B – Key Safeguarding Contacts (Schools and young people in Hillingdon)
(You may format this as a table inside the policy.)
Hillingdon Safeguarding Contacts

Service	Contact Details	Notes
MASH / Stronger Families Hub	**01895 556006**	For all child protection referrals. Must phone first, then send written referral same day.
Hillingdon LADO	Via Stronger Families Hub (01895 556006) and request LADO team	For allegations against staff, volunteers, and those in positions of trust.
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)	**01895 250111**	For concerns outside normal working hours.
Police (non-emergency)	101	For safeguarding concerns not requiring emergency response.
Police (emergency)	999	If a child is at immediate risk.
CEOP	www.ceop.police.uk	Online exploitation and grooming referrals.

ANNEX C – Safeguarding File Retention & Storage Requirements
Retention Periods
Safeguarding records should be retained for:

- **Child protection files:** Until the child's 25th birthday (or longer if required by legal advice).
- **Allegation against staff files:** 10 years from the date of allegation closure or until normal retirement age, whichever is longer.
    - 6 years post placement for HMRC purposes
    - 10 years post placement if a safeguarding allegation

Storage

- All files must be stored securely on encrypted systems or locked cabinets.
- Access restricted to DSL and authorised deputies.
- Transfer of files between settings must be logged and completed via secure means only.

Oxfordshire Annex

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Statement
"For all children located within Oxfordshire, Academics follows the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) procedures, including local thresholds, referral pathways, and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Staff must familiarise themselves with OSCP guidance available at www.oscp.org.uk."

ANNEX OX2 — Oxfordshire Threshold of Needs Framework
Add the OSCP levels:
Level 1 — Universal
No additional support needed.
Level 2 — Early Help (LCSS)
Support required but no statutory intervention.
Level 3 — Children in Need (Section 17)
MASH referral required.
Level 4 — Child Protection (Section 47)
Immediate MASH referral & strategy discussion.

ANNEX OX3 — Oxfordshire Referral Pathways
MASH
0345 050 7666
Online referral: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-care/safeguarding
Out-of-hours EDT: 0800 833 408
LADO (Allegations against professionals)
01865 810603
lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Early Help / LCSS
North: 0345 241 2703
South: 0345 241 2608
Central: 0345 241 2705
lcss-north@oxfordshire.gov.uk
lcss-south@oxfordshire.gov.uk
lcss-central@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Police
999 (emergency)
101 (non-emergency)
CEOP
www.ceop.police.uk

ANNEX OX4 — Oxfordshire Escalation Policy
State:
"Where professional disagreement arises regarding level of need or response, staff must follow the OSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy."
Add link:
https://www.oscp.org.uk/themes/oscp/assets/documents/Escalation-Policy.pdf

ANNEX OX5 — Oxfordshire Local Multi-Agency Procedures Manual
Add:
"Staff working with children in Oxfordshire must refer to OSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Procedures."
Link:
https://www.proceduresonline.com/oxfordshire/

Devon Annex

Annex: Devon Safeguarding Arrangements
This annex applies where Academics is providing services to children and young people in Devon. It should be read alongside our main Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, our safer recruitment procedures, our whistleblowing policy, and our procedures for managing allegations against staff, tutors, contractors and volunteers.

Local safeguarding partnership
The local safeguarding arrangements are led by the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership. The partnership works to ensure that key agencies work together effectively to safeguard children and help them receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

Reporting concerns about a child or young person
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If a member of staff, tutor, contractor or volunteer is worried that a child or young person has been harmed, is being neglected, or may be at risk of harm, they must report the concern immediately to the Academics DSL or a deputy DSL.
Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, emergency services must be contacted on 999.
Where there is a safeguarding concern about a child or young person in Devon, professionals should make a request for support through Devon's online request for support process.
If the concern requires an urgent response, the Devon Front Door should be contacted by telephone.
Devon Front Door contact number:
0345 155 1071
Where an urgent telephone contact is made, this should be followed up promptly by submitting the online request for support form.

When submitting a request for support, staff should include as much relevant information as possible, including:

- a clear summary of the current concern;
- any relevant historical concerns;
- what support has already been offered or put in place;
- the child or young person's needs and circumstances;
- the views of the child or young person, where known;
- the views of the parent or carer, where appropriate;
- the outcome being sought from children's services.

Further to this, informing the DSL (if not already done)

- DSL will follow up with Front Door if no notification of outcome is received.
- DSL will share all information with Devon in an appropriate way.

Staff should speak to parents or carers before making a request for support wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Consent should not be sought if doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person.

Out of hours, the Devon Emergency Duty Service should be contacted where an emergency social care response is required.

Devon Emergency Duty Service contact number:
0345 6000 388

The Emergency Duty Service operates outside normal office hours, including evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

Professional advice and consultation

Where there is uncertainty about the level of need, threshold for referral, or the most appropriate safeguarding response, the DSL or deputy DSL may seek advice through Devon's Professional Consultation Line.

The Professional Consultation Line is for professional use only and provides advice and guidance from the Front Door. The number should be available within the organisation. If the number is not known, it can be requested from Devon SCP.
Professional Consultation Line number requests:
devonscp@devon.gov.uk
Case details must not be sent to this email address. It should only be used to request the **Professional Consultation Line number**.
Where a discussion with the Professional Consultation Line identifies clear safeguarding concerns, staff may be asked to submit an online referral. If the concerns indicate that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, immediate details may be recorded during the call, and the online referral form should then be completed within four hours of the initial contact.

Managing an allegation against an adult working with children
If an allegation is made against any Academics employee, tutor, contractor, volunteer or other adult working on our behalf in Devon, we will treat the matter seriously and act without delay. This includes allegations or concerns that a person has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The concern must be reported immediately to the DSL or senior manager responsible for safeguarding. The person receiving the allegation must not investigate the matter themselves, ask leading questions, make assumptions, offer alternative explanations, promise confidentiality, or discuss the allegation more widely than necessary.

A clear written record must be made, including:

- the date and time the allegation was received;
- who raised the concern;
- who was present;
- what was said or observed;
- the circumstances in which the allegation was made;
- any immediate action taken to safeguard the child or young person;
- any witnesses or other relevant people;
- the rationale for any decisions made.

The DSL or senior manager will ensure that any immediate safeguarding action is taken to protect the child or young person and any other children who may be at risk.

The DSL or senior manager will then contact the Devon Local Authority Designated Officer for advice and oversight. The LADO is responsible for coordinating the response to concerns about adults who work with children.
Devon LADO contact details:
Telephone: 01392 384964
Email for LADO referrals:
childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
Email to request a LADO notification form:
ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Where the concern meets the LADO threshold, a LADO notification form should be completed in line with Devon's procedures. Referrals to the LADO should normally be made within one working day of the allegation being made.

If an allegation requires immediate attention and is received outside normal office hours, the DSL or senior manager should consult Devon's Emergency Duty Service or the police, and inform the LADO as soon as possible.

Academics will follow the advice of the LADO, children's social care, the police and any other relevant statutory agency. This may include a strategy discussion, an allegations management meeting, an internal investigation, referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, referral to a professional body, or other safeguarding action.
Any decision to suspend, remove from duties, restrict contact with children, or take alternative safeguarding measures will be made proportionately, based on risk and in consultation with the LADO where appropriate.
The welfare of the child or young person will remain the paramount consideration, while ensuring that the adult subject to the allegation is treated fairly and that information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
Recording and follow-up
All safeguarding concerns, referrals, advice received, decisions made and actions taken will be recorded securely by Academics.
Records will include the rationale for decisions, the names of professionals consulted, and any agreed next steps.
Academics will cooperate fully with Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Devon Front Door, the LADO, children's **social care, police, schools, local authority teams and commissioners as required.**

Surrey Annex

For all children and young people located in Surrey, Academics follows the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, including the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual, Surrey Continuum of Support, Surrey Children's Single Point of Access referral pathway, Surrey LADO procedures and Surrey escalation arrangements.

This annex should be read alongside Academics' Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding procedures, Safer Recruitment procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and any relevant commissioning or placement requirements.

1. Local safeguarding procedures

Academics recognises that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Staff, tutors, contractors, learning mentors and associates working with children and young people in Surrey must be familiar with and follow the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Where a child or young person is receiving provision in Surrey, staff must consider Surrey's local threshold guidance and Continuum of Support when identifying need, assessing risk and deciding whether early help, child in need or child protection action may be required.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported to the Academics Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and on the same working day. Where there is immediate risk of harm, staff must contact emergency services without delay.

2. Surrey Children's Single Point of Access

Surrey Children's Single Point of Access, known as C-SPA, is the front door for support, information and advice where there are concerns about a child or young person in Surrey.

C-SPA contact details:

Phone: 0300 470 9100

Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

Out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 01483 517898

Emergency: 999 if a child is at immediate risk of harm

Where a concern meets the threshold for referral to Children's Social Care, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or appropriate deputy, will make a referral to C-SPA using Surrey's Request for Support process. Referrals must not be delayed where delay may place a child at risk of significant harm.

3. Information to include in a Surrey safeguarding referral

When making a referral to Surrey C-SPA, Academics will provide relevant information where available, including:

- the child's full name, date of birth, address and current location;
- details of parents/carers and those with parental responsibility;
- the child's school, placement or education provider;
- the nature of the safeguarding concern and the impact on the child;
- any known risks relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harm, radicalisation, domestic abuse, missing episodes, county lines, serious violence or peer-on-peer harm;
- any relevant SEND, EHCP, health or communication needs;
- known involvement of other agencies;
- the child's wishes and feelings, where known;
- whether parents/carers are aware of the referral;
- whether informing parents/carers may increase risk to the child or compromise an investigation.

Where it is safe and appropriate, parents/carers will usually be informed that a referral is being made. However, this will not happen where doing so may place the child at further risk, compromise a police or social care investigation, or where statutory agencies advise otherwise.

4. Record keeping and information sharing

All safeguarding concerns, referrals, decisions, advice received and actions taken will be recorded accurately and promptly. Records will distinguish between fact, professional judgement and third-party information.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised staff with a legitimate safeguarding need. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education, data protection legislation and Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Academics will co-operate with Surrey Children's Services, police, health services, schools, placing authorities and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

5. Allegations against staff, tutors, mentors, contractors or associates

Any allegation or concern that a member of staff, tutor, learning mentor, contractor, volunteer or associate has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children,

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or designated senior manager.

For Surrey cases, Academics will follow the Surrey LADO procedure. The employer must inform the Surrey LADO within 1 working day of the allegation being made and before any further internal investigation takes place.

Surrey Duty LADO contact details:
Phone: 0300 123 1650, option 3
Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk

If an allegation requires immediate attention outside normal office hours, Academics will contact Surrey's Emergency Duty Team or the police and inform the LADO as soon as possible. Academics will work with Surrey LADO, Children's Social Care, the police, the placing school or commissioner, and any other relevant agency. Internal investigation or disciplinary action will not proceed in a way that could compromise statutory safeguarding enquiries.

6. Safer recruitment and suitability

Academics applies safer recruitment procedures to staff, tutors, learning mentors, contractors and associates working with children and young people. This includes identity checks, right to work checks, references, employment history checks, qualification checks where relevant, enhanced DBS checks with barred list checks where applicable, and suitability assessment for the role.

No individual will be placed with a child or young person unless appropriate checks have been completed and suitability has been confirmed. Any concerns arising during a placement will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and escalated in line with safeguarding procedures.

7. Online, home and community-based provision

Where provision is delivered online, in the home or in the community, Academics applies additional safeguarding controls. These may include pre-placement risk review, confirmation of agreed location, parent/carer or responsible adult arrangements where appropriate, session logging, professional boundaries, safe communication expectations, and clear escalation procedures.

Staff must report any change in risk, non-attendance, concerning behaviour, disclosure, environmental concern or safeguarding incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

8. Professional disagreement and escalation

Where Academics believes that a safeguarding concern has not been responded to appropriately, or where there is professional disagreement about threshold, risk or response, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow Surrey's escalation arrangements, including the Surrey FaST process where appropriate.

Staff must continue to escalate concerns until they are satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to safeguard the child.

9. Review

This Surrey annex will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, statutory guidance, commissioning requirements or Academics' safeguarding arrangements change.

Policy owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead
Applies to: All staff, tutors, learning mentors, contractors, associates and volunteers working with children and young people in Surrey.

ANNEX WOR1 – Worcestershire Safeguarding Annex

1. Worcestershire Safeguarding Statement
For all children and young people receiving provision within Worcestershire, Academics follows the safeguarding arrangements and multi-agency procedures of the **Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP)**.
Academics recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is committed to working collaboratively with:

- Worcestershire Children's Services
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP)
- Police
- Health professionals
- schools and educational settings
- local safeguarding partners
- Worcestershire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
Provision delivered under this DPS may take place within:

- pupils' homes
- community venues
- online environments
- alternative education settings
- schools (where applicable)

and safeguarding arrangements are designed to reflect these delivery models.
Academics will make direct safeguarding referrals where concerns meet threshold and will not rely solely on schools or referrers to make safeguarding referrals on the organisation's behalf.

2. Worcestershire Thresholds of Need
Academics recognises the Worcestershire safeguarding threshold framework and the importance of early identification and intervention.
Threshold levels include:
Level 1 – Universal Support
Needs met through universal services.
Level 2 – Early Help
Additional support required to prevent escalation of need.
Level 3 – Child in Need (Section 17)
Multi-agency intervention required where needs are complex or significant.
Level 4 – Child Protection (Section 47)
Immediate safeguarding intervention required where a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
All staff must consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately where concerns may meet Level 3 or Level 4 thresholds.

3. Worcestershire Referral Pathways
Worcestershire Family Front Door (Children's Services)
Telephone: 01905 822666
For safeguarding referrals, child protection concerns and Early Help discussions.
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)
Telephone: 01905 768020
Worcestershire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
Telephone: 01905 846221
Email: lado@worcestershire.gov.uk
For allegations against adults working with children and young people.
Police
Emergency: 999
Non-Emergency: 101
Prevent / Channel Referrals
Concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will consider referral to Prevent/Channel processes and Worcestershire safeguarding partners.
Adult Safeguarding
Telephone: 01905 768053
For safeguarding concerns relating to adults with care and support needs.

4. Home Tuition, Community and Online Safeguarding
Academics recognises that safeguarding arrangements for alternative provision and home tuition differ from mainstream school environments.
Enhanced safeguarding arrangements include:

- pre-placement risk assessments
- lone working considerations
- verification of tuition locations
- emergency contact procedures
- confirmation of adults present where appropriate
- secure online learning platforms
- session logging and monitoring
- professional boundaries guidance
- safeguarding escalation procedures

Where tuition takes place online, tutors must use approved communication platforms and maintain professional standards at all times.

5. Allegations Against Staff and Referral to LADO
Any allegation that a member of staff, tutor, volunteer or contractor has:

- harmed a child
- may have harmed a child
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children
- behaved in a way that may constitute a criminal offence

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
The DSL will consider whether referral to the Worcestershire LADO, Police or other statutory agencies is required.
Academics will not rely on schools or external organisations to make allegations referrals on its behalf where the organisation is directly involved in provision delivery.

6. Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
Academics recognises its responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty.
Staff must remain alert to indicators of:

- radicalisation
- extremism
- online exploitation
- vulnerability to terrorist influence

and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
Where appropriate, referrals may be made directly to Prevent or Channel safeguarding processes.

7. Mental Capacity and Informed Consent
Academics recognises that safeguarding decisions involving young people aged 16+ and vulnerable adults may require consideration of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
Staff should presume capacity unless there is reason to believe otherwise.
Safeguarding decisions should consider:

- informed consent
- coercion or exploitation
- best interests
- risks to safety and wellbeing

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will seek advice from relevant professionals where concerns arise regarding capacity or consent.

8. Policy Dissemination and Assurance
Safeguarding policies and updates are communicated to staff through:

- induction processes
- safeguarding training
- policy updates
- management briefings

- secure organisational systems

Staff are required to read and acknowledge safeguarding policies and updates.
Academics maintains assurance processes including:

- safeguarding supervision
- training records
- compliance monitoring
- incident reviews
- safeguarding audits

to ensure safeguarding procedures are understood and consistently followed.

9. Review
This annex will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- Worcestershire safeguarding arrangements change
- legislation or statutory guidance changes
- safeguarding learning or audits require updates.

Policy Owner:
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Academics

SOMERSET ANNEX

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
This Somerset annex should be read alongside Academics' Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding procedures, Safer Recruitment procedures, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, and any relevant commissioning or placement requirements.

1. Local safeguarding context
For all children and young people (CYP) located within Somerset, Academics follows the local safeguarding arrangements and procedures of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP), including local threshold guidance, referral pathways, allegations management procedures, professional escalation arrangements, and the South West Child Protection Procedures.
SSCP safeguarding partners include Somerset Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Integrated Care Board. Academics will work with Somerset Children's Social Care, Police, health professionals, schools, education settings, local safeguarding partners and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required to safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP.
Any safeguarding concern must be reported to the Academics Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible and on the same working day. Where a CYP is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact emergency services without delay.

2. Somerset continuum of need and thresholds
Academics recognises the Somerset Effective Support for Children and Families guidance and the importance of early identification, proportionate support and timely escalation. Somerset uses the following continuum of need:

Level of need	Summary for Academics staff
Universal Needs	CYP have no additional needs and their needs are met through universal services such as education, health, early years, youth services and community resources. No formal assessment is normally needed.
Additional Needs	CYP have additional needs that may affect health, education or social development. Support may be provided by a single agency or through a coordinated multi-agency response. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team Around the Family (TAF) should be considered.
Complex Needs	CYP and families have a range, depth or significance of needs not being met despite early help. A coordinated multi-agency response and more intensive intervention are required. Staff must consult the DSL if concerns may need to be stepped up.
Acute Needs	CYP have a high level of unmet or complex need, may be in need of protection, or may require statutory intervention. This includes Child in Need (Section 17) and Child Protection (Section 47) concerns where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm.

All staff must consult the DSL immediately where concerns may meet Complex or Acute Needs thresholds, or where there is uncertainty about the appropriate level of response.
Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a CYP is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, child protection procedures must be initiated and the matter must be referred to Children's Social Care. In an emergency, staff must call 999.

3. Somerset referral and advice pathways
The DSL, or appropriate deputy, will decide whether a Somerset referral is required. Referrals must not be delayed where delay may place a CYP at risk of significant harm. Staff must

continue to follow Academics internal reporting procedures even where another agency is also involved.
Professionals wishing to make a request for support or a referral to Children's Social Care should use the multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Child Protection form available through Somerset Professional Choices. Where Children's Social Care involvement is required, the completed form should be submitted securely to Somerset Direct / SD Inputters using the local process.

4. Key Somerset safeguarding contacts

Service	Contact details	Notes
Emergency - Police	999	Use if a CYP is at immediate risk of harm or a crime is in progress.
Police non-emergency	101	For police safeguarding concerns that do not require an emergency response.
Somerset Children's Social Care / Somerset Direct	0300 123 2224 childrens@somerset.gov.uk	For concerns that a CYP may be in danger, advice, urgent referrals and Somerset Direct contact.
Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)	0300 123 2327	For out-of-hours contact with a social worker.
Family Front Door Consultation Line for Professionals	0300 123 3078	For DSL/GP real-time advice where a professional is unsure about referral threshold or wants to discuss their thinking.
EHA / Child Protection form submission	Professional Choices EHA form SDinputters@somerset.gov.uk	For professional requests for support or referral to Children's Social Care using the Somerset multi-agency process.
Somerset LADO / Allegations Management	Allegations Reporting Form to: SDinputters@somerset.gov.uk Or phone Somerset Direct: 0300 123 2224 and request an ARF	For allegations against staff, tutors, contractors, volunteers or others working with children.
Prevent Police Team	01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk Out of hours: 101	For Prevent advice/referrals where the DSL considers a referral appropriate. Immediate high risk: 999.
CEOP	www.ceop.police.uk	Online exploitation and grooming referrals.

5. Information to include in a Somerset safeguarding referral
When making a referral or request for support in Somerset, Academics will provide relevant information where available, including:
the CYP's full name, date of birth, address and current location;
details of parents/carers and those with parental responsibility;
the CYP's school, placement, education provider or commissioning authority;
the nature of the safeguarding concern and the impact on the CYP;
what has been seen, heard, disclosed or reported, distinguishing fact from professional judgement;
any known risks relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harm, radicalisation, domestic abuse, missing episodes, county lines, serious violence or child-on-child harm;
any relevant SEND, EHCP, health, communication or accessibility needs;
known involvement of other agencies and any existing plan;
the CYP's wishes and feelings, where known;

whether parents/carers are aware of the referral and, if not, why not;
whether informing parents/carers may increase risk to the CYP or compromise an investigation; and
the immediate actions already taken to safeguard the CYP.
Where it is safe and appropriate, parents/carers will usually be informed that a referral is being made. This will not happen where doing so may place the CYP at further risk, compromise a police or social care investigation, or where statutory agencies advise otherwise.

6. Allegations against staff, tutors, contractors or associates
Any allegation or concern that a member of staff, tutor, volunteer, contractor or associate has behaved in a way that may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may not be suitable to work with children, must be reported immediately to the Academics DSL or designated senior manager.
For Somerset cases, Academics will follow the Somerset LADO and Allegations Management procedure. A notification to the LADO is made by completing the Allegations Reporting Form (ARF) and sending it to Somerset Direct / SD Inputters. Alternatively, Somerset Direct can be contacted on 0300 123 2224 to request an ARF.
The LADO Service provides advice and guidance to the DSL / case manager and may liaise with Somerset Children's Social Care and/or Avon and Somerset Police before advising the organisation. Internal investigation or disciplinary action will not proceed in a way that could compromise statutory safeguarding enquiries.

7. Home tuition, community and online provision
Academics recognises that safeguarding arrangements for alternative provision, home tuition, community provision and online provision can differ from mainstream school settings.
Enhanced safeguarding arrangements may include:
pre-placement and ongoing risk review;
confirmation of agreed tuition location and responsible adult arrangements where appropriate;
lone working considerations and clear emergency contact arrangements;
safe online platforms, session logging and professional communication boundaries;
monitoring of attendance, engagement, disclosures, online behaviour and environmental concerns;
prompt reporting of non-attendance, safeguarding incidents, changes in presentation or concerns arising during provision; and
secure recording and escalation to the DSL without delay.

8. Prevent, radicalisation and extremism
Concerns about radicalisation or extremism must be reported immediately to the Academics DSL. Staff should follow Academics safeguarding procedures and Somerset's Prevent guidance. For children and young people, Somerset advises that usual safeguarding steps should be followed before making a Prevent referral, and the DSL can seek advice via the DSL Consultation Line where appropriate.
If there is an immediate high risk, intent to harm or imminent travel abroad, staff must call 999. The Somerset Police Prevent Team is available Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 4.00pm on 01278 647466 or by email at PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk. Out of hours advice is available via 101.

9. Record keeping and information sharing
All safeguarding concerns, referrals, professional advice, decisions and actions taken will be recorded accurately, promptly and securely. Records must distinguish between fact, professional judgement and third-party information.
Safeguarding records will be accessed only by authorised staff with a legitimate safeguarding need. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education, data protection legislation, Academics procedures and Somerset safeguarding procedures.

10. Professional disagreement and escalation
Where Academics believes that a safeguarding concern has not been responded to appropriately, or where there is professional disagreement about threshold, risk or response, the

DSL will follow the Somerset Resolving Professional Differences Protocol. Staff must continue to escalate concerns until they are satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to safeguard the CYP.
Somerset expects attempts to resolve differences informally within agencies in the first instance. If agreement is not reached and the concern becomes stuck, the formal Resolving Professional Differences process should be followed.

11. Review
This Somerset annex will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, statutory guidance, commissioning requirements or Academics safeguarding arrangements change.
Policy owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead
Applies to: All staff, tutors, contractors, associates and volunteers working with children and young people in Somerset.

Herefordshire Annex

This annex applies where Academics is providing services to children and young people in Herefordshire. It should be read alongside our main Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, our safer recruitment procedures, our whistleblowing policy, and our procedures for managing allegations against staff, tutors, contractors and volunteers.

Local safeguarding partnership
The local safeguarding arrangements are led by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, whose safeguarding partners are Herefordshire Council, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board, and West Mercia Police.

Reporting concerns about a child or young person
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If a member of staff, tutor, contractor or volunteer is worried that a child or young person has been harmed, is being neglected, or may be at risk of harm, they must report the concern immediately to the Academics DSL or a deputy DSL.
Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, emergency services must be contacted on 999.
Where there is no immediate emergency but a crime may have been committed, West Mercia Police can be contacted on 101.
Concerns that a child has been harmed, is being neglected, or may be at risk of harm should be reported to the Herefordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
Herefordshire MASH contact details:
Telephone: 01432 260800
Email: ReferralsCYPD@herefordshire.gov.uk
Professionals should complete the Multi-Agency Referral Form when making a referral.
Out of hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01905 768020.
Where the concern does not appear to meet the threshold for immediate safeguarding referral but advice is needed, the Children's Help and Advice Team can be contacted on 01432 260261.

Managing an allegation against an adult working with children
If an allegation is made against any Academics employee, tutor, contractor, volunteer or other adult working on our behalf in Herefordshire, we will treat the matter seriously and act without delay.
This includes allegations that a person has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children;
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The concern must be reported immediately to the DSL or senior manager responsible for safeguarding. The person receiving the allegation must not investigate the matter themselves, ask leading questions, promise confidentiality, or discuss the allegation more widely than necessary.
A clear written record must be made, including the date, time, people involved, what was said or observed, and any immediate action taken to protect the child.
The DSL or senior manager will contact the Herefordshire Local Authority Designated Officer for advice and oversight.
Herefordshire LADO contact details:
Telephone: 01432 261739
Email: LADO@herefordshire.gov.uk
Where an organisation is informed of an allegation that a child may have been harmed, the LADO should be contacted within 24 hours. Where the matter is urgent, the LADO and Herefordshire MASH or Emergency Duty Team should be contacted without delay, with the written referral following as soon as possible and in any case within 48 hours.
Academics will follow the advice of the LADO, MASH, police and any other relevant statutory agency. This may include a strategy discussion where there is reason to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where a criminal offence may have been committed.

Any decision to suspend, remove from duties, restrict contact with children, or take alternative safeguarding measures will be made proportionately, based on risk and in consultation with the LADO where appropriate.
The welfare of the child will remain the paramount consideration, while ensuring that the adult subject to the allegation is treated fairly and that information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Recording and follow-up

All safeguarding concerns, referrals, advice received, decisions made and actions taken will be recorded securely by Academics.
Records will include the rationale for decisions, the names of professionals consulted, and any agreed next steps.
Academics will cooperate fully with Herefordshire safeguarding partners, the LADO, children's social care, police, schools, local authority teams and commissioners as required.