

Annual Safeguarding Statement of Assurance

Academic Year 2019 – 2020

1. Nexus Multi Academy Trust provides high quality educational provision for children and young people on roll at:
 - Abbey Special Academy, Rotherham;
 - Becton Hospital Academy, Sheffield;
 - Craggs Primary Academy, Rotherham;
 - Coppice Special Academy, Doncaster
 - Heatherwood Special Academy, Doncaster
 - Hilltop Special Academy, Rotherham;
 - Kelford Special Academy, Rotherham;
 - North Ridge Special Academy, Doncaster;
 - Pennine View Special Academy, Doncaster.

2. In 2019-20, 5 schools converted to become academies in Nexus MAT. These were:
 - Craggs Primary Academy (1 October 2019);
 - Heatherwood Special Academy (1 November 2019);
 - Coppice Special Academy (1 December 2019);
 - Becton Hospital Academy (1 April 2020);
 - North Ridge Special Academy (1 April 2020).

3. The Nexus MAT Board of Directors understands the safeguarding responsibilities placed upon the Trust as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 and considers them of vital importance.

4. The organisation meets its statutory requirements in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Scheme. Trust policy ensures all employees and volunteers who work with children and young adults have had appropriate checks and that these are recorded – along with other relevant information – on the Single Central Record of each academy.

5. Audits of the Single Central Record are undertaken twice a year by the Trust's HR Consultant. All 9 academies received an audit report with areas for action, which is reported to the LGB. A composite report is also submitted to the Standards Committee.

6. Through 2019-20, the Trust has purchased and implemented a new online Single Central Record for all academies to use, to ensure consistency of recording practice and streamline the audit process. This will be "live" from September 2020.
7. Safeguarding policies are up to date. Policies are reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and Local Governing Body (at least annually) and updated in response to national guidance and model documents issued by Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships.
8. There is a Board Director who is the named lead for safeguarding. The Board ordinarily reviews safeguarding across the organisation at least 3 times a year through the work of the Standards Committee, though this was reduced to 2 meetings in 2019-20 due to the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent business continuity disruptions.
9. The Trust executive lead for safeguarding is the Chief Executive Officer. Safeguarding is an area of focus in monthly supervision sessions between the CEO and all Headteachers.
10. Each academy has a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Each Designated Safeguarding Lead is offered half termly supervision from an external social work consultant, commissioned by the Trust. This is optional, though all DSLs engage in this process openly.
11. All staff have undertaken and are up to date with safeguarding training, both core and on specific subjects or themes (such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation etc). This is usually delivered the DSL in each school, who all attend training delivered by their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. In some case, external experts may be brought in to schools to deliver specific workshops on specialist subject areas. There is a plan in place in each academy which provides clear expectations of training. This is delivered through face to face sessions on school INSET and/or twilight sessions, with updates shared at regular whole-school workforce briefing sessions.
12. On 24 February 2020 the Trust hosted a whole-workforce conference which 5 of the academies engaged in (the other 4 did not due to their conversion timeline). A range of workshops were offered, many of which had content with underpinning theory to augment safeguarding knowledge. Such workshops included:

- Strategies to activate mastery of the emotional brain;
 - Foetal Alcohol Disorder and its impact on child development;
 - Understanding the impact of Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs in Children;
 - Responding to behaviours that challenge through a rights based approach;
 - Working with Attachment Disorder in Children.
13. Children and young people are supported to self-safeguard through each academy's personalised approach to delivery of the PSHE curriculum. All academies have been developing their revised Relationships & Sex Education policy in line with the requirement for this to be in place by September 2020.
14. Termly safeguarding audits are undertaken in each academy by an external auditor commissioned by the Trust. Reports are produced and submitted to local governing body meetings and the Trust's Standards Committee.
15. The Trust has a named e-safety lead for each academy and facilitates half termly network meetings to share best practice and ensure peer support and development opportunities are in place.
16. Each academy has a named link governor for safeguarding. Local Governing Bodies review safeguarding across their academy at least 3 times a year through the business meetings cycle for local governance. The reports submitted to LGBs are then amalgamated into a Trust-level report for the Standards Committee.
17. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020 and the subsequent closure of schools, local governance meetings did not take place in many academies for spring half term 2 and the summer term. The Chief Executive Officer oversaw all safeguarding matters in this period reporting directly to Directors, though - due to attendance being non-statutory and many parents choosing to keep their children at home - there was a significant reduction in the number of safeguarding concerns managed by the academies compared to more "normal" times.
18. Despite schools being officially closed, all Nexus MAT academies continued to operate a school offer where this was wanted by parents. Where families chose to not send their child into school, regular contact was made (weekly phone calls as a minimum), and schools continued to have heightened contact arrangements in place - and even home visits - where children were considered to be vulnerable (i.e. open to social care or early help services).

19. One of the major areas of focus for Nexus academies in the next academic year will be the impact on children when they return to a more normalised school schedule and structure. Whilst the term “recovery curriculum” has been utilised a lot in the media, the approach across Nexus academies will be to use the introduction of new Relationships & Sex Education Policies (a statutory requirement for September 2020) in conjunction with the PSHE curriculum to ensure mental health and wellbeing is a key part of a child’s education in the autumn term, as part of our wider safeguarding work.

20. Behaviour and wellbeing is reporting on separately to local governing bodies, to ensure a holistic view of safeguarding and welfare is presented.

21. In 2019-2020, Ofsted Pennine View school and found safeguarding to be effective. No other academies were inspected in this academic year.

22. The Nexus MAT Board has been assured by Ofsted that at Pennine View:
 - The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
 - Staff are well trained. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils feel safe. They say that this is because of the care of staff. They are taught about how to keep themselves safe from harm, including when online.
 - Trustees make sure that the statutory duties to safeguard pupils are met. Leaders check regularly to make sure that pupils in alternative provision are safe. This is also true for a small number of pupils who attend the school on a part-time basis. Leaders work well with other agencies and to protect vulnerable pupils.

23. On 9 July 2020 the Named Director for Safeguarding met with Headteachers from the Trust academies to discuss safeguarding practices in the schools, with particular focus in the impact of COVID-19. This was reported back to the Standards Committee at the meeting of 20 July 2020.

24. On the basis of this work, Nexus Multi Academy Trust confirms it has considered its position in regard to safeguarding children and has assurance that it is meeting requirements and is following good practice.

Name:	Peter Castleton
Designated:	Named Director – Safeguarding
Date:	20 July 2020