



Mater Ecclesiae

Catholic Multi Academy Trust

'One Family in Christ'

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT





Document Control

This document has been approved for operation within:	All Trust Establishments		
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1. Introduction

The Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust (Mater Ecclesiae) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people across the Trust. This policy statement provides the overarching ethos for safeguarding and child protection within all schools in Mater Ecclesiae. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and adhere to these standards.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All individuals who come into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals must ensure that, at all times, they should act in the best interests of the child or young person.

Each school within the Trust has a separate Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which can be found on the individual school's website. This will meet local arrangements and will be specific to each school, whilst also fulfilling the overarching Trust's safeguarding guidance contained in this policy statement.

2. Scope

All staff working with our children and young people, in any capacity, are expected to comply with this overarching ethos and to have regard to the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures within each school. This includes all directors, governors, employees, including casual and agency staff, self-employed or contractual workers, volunteers and any other students or trainees.

3. Equality Statement

This policy statement applies fairly to all employees irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation in accordance with the [Equality Act, 2010](#).

4. Policy and Procedures

All Mater Ecclesiae policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding children will be up to date and in line with DfE statutory guidance including:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 \(updated February 2024\)](#)
- [Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings 2022](#)
- [Revised Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales 2023 \(updated March 2024\)](#)
- [The use of social media for online radicalisation 2015](#)
- [Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2018 \(updated May 2024\)](#)

- [Multi agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation 2016, 2020](#)

Policies are accessible to staff through; the schools' websites, staff areas of the schools' IT network, the Trust website or shared documentation area.

There are a range of policies and procedures at each school/academy to manage the different aspects of safeguarding. These include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safe Use of ICT policies
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy
- Behaviour policy
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Educational Visits policy
- Staff code of conduct

This statement should also be read in conjunction with the Trust's 'Whistleblowing policy' and its 'Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff'.

5. Safeguarding Statement

We are committed to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the children and young people entrusted to our care at all times. All staff are trained to the required level as required by [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) (KCSiE).

In law, individual schools/academies are deemed to be 'relevant partners' of their local authority and as such are under a duty to cooperate in that local authority's Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. Mater Ecclesiae ensures compliance at a local level and also assumes a strategic responsibility to ensure that safeguarding practice is of the highest quality.

There are comprehensive safeguarding and child protection procedures in place at each school/academy which are available to download from their individual websites and from the school/academy on request.

Across the Trust, in order to protect our children and young people, we adhere to the following principles:

• **Establishing a Culture:**

All schools/academies will create an atmosphere where children and young people can feel secure, valued and listened to. All schools/academies will adopt the Trust's ethos of a shared responsibility towards safeguarding practice. This ethos should be evident throughout the school and be clearly visible to pupils, staff, parents and visitors. We will work closely with parents and carers to ensure timely and appropriate support.

• **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:**

Each school/academy is responsible for compliance with its Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures. Each school/academy will set out its statutory duties and its procedures for adults to raise concerns. This is personalised and relevant to each unique setting. The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for each school is published on the school website and will be reviewed at least annually. Each policy will cover all aspects of child abuse and neglect and include issues of female genital mutilation, Prevent, child sexual exploitation, sexual violence and sexual harassment, County lines, gangs, peer on peer abuse, child criminal

exploitation, mental health, serious violence and online safety. This list is not exhaustive and reflects the requirements of KCSiE.

• Continuous Professional Development and Staff Induction:

All staff, including support staff, directors and members of the local governing bodies, must read the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and reflect on it to demonstrate the move from compliance to impact. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at each school/academy must keep an up-to-date record of safeguarding training for each member of staff. In addition to induction training and annual training, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via emails, bulletins and staff meetings), as required, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and young people effectively.

All staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and what role they may need to play in any statutory assessments under the Children Act, 1989. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. Staff should be knowledgeable in how to spot early signs and symptoms of abuse.

Local governing bodies and the Board of Directors are regularly updated about safeguarding, child protection and anti-bullying policies and records.

• Safer Recruitment Practices:

The headteacher must know that all adults present in the school have been suitably vetted to be safe to work with children and young people. All relevant staff will have up to date current safer recruitment training. Mater Ecclesiae meets statutory requirements in relation to the government Disclosure and Barring Service – all staff and volunteers who work with children undergo an enhanced DBS check and online social media checks in line with KCSiE 2024.

The Trust ensures that there is an updated Single Central Record (SCR) of all Trust staff and Directors. Each school maintains its own updated SCR, which is regularly reviewed and audited.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that both their own conduct and that of others is safe. If staff have any concerns about the conduct of others, they must report this immediately to the Headteacher (or the CEO of the Trust if it is regarding the Headteacher) through the Trust's Whistleblowing policy.

The expectations of all staff on site is shared both during the recruitment and selection process and through a thorough induction, which occurs prior to commencing the role and also for those members of staff who have been on a long-term absence on their return to work. The staff code of conduct, Safeguarding policy and Behaviour policy must be read by all staff annually.

Recruitment and selection processes will be used to deter and reject unsuitable candidates. When making appointments, headteachers/heads of school will ensure that at least one panel member has completed appropriate safer recruitment training and that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of KCSiE (2024).

• **Safe Grounds and Perimeters:**

Schools/academies are encouraged to aim for a limited number of entry and exit to the site and these should be supervised at peak times. Traffic and road safety of pupils is paramount and vehicles and pupils should be carefully managed, particularly at the start and end of the school day. The school perimeters have appropriate fencing which is kept in good order. The use of CCTV cameras is in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). All visitors must be identified and recorded. Visitors that do not have DBS clearance are supervised at all times. All staff are accountable for ensuring that wherever young people are, they are safe. This means that they are responsible for reporting any health and safety concerns regarding classrooms or shared spaces to the relevant person.

• **Understanding the Community:**

All schools/academies must consider the risks to children and young people from the school community and the wider local community. Any prevailing local contextual risks or issues are assessed, and all made aware of these.

• **Internet Safety:**

All schools/academies must have regard for online safety. Social media and online safety feature strongly in sexual exploitation and grooming, radicalisation and financial scams and schools/academies must have measures in place to mitigate these risks. Appropriate IT filters must be in place at each school to prevent pupils accessing inappropriate materials.

• **Assessing and Managing Risk:**

All schools undertake an annual assessment of risk. Consideration is given to local, national and international risks and determining the most frequent and serious risks across the school. Risk assessments are completed as necessary. Critical incident planning is robust and is regularly practiced. This includes practising lock-down and fire evacuation procedures.

Risk assessments are completed on any places where children or young people are taken to be educated off-site or for residential trips or visits, work experience or alternative provision. Any trips or visits are appropriately risk assessed using the Evolve system.

All staff must operate within the health and safety regulations for the school or setting, including fire regulations, building regulations and procedures for legionella or asbestos. The Headteacher of each site is responsible for the letting or transfer of control to other agencies for use of the premises.

• **Curriculum:**

The curriculum in each school/academy links closely with risk assessment procedures and helps pupils to recognise, understand, cope and develop resilience to the risks around them. This is generally taught through the PSHE curriculum, supplemented by focus days or assemblies etc. Across the Trust, though a wide-ranging curriculum including PSHE, RSHE and SMSC opportunities that pupils are given many opportunities to learn about diversity, including faith, democracy, law and British values. Through this curriculum offer, children and young people explore their

understanding of life and their own experiences, such as health, nutrition, positive relationships and keeping themselves safe. The personal development curriculum at each school in the Trust covers all aspects of safety and wellbeing relating to children and young people. It is there to support them in managing current and future risks and develop the ability to manage difficult situations. It should also help children and young people to understand, in an age-appropriate way, concepts such as consent. The curriculum, and delivery of it, is also designed to give pupils a voice and opportunities to discuss and talk.

The RSHE curriculum in each school/academy reflects current best practice. Lessons are taught at an age and need appropriate level and include opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions. Signposts to additional support are highlighted if required.

• Developing Partnerships:

Partnership working is important in developing positive professional relationships with partners such as other schools, local authorities, health, social care and the police. DSLs attend forums and strategy meetings with external agencies to better understand risk and safeguarding in the local area.

• Transition Planning:

The Trust is committed to ensuring that at any transition points, such as nursery to Reception, KS2 to Y7 or Y11 into 6th form, or from mainstream to special settings or alternative provision, information is maintained and transferred effectively. Leaders ensure that there is timely sharing of information, and that all information is share in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations. Leaders ensure that any child protection files are transferred to the new setting as soon as possible and must be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt.

• Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out regularly by internal and external advisors, assuring the Board of Directors that:

- The Safeguarding Statement is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our academies' websites and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures.
- The academies contribute to inter-agency working in line with in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023 last updated February 2024)
- A senior member of staff from the leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that there is at least one deputy DSL(s) who is an appropriately trained member to deal with any issues in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ongoing reviews take place to ensure compliance & effectiveness of policy and practice.

This ensures that all schools/academies are compliant and up-to-date in their policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. Any serious incident is subject to a thorough review with the CEO, to include lessons learnt.



Anyone who is concerned about the safety or well-being of any child within Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust should in the first instance contact the relevant school/academy and ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

Trust contacts for safeguarding:

Peter Duffy CEO	Peter.duffy@mecmat.org
Damien Callagher Vice Chair of Directors and Designated Director for Safeguarding	Damien.callagher@mecmat.org
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