Modern Slavery Statement 2024-25

Introduction

This statement has been published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It sets out the steps taken by Southport Learning Trust during the financial year ending 31 August 2025 to prevent Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in its operations and supply chains.

Trustees have not had cause to believe that modern slavery practices have occurred within the Trust or within its supply chains, however, the Trust recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. The Trust is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking within its activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Trusts actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its business and supply chains.

Organisation Structure and Supply Chains

Southport Learning Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust, as of 31st August 2025, the Trust comprises of 8 schools (6,696 pupils, October 2024 Census) across the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton in Merseyside, England. The Trust is a single legal entity, a company limited by guarantee.

The Trust was established in 2017 for the sole purpose of supporting school improvement in our local family of schools and contributing to the concept of system leadership.

The average number of persons employed by the Trust during year ending 31st August 2025 was 845.

Values

> *Collaboration*
> Through powerful connectivity we harness the collective excellence of the schools across our Trust to maximise the impact we have on all of our students.

> *Equity*
> A commitment to overcoming all barriers ensuring all our pupils excel throughout their lives.

> *Sustainability*
> Taking our responsibilities seriously to consistently be a self-improving system to positively impact the future generations of our communities.

> *Innovation*
> Through innovative thinking and the agility to respond to opportunities, our school communities will have access to powerful networks.

Supply Chains

The primary focus of the Trust's business activities lies in delivering education services, supported by an extensive network of suppliers of varying sizes, most of whom are based in the UK. Our principal areas of supply include catering, maintenance and repairs, IT equipment, temporary staff provision, and cleaning services.

Total value of supplies in 24/25 =£11,601

Nearly all the Trust's suppliers, 99.9%, are based in the UK, with the exception being a few minor software subscriptions from companies in the US. The Trust takes pride in supporting local businesses within the Liverpool City region and the broader North/North-West UK area.

Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking

The following key policies and documentation detail our layered, multi-faceted approach in avoiding and deterring modern slavery and ensuring our supply chains are free from modern slavery. These include:

- Employee Handbook
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Children in Education Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Procurement and contracts
- Anti-Fraud Policy
- Gifts, Hospitality & Related Party Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

Identifying and addressing risks

The Trust acknowledges two primary risk pathways through which modern slavery could affect the organization. The first pathway involves safeguarding issues that could directly affect our students. The second pathway is through our supply chain and the vendors with whom we engage.

Procurement and supply chain

The Trust is dedicated to maintaining transparency in our operations and to addressing modern slavery in a manner that aligns with our responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We hold an expectation of equally high standards from all our contractors, suppliers, and business partners.

Our procurement processes undergo an internal audit and are evaluated yearly by external auditors. We are exploring the use of frameworks provided by public sector purchasing organizations for all tenders, which inherently comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Should we decide against utilizing an existing framework, we will ensure that the risk of modern slavery is considered and integrated into the criteria for tender evaluation.

We have completed a desk-based audit of our key suppliers' statements to reassure ourselves they continue to operate in accordance with the requirements of the act. No areas of risk were identified.

Safeguarding

The Trust places utmost importance on safeguarding, diligently adhering to statutory obligations and promoting a culture of protection among staff and students. A fundamental principle of our safeguarding strategy is the belief that safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Each employee is individually accountable for being aware of the signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns, understanding our safeguarding policies and procedures, and being prepared to respond effectively.

Within each school, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed to take the lead on safeguarding responsibilities. Additionally, each school is supported by a Safeguarding Governor, who regularly meets with the DSL to review crucial elements of their role and assists with reporting and the execution of annual audits as required by Section 157/175. This role also serves to reassure the local governing board about the school's safeguarding effectiveness.

At Trust level, a Trust Safeguarding Lead has been appointed to support the school-based DSLs, and a Safeguarding Trustee has been appointed to provide assurance to the of the effectiveness of safeguarding in the across the Trust.

Consequently, each level of Trust governance undertakes evaluations to assess the quality and impact of safeguarding measures.

Training for staff

All employees receive annual Safeguarding training which incorporates modern slavery.

All staff members, regardless of their role or location, receive safeguarding training.

Moreover, the Trust maintains a Whistleblowing Policy that allows individuals to report wrongdoing or legal breaches confidentially and without fear of disciplinary repercussions.

In the 2024/25 period, to further elevate awareness, Key staff members within the Trust, identified as being either engaged in large-scale procurement activities or positioned to evaluate risks related to modern slavery, receive annual 'Modern Slavery Awareness' training through the Trust's online compliance and training platform, SmartLog.

After completing this course, key staff members will understand:

- What modern slavery is and how it affects those in the UK.
- The main types of modern slavery.
- Who the victims of modern slavery are and how they are exploited.
- How to identify victims of modern slavery.
- How to report concerns and incidences of modern slavery, and the actions taken behind the reports.