



THE FORGE

TRUST

**Safeguarding Lead Handbook:
Reference Guide for
Safeguarding Leads in
The Forge Trust**

September 2024 Version 6

Written by Mrs Joanne Knapp (Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust)

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the number one priority in The Forge Trust.

This handbook is designed for Safeguarding Leads who work in academies within The Forge Trust.

Aim:

- The Forge Trust is based on a set of non-negotiables that define what an excellent education should look like in the 21st Century. At the heart is the 'whole child'.
- We believe that unless every child is properly safeguarded, they cannot achieve their full potential.
- A child who is suffering from any form of abuse cannot truly be at their best. Therefore, it is a requirement that all staff who work within The Forge Trust, should ensure that safeguarding is the central concern.
- To enact this vision across multiple schools is both exciting and challenging. The Forge Trust has clear structures in place to meet our central commitment to safeguarding every child in our care.
- This handbook is to ensure that safeguarding practice is consistent throughout The Forge Trust and therefore provide Safeguarding Leads the tools and information to do this.

2.) The Forge Trust Safeguarding Leads

- Safeguarding within a Multi-Academy Trust, begins at a strategic level. To be able to safeguard all pupils across a Multi-Academy Trust, it is essential to have safeguarding as a core aim and then ensure that there is a strong, robust leadership structure. This will support the practical implications of day to day safeguarding in the complex, fast changing environments found in academies within The Forge Trust
- For this reason we have a Senior and Deputy Safeguarding Lead of The Forge Trust (Mrs Jo Knapp and Mrs Sally Bowler). These two leads ensure that the Trust is always totally up to date with the new advice and ever-growing requirements placed upon schools to ensure that all pupils are properly safeguarded. The Senior and Deputy Safeguarding Leads receive regular continuing professional development (CPD) by attending both local and national CPD events.
- The Trust Safeguarding Leads are also responsible for ensuring that the Trust's safeguarding provision within academies within the trust are fully compliant with requirements and, importantly, represent best practice that goes beyond the requirements of regulatory bodies. They are supported in this role leading an annual review of the safeguarding standards of academies within The Forge Trust using The Forge Trust Audit document featured later in this handbook.

| **Contact details:**

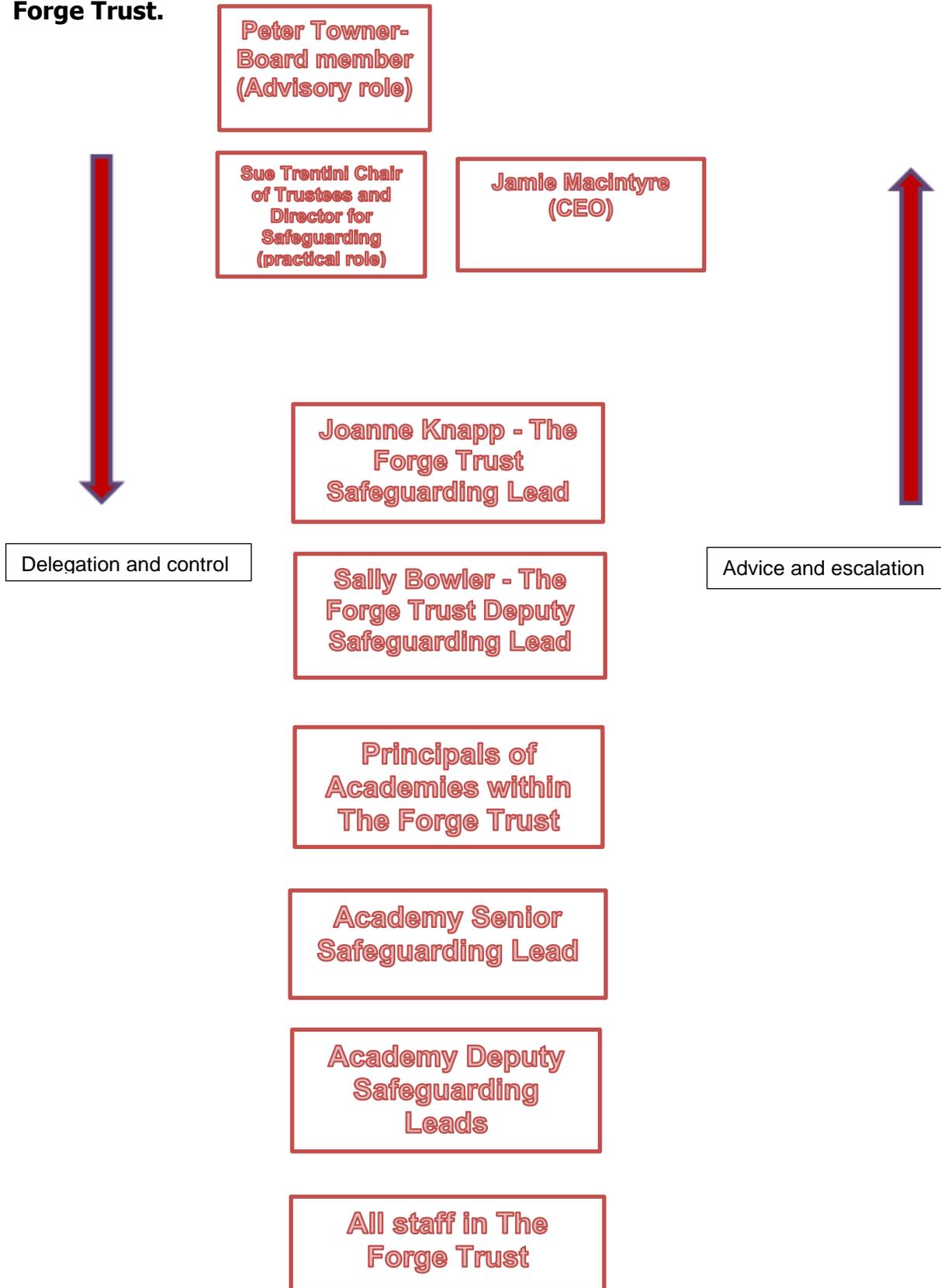
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3.) The Forge Trust Safeguarding Escalation and Roles

Below details the Safeguarding Scheme of Delegation structure within The Forge Trust.



4.) Responsibilities of Safeguarding Leads in academies within The Forge Trust

Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023

Trustees 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.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual academies as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding lead(s). Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead; this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;
- support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Work with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- liaise with the principal to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) within The Forge Trust should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure that the academies child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- ensure the academies child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with The Trust Safeguarding Leads and Board of Trustees.
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this; and
- link with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
 - Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads for The Forge Trust and attend The Forge Trust Network meetings.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during academy hours) for staff in the academy to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual academies, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable.

It is a matter for individual academies and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

5.) Reporting to the Chief executive and the Board of Trustees.

- Each academy joining the Trust will be audited against The Key- safeguarding audit and The Trust's safeguarding documentation for Safeguarding. This will take place in their first term of joining The Forge Trust. If an audit of safeguarding reveals any areas for improvement, the Forge Trust Senior and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will intervene directly liaising with the academy Safeguarding Lead and Principal to enact the necessary improvement.
- Each academy in The Forge Trust is reviewed annually against The Forge Trust audit for safeguarding. This takes place as part of the Principals Peers Review (Annual Academy Health check) during the summer term. The audits are led by the Forge Trust Senior and/or Deputy Safeguarding Lead if the school is 'Requires Improvement' or has been previously rag rated as red in a number of areas. Otherwise it is the responsibility of the academy Safeguarding Lead to annually complete The Forge Trust audit document.
- The board of directors receives a composite report at Trustee meetings about safeguarding which details individual academies performance in relation to the safeguarding audit. The individual academies safeguarding rag rating and action plan will be used as a source of reference.
- Safeguarding Leads will also have to complete a report to Trustees documents and this will be given to Jo Knapp who will collate an overall report to Trustees using this document. Jo Knapp will attend the Trustee Meetings in the Autumn, Spring and Summer term.
- **We ensure that safeguarding is always a top priority at every meeting of the Trust's Governance Structure.**

5) The Forge Trust Safeguarding Network Group

These will be led by the Senior and Deputy Safeguarding Leads for the Forge Trust (Mrs Jo Knapp & Mrs Sally Bowler) and are for academy safeguarding leads and deputies to attend. The Trustee Director for Safeguarding will also be invited to attend the meeting. The meetings will be held every half term at one of the academies in the trust or via TEAMS.

The purpose of these meetings are:

- To share good practice;
- To verify any queries to Safeguarding policy and procedure within The Forge Trust;
- To identify any Safeguarding training requirements;
- To discuss trends in safeguarding across the MAT identified in audits.

- To share information of changes or additions to local guidance;
- To discuss serious case review recommendations;
- Reflecting on the outcome of safeguarding incidents within academies within The Forge Trust.
- Opportunities for safeguarding leads to seek advice.

6) Safeguarding Training across The Forge Trust

'All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. All staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024'

Monitoring of training at a trust level

- The Senior Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust holds a centralised list to track statutory training of staff and SL's within academies within The Forge Trust.
- It is the individual academies Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure that the statutory training is booked and completed within their academy. This needs to be communicated when completed to the Senior Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust and will be overseen and monitored at a Trust Level.
- The Senior and deputy Safeguarding Leads from the trust will identify training themes across the trust which need addressing through the safeguarding audits.

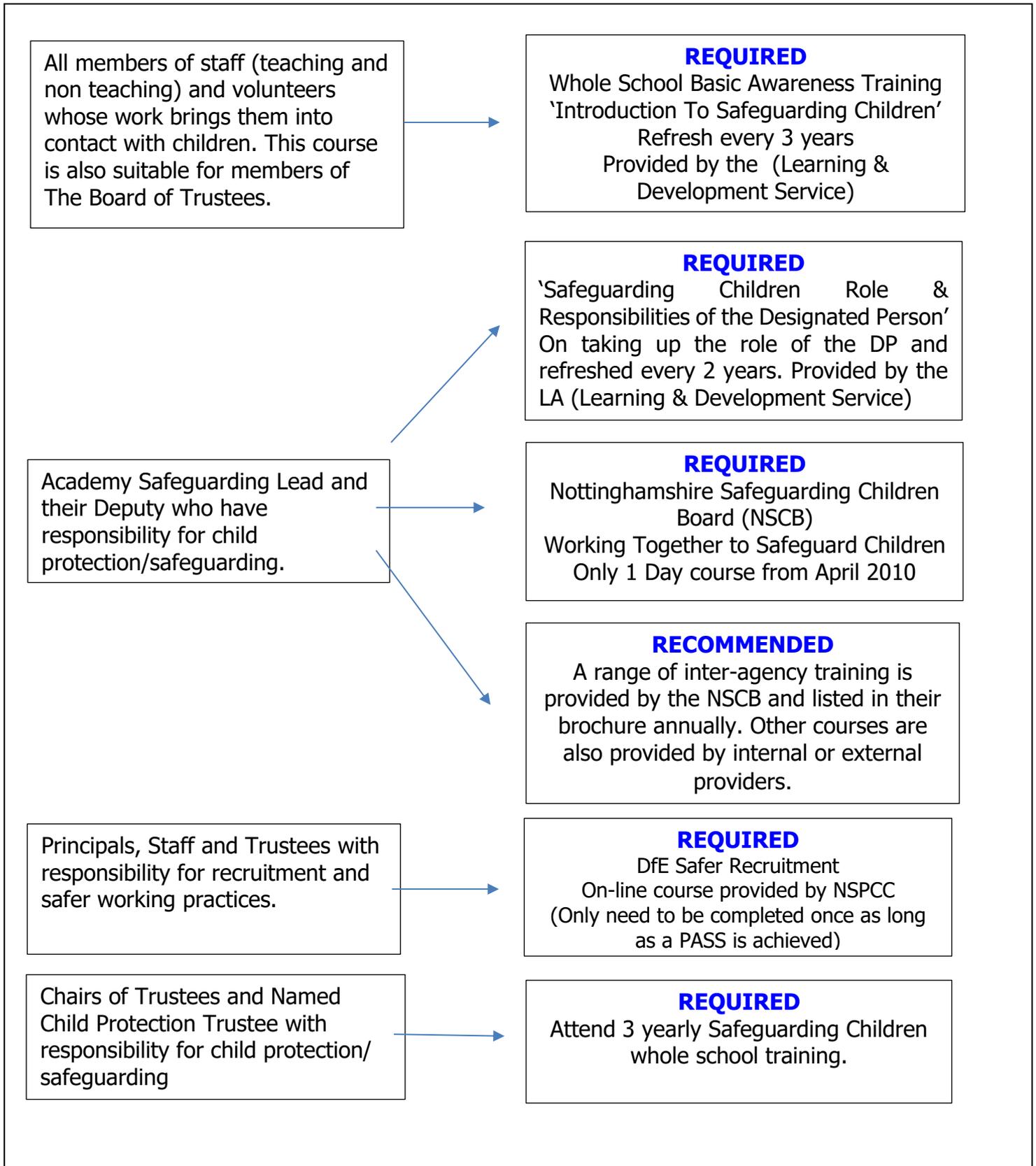
This training may be given through:

- The safeguarding focus group meetings;
- The senior/deputy safeguarding lead for the Trust, who may provide training power points for safeguarding leads to present in staff meetings within their individual academies;
- Academy safeguarding leads being directed to appropriate online safeguarding training by the Senior/Deputy Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust;
- Common trends training needs across the trust being planned into particular training courses for staff within the Forge Trust to attend. These will be led by the senior/deputy Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust.

The Forge Trust Safeguarding Training Minimum Expectations:

- All statutory training detailed in the chart on the page below needs to be completed.
- As a trust, we stipulate that DT's have to have their DT training up to date and attend at least one face to face training and two online training modules per year. These should be current, recommended courses recommended by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.
- DT should attend the Forge Trust Safeguarding Network Groups as training may be incorporated into these meetings.
- All other employed staff need to have had a safeguarding induction when they join the Academy (refer to The Forge Trust Induction Policy) including online prevent duty training, attend the LA Statutory Basic Introduction to Safeguarding (3 yearly) and access a minimum of two other training refresher training sessions throughout the year (this could be in-house by their DT's or by them completing an online module).

Below details the statutory and recommended Safeguarding training



8.) Resolving professional disagreements with social care escalation within The Forge Trust

Resolving Professional Disagreements (Escalation Procedure)

In the first instance always speak with your Principal about any unresolved issues. If the matter involves a professional from another agency (such as Social Care) ensure you contact their line manager, preferably in writing to clearly express the concerns and where appropriate suggest solutions. Please follow the guidance below explicitly and inform Mrs Jo Knapp or Mrs Sally Bowler when you have entered escalation procedures without delay.

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1. Introduction

Problem resolution is an integral part of interagency working to safeguard children. It is often a sign of developing thinking within a dynamic process and can indicate a lack of clarity in current procedures or approach. Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies and a commitment to genuine partnership working. As part of this there needs to be a system in place to enable disagreements to be resolved to the satisfaction of practitioners and organisations involved. The aim should be to resolve difficulties at practitioner level between organisations, where this is possible, but where not the disagreement should be escalated until a resolution is achieved. Disagreements should not be left unresolved.

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around **thresholds, roles and responsibilities, the need for action and communication.**

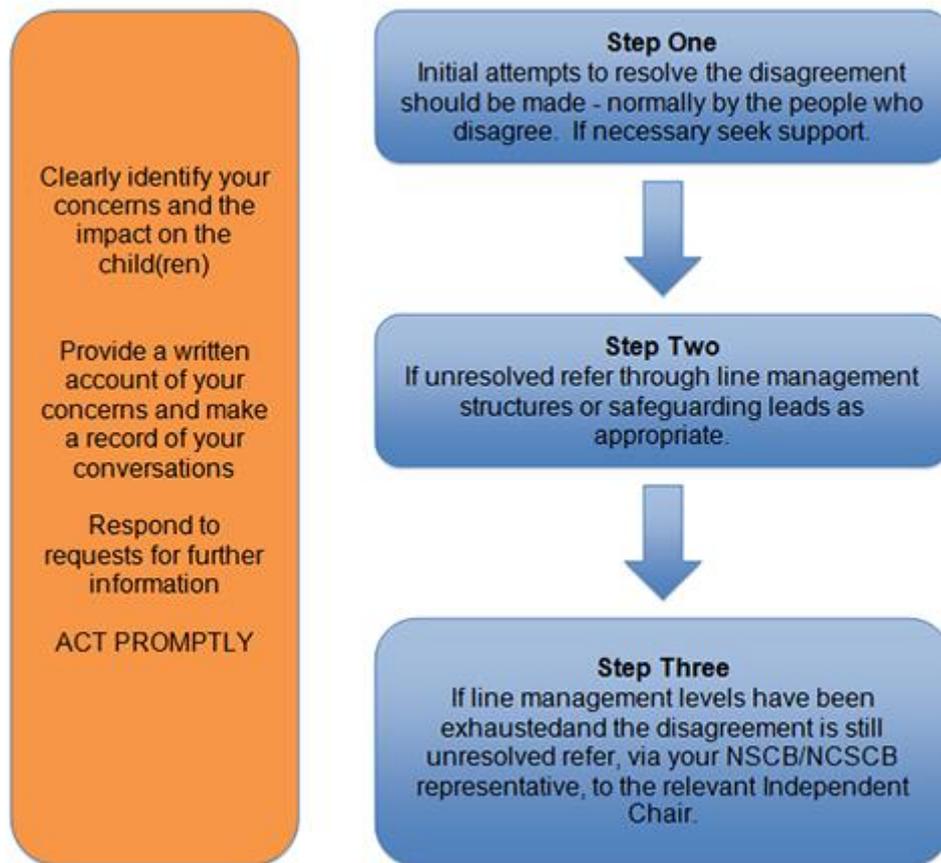
It is important:

- To avoid professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child;
- To resolve difficulties (within and) between organisations quickly and openly;
- To identify problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity in existing procedures and to promote resolution via necessary amendments.

Throughout any dispute between individuals or organisations practitioners must remain child focused. The safety of individual child(ren) remain the paramount considerations.

With any dispute about thresholds, please refer to the appropriate pathway documents (Family Support Pathway in the City, Pathway to Provision in the County) to help articulate your concern.

2. Procedure



Step One

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem. This should normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised however that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some practitioners to pursue this unsupported. Practitioners should consult with their line manager or The Forge Trust Safeguarding lead as appropriate.

Step Two

If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the practitioner's own line manager or their organisations safeguarding children lead, who will discuss with their opposite number in the other agency. At this stage it may be useful for the line managers/safeguarding children leads to agree a meeting between themselves and the concerned practitioners to assist with the exploration of the problem.

If the problem remains unresolved the line managers will refer to their line managers for consideration. This process will continue until a resolution can be found.

Note: some organisations may not have a defined line management structure and in these circumstances the practitioner with concerns about an unresolved disagreement should take responsibility for raising their concerns through the line management structure in the other agency.

Step Three

In the rare circumstances where the problem cannot be resolved through line management arrangements, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) who will offer mediation. Ideally, their agency representative on the relevant SCB will contact the Independent Chair and inform the Board Manager of this action. Where felt appropriate, a mediation meeting will be set up involving as a minimum the SCB Chair, the respective organisations Board representatives and the SCB manager.

A clear record should be kept at all stages, by all parties. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

When the issue is resolved, any general issues should be identified and referred to the agency's representative on the SCB for consideration by the appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) panel or group to inform future learning.

It may also be helpful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

3. Timescales

The timescale within which the processes set out above should take place will be dependent on the nature of the disagreement and what this may mean for the safety of the child. In some circumstances immediate action will be merited and progress through agency line management routes will need to take place **within 1 working day** and, in circumstances where there continues to be disagreement, the issue will be brought to the attention of the Independent Chair the following working day. In less urgent cases the whole process should be completed within no more than **4 weeks**.

4. Effective Escalation

When trying to resolve professional disagreements remember to:

- Clearly identify your concerns;
- Describe the impact on the child(ren);
- Set out what work has already been undertaken;
- Put all of the above in writing and provide it to the other agency and record details of conversations;
- Be responsive to obtaining/providing any additional information requested.

9.) Managing allegations of abuse by staff members in The Forge Trust

If staff members have concerns about another staff member, then this should be referred to the Principal or other agency representative. Where there are concerns about the Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Trustees and allegations should be reported directly to the designated officer(s) at the local authority. Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and make any referral via them.

If there has been an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff, this also needs to be immediately reported to the Trust Safeguarding Lead Mrs Joanne Knapp.

Please refer to The Forge Trust Safeguarding Policy for more guidance.

10.) Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

11.) Monitoring the quality of safeguarding provision within The Forge Trust

All schools who join The Forge Trust will be expected to follow the policy and procedures in The Forge Trust Safeguarding Policy document and also in this Safeguarding Leads handbook. This is non-negotiable and is essential to ensure a consistent approach throughout the trust in relation to safeguarding.

Trust level safeguarding monitoring:

- Academies who join The Forge Trust will undergo a Safeguarding monitoring visit by both or either the Senior and Deputy Safeguarding Lead for The Forge Trust. This will take place in the first term of the academy officially joining The Forge Trust.
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- Safeguarding will then be part of the Principal Peer Review Annual Academy Health Check. The Trust Senior Safeguarding Lead (assisted by the Deputy Safeguarding Lead) and Trustee Safeguarding Director will complete the Safeguarding Audit Documents and this will form part of the annual review of academies within The Forge Trust.
- This is to verify the strengths and weaknesses of safeguarding policy and procedure in the academies who are in The Forge Trust.
- This will then inform an action plan which will be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to follow within the academy.
- A monitoring visit will then take place in the following term to check the actions have been followed.
- The aim is for all academies to achieved green in the rag rating of all the sections of The Forge Trust Safeguarding and Prevent audit document.
- The outcome of Safeguarding audits for academies within The Forge Trust will be summarised a reported to the Board of Trustees, executive principals and relevant hub leaders.

Academy level monitoring:

- Safeguarding leads will be expected to be monitoring safeguarding provision in their academy as part of their role as Academy Safeguarding Lead. These will be in the form of informal monitoring 'drop ins' and also by completing the annual safeguarding audit which has to be submitted to the Local Authority.
- More guidance and support will be given through The Forge Trust Safeguarding network group meetings.

Any monitoring completed by academy safeguarding leads should be emailed to the Trust Senior Safeguarding Lead to be collated in a central place. j.knapp@theforgetrust.co.uk

12.) Mandatory documents for Safeguarding Leads to be familiar

This handbook should be read in conjunction with other Forge Trust linked policies including:

- The Forge Trust Safeguarding guidelines booklet
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Induction Policy
- Preventing extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality and diversity Policy

Statutory documents listed below should also be referred to:

- Working together to safeguarding Children – 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Sept 2024
- Pathway to Provision V9.1
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused
- Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF)
- 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism', HM Government, 2015
- DFE Monitoring and Filtering Guidance

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb>

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb>

13.) Safeguarding File Contents Page

- 1.) Safeguarding Policy Document
- 2.) Safeguarding Guidelines Handbook
- 3.) Single Central Records Policy
- 4.) Induction Policy
- 5.) Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- 6.) Safer Recruitment Policy
- 7.) Whistleblowing Policy
- 8.) Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- 9.) Prevent Duty Guidance and Audit Document
- 10.) Safeguarding Training and Induction Logs
- 11.) Safeguarding Training Certificates
- 12.) Safeguarding Audit Document and action plan
- 13.) The Forge Trust Safeguarding focus group documents
- 14.) CPOMS documents
- 15.) Monitoring of Safeguarding in school logs
- 16.) Safeguarding Reports to Trustees
- 17.) Managing Allegations documentation
- 18.) Safeguarding Templates

