

## Safeguarding Policy

<b>Responsible</b>	College DSLs
<b>Approved by</b>	Trust Board
<b>Approval date</b>	October 2023
<b>Date for review</b>	October 2025
<b>Date for next review</b>	October 2026

# POLICY

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## Purpose

Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust (BFMAT) has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that each Academy functions with a view to safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults attending academies across the Trust

## Scope

This policy applies to Better Future's Multi-Academy Trust which will be referred to as BFMAT for the purposes of the policy.

This policy acts as an overarching statement of our approach to safeguarding and the key components of that. Alongside this policy each Academy has a College/Academy Safeguarding Policy, overseen by the college Academy DSL together with the Senior Leadership Team and the LGB. These Policies will also be reviewed at Trust level by the Trustee Safeguarding Leads.

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## Definitions

*A summary of key terminology used within the Policy, if useful and applicable.*

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## Equality Statement

Equality, freedom and treating all persons with dignity and respect are fundamental human rights. As such, BFMAT is committed to making these central in all its work.

A diverse student body and workforce benefit BFMAT's role as a provider of high quality education and employment in a modern and ever-changing society. BFMAT is firmly committed to the promotion of equality and will not unlawfully discriminate, or tolerate discrimination (direct or indirect, harassment or victimisation) on grounds of age, disability, ethnicity (including race, colour, caste and nationality), gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation; this includes discrimination by association or due to perception. This policy will operate in furtherance of this.

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## The Policy

Better Futures MAT believes that a child or young person under the age of 18 should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our students and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

BFMAT has accountability and overall responsibility for the safeguarding of Young People and Vulnerable Adults across its academies. BFMAT assumes a strategic responsibility to ensure compliance at a local level. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring that all academies:

- Provide a safe learning environment for our students
- Identify those students who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant physical and/or mental harm, and/or impairment of their life chances and opportunities to learn and achieve. Staff will maintain an awareness that students can be at risk of harm outside their family situation, and that mental health problems may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation or the risk of any of these
- Have a whole trust approach to online safety. Each college ensures ALL staff and governors are aware of filtering and monitoring, including theirs and others roles and responsibilities in safeguarding those online.
- Take appropriate action to see that such our students are kept safe, both at home and at the College and have access to all appropriate support to improve their life chances. This may include referrals to external agencies and Safeguarding Partners such as Social Services and/or the police, either directly or through the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH)
- Encourage families to report any concerns and work with them to resolve issues through restorative practice
- Promote the welfare of our students in need of additional support even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk of harm
- Be aware that students whose life situation requires the appointment of a social worker are at higher risk of safeguarding concerns
- Appoint a Safeguarding team comprising staff who have been trained in line with county safeguarding regulations. This team will be led by a senior leader assuming the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Share relevant information with colleagues and external partners to improve understanding and provide holistic support to students who are experiencing threats to their safety and well-being
- Share information with Safeguarding Partners to facilitate the care and support of our students. It should be noted that in relation to safeguarding, GDPR does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe
- Engage with local and national police forces to engage with their programmes and initiatives, such as Operation Encompass
- Be alert to and keep abreast of developments and new requirements as highlighted in KCSIE 2025, regarding safeguarding issues which are named in our local safeguarding policies. This includes, but is not limited to;
  - Where students are placed in Alternative Provision (AP), academies must obtain written confirmation from the provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed. The commissioning academy retains responsibility for the student's safety and must regularly review the suitability of the placement.
  - Virtual School Heads now have an expanded role that includes supporting children in kinship care. Staff should be aware of this when working with students who are looked after or previously looked after.

- Language used in safeguarding documentation and communication should reflect inclusive practice, avoiding terms such as ‘disorder’ or ‘spectrum’ in line with updated SEND guidance.
  - This includes updates to safer recruitment checks, including online searches, and awareness of cybersecurity risks as part of safeguarding.
  - Staff should also be aware of new resources to support this, such as those from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation.
  - The DfE’s ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ guidance is now statutory. All academies must ensure accurate daily attendance registers are submitted and that persistent absence is treated as a potential safeguarding concern.
  - Awareness of risks associated with misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories, as well as the use of generative AI tools. Staff and IT teams must refer to the DfE’s ‘Plan Technology for Your School’ and associated AI safety guidance to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring is in place
- Keep abreast and implement all Government guidance on safeguarding by updating policy and procedures
  - Be alert to the Counter-Terrorism Local Profile for the region of each College
  - Recognise and aim to prevent our students being drawn into terrorism by teaching them how to recognise malevolent influences and by embedding British values across the curriculum and in the general college ethos
  - Teach our students to understand and manage risk and the value of healthy relationships, including sexual relationships. This covers recognising when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Students are taught about safeguarding, including online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum
  - Challenge child on child sexual abuse and harassment in any form and teach our students to recognise and report this
  - Challenge all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form and teach students and staff to recognise the signs and report.
  - Empower our students by teaching them how to help keep each other safe
  - Follow safeguarding guidelines when delivering online learning to ensure that parents have been informed and that students and staff are protecting themselves
  - Raise parent awareness of online threats to children and young people and encourage them to contact us with any concerns
  - Establish procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff , whether or not these reach threshold for external referral. This includes supply staff and contractors.
  - Follow the legal guidelines regarding the safe recruitment of staff. Inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be carried out as part of due diligence checks
  - Ensure that all new staff are trained in the principles of safeguarding and the individual procedures in place in each college within the MAT. All existing staff will receive regular refresher training to incorporate updated guidance, advice, and procedures
  - Monitor the quality of safeguarding practices and their impact on outcomes for young people across the Trust and provide regular reports to the Trust Board
  - Maintain and review an individual Academy Safeguarding Policy, with detailed processes and procedures relevant to each Academies’ local context.