

DIARY DATES

Good Friday
25th March 2016

Safeguarding Conference
April 20th

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DfE Consultation: Children Missing in Education

The DfE have recently published a consultation document: Improving information in identifying children missing education. The consultation has now closed however it follows recent Ofsted inspections of schools in several LAs which raised concerns about inconsistent practice and poor communication in identifying children who missing education (CME) are putting them at risk of harm. You can download the consultation document here:

www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/cmconsultation

Welcome to the first edition of the ATT Safeguarding Newsletter

My name is Brett Westwood and I am a Director of Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) and the link director for safeguarding across The Trust.



The statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education clearly states that everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children and young people can learn. They also have the responsibility to identify any children or young people who may be at risk of harm, take appropriate action to keep them safe and work with other agencies as needed.

I meet regularly with Pat Hunt, Senior Improvement Advisor, for updates of all policy, procedures and developments across the academies. We look at the Safeguarding Audits and Action Plans and review the progress and their impact. I report these findings to the Board of Directors at every Board meeting. I know how important this is to The Trust and how seriously the Directors of ATT take their duty to safeguard all of our children and young people.

I am sure that regular newsletters from Pat and her team will provide us all with current updates of local and national policy, case reviews and lessons to be learnt. This will help us all to continually improve our systems and strategies and keep safeguarding at the center of all that we do.

The second Safeguarding conference will be held on April 20th Birmingham. We are pleased that Dai Durbridge, from Browne Jacobson will be our main speaker who will give advice on reporting and dealing with allegations against staff.

Bomb Alerts

As you are aware we all need to be extremely vigilant and prepared should your academy receive a potential bomb threat. Recent bomb threats to schools affected fourteen schools in London, West Midlands and Cornwall.

Information from the West Midlands Police has been shared with you however you must make sure you have revisited your critical incidents plans. On Friday 29th January 2016, after these 'malicious hoax communications to schools' the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) sent out guidance to schools, and is outlined below. You can download the guidance letter from NaCTSO here: www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/nactso

Andrew Hall (safeguarding in schools) states "it is important to strike the balance between preparedness and risk management. There are several cases where schools in the UK have rehearsed 'lock down' procedures with children which have made them very scared and, sometimes, not want to go to school again afterwards. It is important to have a plan that informs key staff, without unnecessarily alarming students or other staff.

Communications is a key aspect in these situations, so make sure that all emergency numbers are close to hand (and probably inputted into mobile phones already). Don't forget that your reception team will probably be the first to hear about an emergency and pupils may be sharing on social media before management know, which may raise other concerns.

Stonewall

The government estimates that six percent of the UK population, around 3.9 million people, identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGBT). Estimates suggest that one percent of the UK population, around young people per class group and one trans young person per year group, and many more students may be questioning or feel unsure about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Rightly Ofsted is looking very carefully at how well our academies are supporting these groups of pupils. Stonewall is a charity that champions for the right of LGBT and has a wealth of information via <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us>

Hosting a speaker

When hosting a speaker (either during or outside of school hours), schools may wish to consider carrying out the following research before agreeing to host:

- The topic of the event (including the purpose of the speaker's visit and the appropriateness for the audience).
- The speaker's reputation and who may be prompted to attend, particularly whether the speaker or members from the organisation they represent have a reputation for causing disruption at venues.
- Any risks to the school's reputation and ethos.
- The status of the speaker, including their previous comments, by carrying out checks on internet search engines and across social media sites. When carrying out internet searches, it is good practice to look beyond the first page of results.
- Whether you consider there to be potential for speakers to use language intended to stir up hatred or incite violence.
- The views of the Community safety team/ local police/ LA Prevent coordinator if you have any concerns. Schools should consider these steps for every event that they host.

Early Years Settings: Staff using their own cameras to photograph children

An Ofsted report about a nursery in Kent downgraded the nursery from 'outstanding' (in 2009) to 'inadequate' (Oct 2015) partly because staff were using their own phones to take photos of children and sending them to their parents.

The Ofsted judgement in Leadership and Management said, 'Children are not safeguarded effectively. Staff use personal mobile phones to photograph children at the setting. The provider/manager lacks understanding of the risks this presents to children and does not monitor the use of mobile phones effectively to ensure children's safety'.

Since 2009 of course there have been a number of high profile cases involved staff in nurseries photographing their abuse of young children, most notable being the case of Vanessa George at a nursery in Plymouth.

The 'Early Years Framework' (September 2014) (see paragraphs 3.4 and 3.6) and 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills' (September 2015) (see page 9) require nurseries to have a policy regarding the use of cameras and other devices, to ensure that there is no 'inappropriate sharing of images'. Typically, this will mean that staff's own equipment will not be used. Whilst people may feel that there is no risk of the current staff misusing cameras

Focus on - Serious Case Review: William Vahey

The Serious Case Review (SCR) of a teacher who abused over fifty children from a London independent school whilst on overseas visits was published last week. The SCR makes grim reading, but it is important that we understand what happens when things go wrong, so that practice changes and the risk to children is reduced.

The Review's Chair, Dame Moira Gibb, concludes the report with a series of recommendations, some which relate to practice in the school, but most have a wider impact. As with many issues of this kind, people must always be alert to 'thinking the unthinkable'.

The report says: "Vulnerability and availability of victims are important aspects of sexual abuse and of 54 pupils who were identified as having been abused, 23 are described as having one or more of the following issues: learning need, family problems, and language difficulties being new to the UK." In this school, only 14% of pupils were described as being in this category, but yet almost half the victims meet these criteria.

The report sets out a number of learning points, including:

- School Boards, Trustees or Governors should be able to give strong scrutiny and challenge about safeguarding and child
- All staff should be trained to recognise the *modus operandi* of sex offenders who target pupils in schools, rather than only as a part of Safer Recruitment training as now.
- That the record-keeping of concerns about staff conduct is of such quality that patterns of behaviour can be identified, so that action can be taken sooner rather than later.
- Improved handover of principals and Headteachers, so that confidential information about staff conduct is properly understood and information is not lost.
- There should be no barriers that prevent pupils reporting their concerns about staff.
- There should be a more effective process for obtaining overseas checks and the review notes that 'there is no current work on how this can be achieved at a governmental level'.
- Arrangements for protecting children on school trips from harm by people in positions of trust should form part of the DfE guidance to schools. **Download:** Serious Case Review William Vahey <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/SB%20SCR%20FINAL%20REPORT%2012%201%2016.pdf>

Educate against Hate

The government has recently launched a new website aimed at supporting parents, teachers and school leaders in implementing the Prevent Duty. There are some useful resources on the website including written advice and signposting to other organisations - educateagainsthate.com



Welcome to Neree!

Neree is our new apprentice working as the administrative support for safeguarding. I'm sure you've already heard from her when she's been chasing you about completing your safeguarding training!

