QUANTOCK
EDUCATION TRUST

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
2026-27

Part 1 – overarching Trust policy

(to be read in conjunction with Part 2 - School Policy)

STATUS	Updated draft for trustee approval. KCSIE 2026 applies from 1 September 2026.
DATE	1st September 2026
POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE	Chief Executive Officer
DATE RATIFIED BY TRUSTEES	7th September 2026
DUE FOR REVIEW	September 2027 (annual) or sooner if statutory guidance changes
LINKS	Incorporating Raising Concerns at Work (Whistleblowing), Behaviour Management Confidential Reporting Code, Health and Safety, Management of Allegations against staff policy, Safeguarding Children, E-Safety, Use of Photography and recording, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Equal Opportunities, Anti-Bullying, Physical Interventions, First Aid, Drugs and Substance misuse, PSHCRE, SRE, SMSC, Racial Equality, Work Placements, Attendance and Absence, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards (April 2015)

Summary of Changes

This edition updates the 2025-26 policy for KCSIE 2026. It should be checked against local safeguarding partnership procedures and each school's Part 2 arrangements

Version	Section	Description of Changes
July 22	All	Baseline Document
July 23	All	Updated in line with KCSIE 2023
May 24	7	St Bartholomew's added to the Trust schools
July 24	All	Updated in line with KCSIE 2024
July 25	All	Updated in line with KCSIE 2025
August 2026	All	References and expectations updated for KCSIE 2026, effective 1 September 2026.
August 2026	1, 4	All staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, are expected to read Part one. The former shorter Annex A version has been removed.
August 2026	1, 5	Strengthened early help and Family Help language, including community-based early help and action before statutory intervention.
August 2026	4, 5	Updated safeguarding risks, including modern slavery, financial exploitation, child-on-parent/carer abuse, misogyny and incel-related ideology; strengthened serious violence and mental health content.
August 2026	5	Added safe and effective use of generative AI, AI-generated imagery, multiple-phone policy expectations, annual filtering and monitoring checks and record keeping.
August 2026	2, 5	Added premises, sport and third-party use expectations; strengthened DSL cover, information sharing, alternative provision and attendance oversight.
August 2026	5	Added young carers and children with medical conditions; strengthened SEND barriers and support for LGBT or gender-questioning children.
August 2026	5	Updated safer recruitment, regulated activity, volunteers, work experience, trainee teachers, DBS referrals and Check a teacher's record terminology.

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1. Introduction

Quantock Education Trust (QET) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and children's welfare is paramount. QET will protect children from maltreatment and exploitation, prevent impairment of health or development, provide help and support as soon as problems emerge, and help children grow up with safe and effective care.

QET adopts a child-centred and coordinated approach, maintains an attitude of "it could happen here", and recognises that harm can occur within families, online, in school, in peer groups and beyond the home in the wider community. Safeguarding concerns can overlap and should be considered in the round rather than in isolation.

The Trust will work in accordance with KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, local safeguarding partnership procedures, the Education Act 2002, the Children Act 2004 and relevant data protection law. Schools will act promptly, share information lawfully and proportionately, and escalate professional concerns where necessary.

1.1. Key Principles

QET is committed to the following safeguarding key principles: -

- Every child has an equal right to protection, support and respectful treatment.
- All staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, members and contractors share responsibility for safeguarding.
- Staff must act in the best interests of the child, listen to children and take their wishes and feelings into account.
- Early support should be offered before difficulties escalate. Where appropriate, this includes universal services, community-based early help, Family Help and statutory children's social care.
- No concern is too small to share. Staff should report concerns, record decisions and the rationale for action or inaction.
- QET will promote an open culture in which children and adults can speak, are listened to and can raise concerns without fear.
- Each school will maintain a compliant single central record and effective safer recruitment arrangements.

1.2. Reading requirements

All staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, must read and understand KCSIE 2026 Part one. The Part One overview is a complementary quick reference and does not replace Part One. Governors and trustees must read the relevant governing body and proprietor requirements, including Part two. Schools must have mechanisms to help staff understand and discharge their responsibilities.

1.3. Policy framework

This Part 1 policy sets the overarching Trust framework. Each school's Part 2 policy must set out local contacts, referral routes, contextual risks and procedures. This policy should be read alongside policies on staff conduct, whistleblowing, behaviour, attendance, online safety, filtering and monitoring, mobile phones, generative AI, safer recruitment, allegations and low-level concerns, reasonable force, equality, health and safety, first aid, anti-bullying and data protection.

2. Governance and accountability

The Trust Board retains strategic oversight of safeguarding. Local Governance Committees oversee implementation at school level. Safeguarding will be a standing agenda item and leaders will provide sufficient, accurate information for effective support, challenge and assurance.

Roles	Responsibilities
Trust Board	Retains ultimate accountability for safeguarding and welfare across the Trust. Receives termly safeguarding assurance reports, provides strategic support and challenge; assures itself that policies, procedures, training, governance and quality assurance arrangements are effective; and monitors risks and improvement priorities.
Designated Trustee for Safeguarding (DTS)	Trust-wide oversight; liaison with the ESL, SSL and school safeguarding governors; reports assurance and risk to the Trust Board.
Executive Safeguarding Lead (ESL)	Executive ownership of Trust-wide safeguarding and policy development. Named lead: Chrysta Garnett.
QET Strategic Safeguarding Lead (SSL)	Professional advice, peer audit, DSL network, supervision, policy updates and learning. Named lead: Gary Norton-Sanders, externally commissioned.
Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG)	School-level oversight, termly monitoring and reporting to the Local Governance Committee.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Operational lead in each school setting for safeguarding and child protection, referrals, advice, records, multi-agency working and staff support.
Headteacher	Ensures policies and procedures are implemented, staff are supported, and concerns about adults are managed appropriately.
Director of Boarding	Operational leadership of boarding welfare and safeguarding; compliance with National Minimum Boarding Standards; preparation for social care inspection; leadership of boarding staff; reporting significant issues to the Headteacher, DSL and governance structures.
Boarding Governors	Provides focused, informed support and challenge concerning boarding safeguarding, welfare and compliance. Undertakes planned monitoring using the agreed QET safeguarding assurance approach, appropriately adapted to the boarding context; considers boarders' voice, complaints, incidents, staffing, supervision, safeguarding culture and compliance with the National Minimum Boarding Standards; and reports assurance, risks and agreed actions to the Boarding Committee and relevant governance structures. The role does not include operational case management or investigation of individual concerns.

Boarding Committee	Exercises delegated governance oversight of boarding provision, including safeguarding, welfare, leadership, staffing, supervision, premises, health, boarders' rights, complaints and compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Receives monitoring reports from the Boarding Governor and assurance from the Director of Boarding and school leaders; tracks improvement actions; considers inspection and independent scrutiny findings; and escalates material risks through the Trust's governance arrangements.

2.1. **Governance Assurance**

- The DTS, ESL and SSL will meet at least termly to consider audits, training, policy changes, emerging risks, DSL capacity and DSG findings.
- Each DSG will meet the DSL at least termly using the agreed QET monitoring framework and will report to the LGC without disclosing identifiable child information.
- Governors and trustees will receive induction and regular safeguarding training appropriate to their strategic role.
- The governing body will assure itself that a trained DSL or deputy is available during school hours and that adequate cover arrangements exist for absence and out-of-hours or out-of-term activity.
- Each Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) will undertake at least termly safeguarding monitoring activity using the agreed QET Safeguarding Governor Visit Template. The template provides a consistent framework for support, challenge and assurance across the Trust. Findings will be reported to the Local Governance Committee and will contribute to Trust-wide safeguarding assurance and improvement activity.
- The Designated Safeguarding Governor provides oversight and constructive challenge but does not investigate individual cases, make operational safeguarding decisions or seek identifiable information unless there is a lawful and role-specific basis.
- Trustees will receive termly safeguarding assurance reports covering significant safeguarding activity, emerging themes and risks, quality assurance findings, progress against agreed actions, workforce or DSL capacity, governance assurance, boarding safeguarding and welfare, and any matter requiring strategic oversight or escalation.
- In addition to termly safeguarding assurance reports, the Strategic Safeguarding Lead will present an Annual Safeguarding and Welfare Report to the Trust Board. The annual report will provide cumulative, Trust-wide evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. It will bring together analysis of safeguarding activity and trends, children's and boarders' experiences, quality assurance findings, governance effectiveness, workforce development, complaints, allegations and low-level concerns, learning from incidents, inspection and external scrutiny, boarding safeguarding and welfare, compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, emerging risks and priorities for improvement.
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed at least annually, with checks, decisions, actions and oversight recorded.
- Premises, sport, lettings, contractors and organisations providing activities for children will be included in safeguarding assurance.

3. The Supporting Structural and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Focus	Process
Quality assurance	Each school will complete an annual safeguarding audit. Additional scrutiny will be commissioned where risk, inspection findings or assurance activity indicate this is needed.
Strategic oversight	The DTS, ESL and SSL consider Trust-wide themes and report to the Board. Serious concerns are escalated immediately.
Local governance	The DSG meets the DSL termly; safeguarding is considered at each full LGC meeting; actions are tracked to completion.
Peer learning	The SSL facilitates a regular DSL network to share learning, consider complex practice and strengthen consistency.
Supervision	DSLs receive regular, supportive and reflective supervision, including individual and peer opportunities.
Records and data	Schools maintain secure, accurate records of concerns, discussions, actions, decisions and rationale, and analyse patterns and disproportionality.
Link Governor	Each Designated Safeguarding Governor completes safeguarding monitoring at least termly using the agreed QET Safeguarding Governor Visit Template. Evidence, assurance, actions and follow-up are reported to the Local Governance Committee and contribute to Trust-wide safeguarding evaluation.
Safeguarding Reports	Each DSL produces a safeguarding report for the LGC and the Strategic Safeguarding Lead provides Trustees with termly safeguarding assurance reports covering significant activity, themes, risks, quality assurance, governance findings, boarding safeguarding and progress against agreed actions. Matters requiring immediate strategic oversight are escalated without waiting for the next scheduled report using the Trust template

4. Training and professional awareness

- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and updates at least annually, with further briefings when risks, law, guidance or local procedures change.
- All staff read KCSIE 2026 Part one and confirm that they understand it. The previous shorter Annex A reading route no longer applies.
- DSLs and deputies receive role-specific training at least every two years and regular updates between formal training events.
- Governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and Prevent training and understand their strategic responsibilities.
- Training covers abuse, neglect and exploitation; early support; child-on-child abuse; sexual harassment and violence; domestic abuse; modern slavery; financial exploitation; child-on-parent/carer abuse; serious violence; radicalisation; misogyny and incel-related ideology; mental health; online harms; AI-generated content and imagery; professional boundaries; allegations and low-level concerns.

- Training records include attendance, content, date, provider and follow-up action. The DSL evaluates impact, not only completion.
- Training records include attendance, content, date, provider and follow-up action. The DSL evaluates impact, not only completion.

5. Supporting Systems and Practices

5.1. **Responding to concerns and providing support**

Staff must act immediately where they have a concern about a child. They should listen, reassure, avoid promising confidentiality, record the concern accurately and report it through the school's agreed route. The DSL will consider support before statutory intervention, community-based early help, Family Help, referral to children's social care or emergency action. Where there is immediate danger, staff must contact emergency services and children's social care without delay.

The child's voice, lived experience, identity, communication needs and family and community context must inform assessment and planning. Staff should remain professionally curious, recognising that apparently separate concerns may overlap.

5.2. **Child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence**

QET has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse while avoiding language that discourages reporting. Schools will respond to harmful sexual behaviour, harassment, violence, bullying, prejudice-based abuse, online abuse and abuse occurring outside school. Victims, alleged perpetrators and other affected children will receive proportionate support. Staff must not dismiss behaviour as banter or an inevitable part of growing up.

5.3. **Children potentially at greater risk**

Schools will identify and reduce additional barriers faced by children with SEND, young carers, children with medical conditions, children absent from education, looked-after and previously looked-after children, children requiring mental health support, children in alternative provision, and children who are LGBT or gender-questioning. Support must be child-centred, respectful, lawful and responsive to the individual child.

5.4. **Online safety, mobile phones, filtering and monitoring**

Online safety is integrated into safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, staff conduct and parental engagement.

Each school will maintain a clear mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of phones during the school day.

Filtering and monitoring systems will be appropriate to the school's risk profile. Roles are explicit, checks occur regularly, the governing body reviews effectiveness at least annually, and records of checks and actions are retained.

Misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, cybercrime and image-based abuse are recognised as potential safeguarding harms.

5.5. **Generative artificial intelligence**

QET will support the safe and effective use of generative AI in education. Schools will assess safeguarding, privacy, bias, accuracy, age-appropriateness and online safety risks before use; set clear expectations for staff and pupils; and respond to harmful, manipulated or wholly AI-generated content. The term "nudes and semi-nudes" includes images digitally altered or wholly generated using AI, including deepfakes or "deep nudes".

5.6. **Information sharing and records**

Safeguarding information will be shared lawfully, securely, proportionately and in a timely way. Staff should not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent necessary information sharing to protect a child. The DSL will ensure records capture the concern, context, views of the child, actions, decisions and rationale, including reasons for not referring. Child protection files will be transferred securely and promptly when a child moves school.

5.7. **Safer recruitment and regulated activity**

QET will operate safer recruitment in line with KCSIE 2026. This includes appropriate pre-appointment checks, accurate single central records, online searches where applicable, clear arrangements for volunteers, trainee teachers, work experience, contractors and agency staff, and use of "Check a teacher's record". Schools will apply the 2026 regulated-activity requirements and seek appropriate HR or safeguarding advice where a role is unclear.

5.8. **Low level concerns or allegations about adults**

All concerns that may meet the harm threshold must be reported via the Trust wide reporting system and will be managed when required with the Local Authority Designated Officer. This includes low-level concerns, this may include a sense of unease or "nagging doubt. The Trust will promote an open and transparent culture, maintain confidentiality and distinguish safeguarding processes from disciplinary processes while ensuring both are completed where required.

5.9. **Premises, sport and third-party activities**

Schools will ensure that safeguarding arrangements cover sport, clubs, lettings and activities delivered by external organisations on school premises. Agreements will set clear safeguarding expectations, reporting routes and responsibilities. Any allegation arising from an activity on school premises will be managed under the school's safeguarding procedures, including liaison with the LADO where appropriate.

5.10. **Alternative provision and attendance**

Where a pupil is placed in alternative provision, the commissioning school remains responsible for safeguarding assurance. Schools will monitor attendance, welfare, quality and the suitability of placements. Patterns of absence will be treated as a possible safeguarding indicator, and schools will work with relevant partners, including the Virtual School Head where applicable.

6. Policy Review

The Trust Board will review and approve this policy at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures, learning from incidents, audit or emerging risk requires change. The effectiveness of implementation will be tested through training assurance, audits, case learning, pupil voice, governance visits and data analysis.

7. Local Arrangements

Each school must maintain a Part 2 policy that identifies local safeguarding contacts and procedures, contextual risks, early help and referral routes, arrangements for managing allegations and low-level concerns, online safety, filtering and monitoring, mobile phones, generative AI, child-on-child abuse, attendance, alternative provision, safer recruitment and emergency response. The Part 2 policy must be readily accessible to staff, families and the school community.

All schools receive frequent support and scheduled visits from the Safeguarding Strategic Lead.

Part 2 contains each of the school's local arrangements and procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection. Copies are available via each school's website:

- https://www.haygroveschool.co.uk/Policies-and-funding-information/
- https://www.spaxton-school.co.uk/web/policies/217900
- https://www.stogurseyprimaryschool.co.uk/web/policies/566570
- https://www.sexeys.somerset.sch.uk/reports_policies/safeguarding-policies/
- https://www.st-bartholomews.somerset.sch.uk/key-information/policies/
- https://merriottfirstschool.co.uk/policies/
- https://haselburyplucknettschool.co.uk/policies/
- https://www.ashlandsprimaryschool.co.uk/our-school/policies/

8. Trust Contacts

Role	**Named Contact**
QET Designated Trustee for Safeguarding (Trust Board) (DTS)	Lisa Toms
QET Executive Safeguarding Lead (ESL)	Chrysta Garnett
QET Strategic Safeguarding Lead (SSL) Practitioner	Gary Norton Sanders (externally commissioned)
Sexey's Director of Boarding	Tom Tuthill

Appendix A: Safeguarding link governor monitoring framework

The Link Governor provides support and strategic challenge but does not investigate individual cases or access identifiable case information unless there is a lawful and role-specific basis. QET Link Governors use an agreed format for their scheduled visits using an agreed template.

- How do leaders know how safe children feel, including online, in sport and in less-supervised spaces?
- How are pupil voice and the experiences of children with SEND, young carers and children with medical conditions informing safeguarding improvement?
- Have all staff read KCSIE 2026 Part one and demonstrated understanding?
- Is DSL and deputy cover sufficient during school hours and for relevant activities outside normal hours?
- How does the school identify and respond to early help and Family Help needs before statutory intervention?
- How are child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence recognised, recorded and responded to?
- Are filtering and monitoring checks completed, recorded and reviewed by governors at least annually?
- How are mobile phone and multiple-phone risks managed?
- How are generative AI, manipulated imagery and AI-generated nudes or semi-nudes addressed?
- How does the school assure safeguarding in sport, lettings, premises use and third-party clubs?
- How does the school assure alternative provision and respond to absence as a safeguarding indicator?
- Does the SCR and safer recruitment evidence reflect current requirements for staff, volunteers, trainee teachers, contractors and agency workers?
- Are allegations and low-level concerns managed, securely recorded and reviewed for patterns?
- What learning from incidents, audits, complaints and pupil voice has changed policy or practice?

Appendix B:

Annual safeguarding report to the governing body

Date of report	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Safeguarding Governor	
Date SCR last checked	
Date filtering and monitoring last reviewed	

B1. Training and assurance

Group	Number	Training/date	Assurance and impact
Teaching staff			
Support staff			
Governors/trustees			
DSL/deputies			
Volunteers/contractors			

B2. Children whose circumstances may increase risk

Cohort	Number	Themes/action
Children with SEND		
Looked-after/previously looked-after children		
Young carers		
Children with medical conditions		
Children requiring mental health support		
Children in alternative provision		
Persistently/severely absent children		
Children who are LGBT or gender-questioning		

B3. Referrals, concerns and incidents

Category	Number	Analysis, disproportionality and learning
Children's social care referrals		
Early help/Family Help		
Child-on-child abuse		
Online safety/AI-related incidents		
Bullying/prejudice incidents		
Serious violence/exploitation /modern slavery		
Allegations meeting harm threshold		
Low-level concerns		
Prevent concerns		

B4. Evaluation and priorities

Strengths and evidence	Areas for development	Action, owner and deadline

Sources and implementation note

This update is based on the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, published on 7 July 2026 for implementation from 1 September 2026, including its Annex C summary of changes.

- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- Department for Education, KCSIE 2026 full statutory guidance: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a9081309a177a1decf97b00/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf
- Department for Education, KCSIE 2026 Part one: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a9088e19a177a1decf97b01/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026_Part_one.pdf