Catmose College, Oakham: review of safeguarding provision

Date of review: 10 January 2019
Reviewed by: David Young (Education consultant)

Introduction

A review of the college's arrangements for safeguarding students was conducted, taking account of current statutory guidance.

Policy documentation

Safeguarding policies for Catmose College and for Rutland and District Schools' Federation.

- The college safeguarding arrangements are underpinned by a comprehensive federation safeguarding policy. An additional college policy applies the federation's requirements and expectations appropriately within the specific context of the college. Both policy documents are appropriately accessible online.
- The policy documents have regard to the requirements set out in current statutory guidance documents, including:
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018) (KCSIE)
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
  - What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015).
- The policy documents also take appropriate account of:
  - guidance provided by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board
  - additional recent legislation covering the college's legal responsibilities as set out in: the Independent School Standards; The Children's Act; The Serious Crimes Act; The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act; the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act; The Prevent duty; and The Childcare Act.
- Consequently, the college policy demonstrates a secure basis in relevant and current statutory requirements.
- The policy document provides appropriate definitions of safeguarding and of the types of abuse to which students may be exposed. Sufficient information is provided to alert staff to potential risks which may not always be overtly evident. The equality statement raises awareness of students for whom special consideration may be required.
- All staff are appropriately required to read Part 1 and Annex A of the statutory guidance (KCSIE) and to review this at least annually. The responsibilities listed for all staff are appropriate and precise.
- The policy makes a commitment to safeguarding training at induction, annual safeguarding training for all staff, together with additional updates as required.
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is defined clearly and supports staff understanding of how their responsibilities relate to the DSL role. Appropriate intervals are set out for DSL training.
- The policy sets out appropriate strategic and monitoring roles for the governing body and for senior leaders, together with training requirements.
- Staff, volunteers and governors are provided with clear and specific guidance on how to implement their responsibilities in the event of a concern.
- The policy helpfully includes contact details for DSL and deputies, and external agencies to whom referrals may be required.

- Clear reporting lines are set out for any concerns regarding a member of staff. This includes a cross-reference to the college whistle-blowing policy.
- The policy includes informative information about peer-on-peer abuse, links with the college behaviour policy and the potential safeguarding concerns.
- Record-keeping guidance is clear and distinguishes appropriately between 'non-confidential' and 'confidential' records.
- The Catmose College policy links appropriately with additional policies e.g. staff code of conduct and behaviour management policy.
- A helpful summary of issues addressed in the curriculum is included.

Implementation of policy

- Efficient electronic communication systems support the college requirement for the immediate reporting to designated leaders of any safeguarding concerns or disclosures. Staff confirm their confidence in the required procedures and the prompt response from senior leaders. Referrals are taken from staff, students and parents and followed-up through agreed college procedures.
- The DSL and deputies have a secure understanding and effective experience of links with external agencies, including social services, in responding to safeguarding concerns. Senior leaders have experience of managing individual cases of potential student exposure of students to FGM and to extremism.
- Regular communications to staff reinforce good practice e.g. whole-college push on register checks every lesson. Arrangements for following up any concerns about absence are thorough and effective. Staff have accurate information about any absentee and ensure immediate follow-up with parents. Any cases of persistent concern are followed through systematically and thoroughly. The college ensures effective working relationships with the local authority and external agencies to resolve any longer-term concerns about attendance.
- Thorough systems for record-keeping enable access by senior leaders to case histories of individual students and provide a chronological record of concerns, communications and interventions in relation to any individual case.
- The college intervention team meets regularly to review individual students of concern. Decisions are made about any required referrals, communication with parents and/or external agencies, and records updated.
- Regular analysis of data enables senior leaders to respond appropriately to any concerns. Appropriate action has been taken, for example, to reduce fixed term exclusions. The use of 'Sleuth' software enables detailed interrogation of information about behaviour. Regular analysis supports effective interventions with students, and improved communication with parents and external agencies.
- Discussion of case studies with senior leaders demonstrates effective implementation of support strategies, detailed record-keeping and positive feedback about multi-agency joint working.
- Records of any concerns at the point of transition for new students, e.g. on entry to Year 7, are followed up and additional information sought if required. Senior leaders obtain and maintain records of welfare and safeguarding concerns and monitor students' induction to the college.
- The college's 'stages system' for managing behaviour is interlinked with safeguarding arrangements. Senior leaders have a secure understanding of the potential link between significant identified behaviours and potential safeguarding issues. This relationship is managed well.
- Any allegation against a member of staff are managed by the Principal and the head of human resources, in line with statutory guidance.

Curriculum provision

- The curriculum includes appropriate opportunities for students to consider and understand the variety of risks to which they may be exposed in daily life. Suitable themes are included in assemblies, the tutor programme, whole-college theme days, and across a variety of subjects.
- Staff stress the thoroughness of the link between assemblies and tutorials. They value the work done by year team leaders to provide structure to the programme and support for individual tutors.
- Students in Year 8 believe that the college takes effective action to keep them safe. An example of communication arrangements and wearing of college uniform on a recent trip was discussed.
- They understand the actions taken by the college to block unsuitable on-line sites and the way staff teach them about on-line safety.
- Students identified work on substance abuse and the potential links with mental health. Additional work on mental health and how to manage this were also discussed. They value the lessons learned during 'mental health week' and experiences of switching off phones at planned intervals.
- Students recall case study videos about child sexual exploitation and extremism. They also value presentations from visitors e.g. Childline.
- They are appreciative of the work of client services; they value the opportunity to talk confidentially to these and other members of staff. They recognise the role of staff on duty at entrances to the college at the start and end of the college day.
- Students in Year 10 believe that understanding of risk and arrangements to ensure their safety and wellbeing are given a high priority in the work of the college.
- They recall a recent powerful video presentation about on-line safety. They value the wide-ranging support for students in protecting themselves e.g. on-line, including from cyber-bullying.
- They identify examples in assemblies and tutorials of work on safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, extremism and bullying. They identify various themes including knife crime, gang membership, sexting, 'county lines' (drug abuse) – they value presentations made by visitors from specialist organisations from outside the college.
- As stated by younger students, they value safety arrangements on trips, tutorial work on bullying. They support the view that the college gives a high priority to their safeguarding and deals well with any concerns. They too appreciate work in tutorials on mental health, including depression. Again, the positive role of client services and the openness of staff are commended.
- Senior leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date with any new requirements or priorities in legislation and guidance. They identify recent attention to peer-on-peer abuse arising from revised statutory guidance.
- The college also responds effectively to external initiatives which support the college's work on safeguarding. A working group of schools has gained lottery funding as part of the 'Resilient Rutland' project. This has enabled all staff to be trained in mental health first aid.
- Display screens in circulation areas around the college provide information and news for students. Information and updates for students include, for example, appropriate information about sources of information and helplines available to students.

Staff responsibilities and training

- An appropriate **job description** has been produced for the DSL. This includes:
  - appropriate strategic responsibilities in addition to day-to-day management and implementation activities
  - responsibility for induction into safeguarding procedures for new and part-time staff
  - responsibility for managing referrals to various external partners (and understanding local authority procedures)
  - provision of support, advice and expertise for staff
  - awareness raising, including for governors and staff; communication of training opportunities
  - creating and maintaining an appropriate ethos and culture for staff and for students
  - monitoring and oversight of student records, best practice in recruitment, reporting to governors.
- Comprehensive induction arrangements ensure that all new staff are systematically introduced to the college. Interviews with a sample of recently-appointed and experienced staff confirm the quality and thoroughness of induction. Safeguarding has a high profile in induction arrangements. This establishes staff confidence with the requirements of the college policy and procedure, together with an understanding of statutory responsibilities.
- Staff are provided with training across the full range of their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand their responsibilities, for example, about risks of child sexual exploitation, children missing from education, extremism and terrorism, FGM, on-line sexting, and potential student access to drugs and substance abuse.
- Staff appreciate the inclusion of safeguarding training in their induction programme. They are quickly familiar with the names and roles of staff with safeguarding responsibilities. They are familiar with the requirements of statutory guidance and how these apply to them within the college context.
- Staff recognise the high priority placed on safeguarding students; they are regularly briefed, and emails and presentations are circulated regularly.
- Staff identify the variety of training provided for students through assemblies and tutorials.
- Staff also value the work of client services. They state that the support and advice available to staff is 'amazing'.
- Staff receive additional support and information through daily briefings and through weekly core training sessions for all staff. Staff appreciate the thoroughness of briefing arrangements, including arrangements to follow up important messages with any staff member who may miss a training event.

Leadership and management, including governance

- A **review of the management of safeguarding policy** was undertaken in November 2018. This confirmed:
  - the updating of policy against the revised statutory requirements, September 2018
  - up-to-date training for DSL and deputies
  - up-to-date training recorded on the SCR for all staff, including induction
  - safe practice in site access and security

- good examples of safeguarding themes within the curriculum
- curriculum opportunities re. safeguarding for 'more vulnerable' students
- good practice in staff recruitment.
- **A meeting between DSL and the governor** responsible for safeguarding took place in November 2018.
- This meeting confirmed:
  - staff with safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately trained
  - all staff attended a safeguarding inset day in September 2018 – including Part 1 and Annex A of KCSIE 2018
  - safeguarding training booklet introduced for all staff
  - all governors trained in safeguarding (including legislation update September 2018); link governor informed of changes in legislation and conducts annual audit
  - recent newsletter sent to parents outlining changes in safeguarding policy, including information about college responses to various potential safeguarding issues
  - confirmed that PSHE covers safeguarding in detail; continuous attention to on-line safety, building design, attendance and behaviour
  - all concerns and actions recorded on the welfare log or safeguarding log – parent contact log also in place
  - a number of related policies were updated and approved by governors in July 2018
  - the report of this meeting reached positive conclusions about all aspects of the college's safeguarding arrangements.
- The governors are proactive in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. The governor safeguarding lead meets annually with the DSL to review safeguarding practice and to report to the governing body.
- A range of appropriate information is communicated to governors, including details of students' attendance, exclusions and any policy updates.
- Governors believe that the college arrangements for safeguarding are effective. They identify strengths in:
  - the college ethos of mutual respect between students and staff
  - well informed and enthusiastic leaders who constantly plan and implement new developments
  - students' understanding of how to seek help
  - the active role of client services, including their range of external contacts
  - the thoroughness of the college's arrangements for implementing and promoting safeguarding
  - attention to detail in the monitoring of absence records
  - the quality of curriculum provision
  - annual parent and student surveys which confirm satisfaction with arrangements
- The college makes effective use of scrutiny panels, including governors with relevant areas of expertise and interest, to review aspects of the college's policy implementation. Governors may recommend further scrutiny or review by an external 'expert'. These arrangements make a strong contribution to the development of expertise within the college staff and governing body.
- The Principal has ensured that suitably experienced staff are appointed to key areas of responsibility for safeguarding. Senior leaders are provided with thorough training and support to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Expectations are high and staff respond positively, demonstrating commitment and calm resolution.

- The management of the college is characterised by effective teamwork. Staff at all levels understand their responsibilities and work tirelessly to support each other.
- Staff have an outstanding awareness of their responsibilities to create a safe environment and to support individual students continuously. Staff are supported extremely well by the high quality of service provided by the student services team.
- The college's arrangements for safeguarding students are exemplary. The safety and well-being of students are paramount in staff responsibilities. Arrangements for safeguarding are coherent and comprehensive, and implementation is consistent.

Recommendations

- Recommendations: (Federation policy)
  - Paragraph 26.3 - no longer required (see 2018 revision to government guidance on disqualification by association)
  - Paragraph 3 Definitions – it would be useful to include reference to Children Missing from Education page 77 of KCSIE.
- Recommendation: that copies of parent newsletters be sent to all governors to ensure immediate awareness of current issues.