

Committee: **Joint Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny (Safeguarding) Committee**

Date of meeting: **14<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education  
Sarah Dixon, Safeguarding In Education Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
24.06.21		04.07.21			14.07.21	21.07.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy following its annual review.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Education Directorate Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy was originally adopted in April 2015 and has been reviewed on an annual basis. The attached draft policy has been reviewed and updated for the 2021-2022 academic year.
  - 2.2 In order to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities, the Council is required to provide model policies and procedures for maintained schools on all aspects of child protection. The policies and procedures must be consistent with Welsh Government guidance and local arrangements. The attached draft policy covers all practitioners in Blaenau Gwent's Education Directorate and educational settings. Employees of commissioned services are required to follow their organisation's safeguarding policies e.g. Education Achievement Service, Gwent Ethnic Minority Service, Youth Offending Service and Shared Resources Service (SRS). These policies are quality assured on an annual basis by the Safeguarding in Education Manager prior to the commencement of each academic year.
  - 2.3 All education and training providers in Wales are inspected by Estyn and a new framework was introduced in the Autumn term 2017. Safeguarding will be inspected under inspection area four, 'Care, Support and Guidance' and as such the model policy is cognisant of the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.

2.4 The inspection of local authority education services for children and young people covers the statutory functions of the local authority, including the local authority youth service.

2.5 Children in Wales (CIW) and Estyn jointly inspect care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education. These joint inspections evaluate the care provided for all children up to the age of twelve and the education of three and four year old children that do not receive education in a maintained setting for children aged three and four years old.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Scrutiny Members are asked to consider the reviewed Safeguarding Policy in order to inform the development of the report that is to be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. The options for Scrutiny Members to consider are to:

Option 1 - accept the draft policy as presented in appendix 1; or,

Option 2 - make amendments to the draft policy.

## 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

### 4.1 **Statutory Responsibilities**

All schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is a statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) are national procedures which guide safeguarding practice. They are applicable for all practitioners and managers working in Wales.

### 4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan of:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life; and,
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

## 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

### 5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no direct financial implications.

## 5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

Failure of educational establishments to adopt rigorous arrangements for safeguarding poses significant potential risk to children and other education users. Settings are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, reviewed annually, in accordance with local and national guidance. Providing a safeguarding policy for adoption by all education settings ensures that an appropriate policy is available to mitigate risk.

## 5.3 Legal

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Local Authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and FE institutions must have regard to Welsh Government Circular 272/2021, 'Keeping Learners Safe', for the purpose of meeting their duties, and should exercise their functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 Performance Information and Data

The Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed. Updates have been made to reflect Keeping Learners Safe (KLS) guidance, which was updated in April 2021 and which now identifies the requirement where guidance 'must' or 'should' be followed and aligns to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

The main changes are to the following areas of the policy:

- Amendments to the role of the designated safeguarding person (DSP) and further clarity to the training requirements, including the expectation of the council for governor safeguarding training.
- Updated guidance reflecting the KLS guidance on responding to concerns that a child is at risk and reporting a child at risk
- Reference to the roll-out of 'MyConcern'; a safeguarding software package purchased by the Council for use across the school estate
- Reference to the recent ministerial statement on sexual harassment and abuse in education settings including the establishment of a named single point of contact in each setting
- Basic training requirements for all staff, volunteers clarified further, and,
- Annual return of settings self-evaluation document to the Safeguarding in Education Manager who in turn will provide an analysis to DMT in the Autumn term of the main findings and any key areas for improvement

Adoption of the policy is monitored through the safeguarding matrix, which is overseen by the Safeguarding in Education Manager

**6.2 Expected outcome for the public**

Learners are provided with a safe learning environment, with the policy supporting settings to respond appropriately to concerns.

**6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

This policy has been consulted upon with Education DMT, Social Services, Youth Service, Early Years, Organisational Development and Community Safety.

**6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

Ensuring that the Council and its education settings operate robust safeguarding practices, informed by policy, is essential to the wellbeing of all learners in Blaenau Gwent.

**6.5 Preventative focus**

Having an effective policy in place supports educational establishments to adopt practice to keep learners safe and identify concerns early.

**6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**

Gwent Safeguarding is the statutory multi-agency partnership Board responsible for making sure safeguarding is at the core of all services provided across the region.

Education forms part of this multi-agency partnership.

**6.7 Integration (across service areas)**

Within the context of the legal framework and associated guidance, it is important that education settings, schools and governing bodies ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and arrangements regarding safer recruitment are rigorously followed in order to safeguard children.

**6.8 EqIA**

An equality impact assessment has been completed and there are no positive or adverse impacts in relation to the revised safeguarding policy.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The adoption of this policy will be monitored by the safeguarding in education manager through the safeguarding matrix.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Education Directorate LGES Safeguarding Policy

Keeping Learners Safe

[Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#)