



# Annual Safeguarding Report 2022 – 2023



## Foreword



I am pleased to present the first annual Safeguarding Report for East Midlands Academy Trust. As a Safeguarding Trustee, I am committed along with the Trust to ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of our school community and this report reflects our unwavering commitment to creating a safe and nurturing environment where every child can thrive.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and EMAT recognises its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its pupils. Our partnership with the Thompson Team has ensured that safeguarding strategies and frameworks are in place and are monitored and scrutinised to ensure we are compliant, and our children are protected.

We believe that safeguarding is a continuous journey, and this report reflects our ongoing commitment to improvement. It outlines the strategies that have been put in place to support some of our most vulnerable children, details the training and awareness initiatives undertaken by our staff, and provides information on how we will continue to support and improve.

We can also take this opportunity to celebrate the achievements in safeguarding over the last year with the introduction of Mental Health Leads in all our schools, establishing a mental health working party and developing the safeguarding forum to name but a few. The dedication of our staff is making a positive impact on the lives of our children, creating an environment where they feel safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the Thompson Team for all the work they have done with the Trust and look forward to this continuing. I would also like to thank all school staff for their dedication to safeguarding ensuring our schools remain safe places for children to learn and grow.

*Fiona Wheeler*

EMAT Trustee

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## 1 Introduction

Thompson Team (TT), EMAT Independent Safeguarding Advisors, welcome you to our first annual EMAT Safeguarding Report. Our 2022-23 report provides the Board of Trustees with:

- An overview of the local, regional and national context of safeguarding
- An overview of safeguarding practice within the Trust
- The Safeguarding Teams' achievements and developments in 2022-23
- Assurance that the Trust is meeting its statutory obligations with regard to safeguarding
- 2023-24 challenges and future priorities

EMAT and TT understand their responsibility to ensure safeguarding is reflected in organisational culture, strategy, policy and practice. Everybody has the right to be safe, free from abuse and protected from harm. The term 'safeguarding' encompasses all activities to assist children, young people and adults at risk to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding includes the early identification and/or prevention of harm, exploitation and abuse by using national guidelines, local multi-agency procedures and by disseminating 'lessons learnt' and promoting best practice.

The Safeguarding Team at EMAT is made up of Governors, Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) and Senior Mental Health Leads (SMHL). Those in these roles have undertaken additional training to assist them in their responsibilities to safeguard children. All staff have a key role to play in safeguarding and all staff have undergone training to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children.

TT regularly report directly to the CEO (Josh Coleman) and Head of Education (John Lawson). This is done both informally as required and formally in a calendared meeting every 2/3 weeks.

## 2 National Context – Key challenges (2022-23)

There were a number of key national challenges in 2022-23 including the following aspects.

### 2.1 Recovery from the pandemic

- a. Mental health and wellbeing, including parental mental ill health as well as the mental health and wellbeing of young people.
- b. Additional support for vulnerable children and families. This includes those who have witnessed and experienced domestic abuse and those facing financial hardship. The pandemic has increased the difficulties faced by these vulnerable young people.
- c. There has been an increase in the number of referrals made to social services and other agencies. Young people are often not able to access specialist support when needed and/or face long waiting times to access support.

### 2.2 Updates to KCSiE 2022

Updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) were a priority and focus area in 2022-23<sup>1</sup>. These changes reflect national challenges in relation to safeguarding.

These changes include areas we have enhanced over the academic year, such as:

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<sup>1</sup> [Keeping children safe in education 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106567/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2022.pdf)

- Updated Governor and Trustee training requirements
- Incorporating the DfE’s advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges<sup>2</sup> which has been withdrawn with relevant aspects incorporated directly into KCSiE 2022
- Providing more information on managing low level concerns
- Reinforcing the importance of communicating with parents/carers about children’s access to online sites when away from school

### **3 Local Context**

EMAT has 5 schools situated in Northamptonshire and 2 in Milton Keynes. Northampton and Milton Keynes are ethnically diverse districts. Ethnic minorities make up 15.5% of the population in Northampton. The percentage of learners from culturally diverse heritage is significantly higher than the national average (21%) at Northampton International Academy (57%), Castle Academy (71%), Stimpson Avenue Academy (73%), Shepherdswell Academy (55%) and Orchard Academy (53%).

Northampton has a disproportionately high level of unemployment and poverty, and the lowest average household income, qualification levels and general health. Orchard Academy have a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils (41%). However, the percentage of disadvantaged learners at Prince William (14.5%), Stimpson Avenue Academy (13.9%) and Hardingstone Academy (16.7%) is below national average (25.5%). The proportion of learners receiving SEND support is high in many of the EMAT schools (Prince William School 15%, Orchard Academy 19%, Hardingstone Academy 14% and Northampton International Academy and Shepherdswell Academy are in line with national 13%).

The most common crimes in the areas are violence, sexual offences, and anti-social behaviour. There are known gangs operating in the catchment area of a number of EMAT schools. The use of recreational drugs is also prevalent across the catchment areas.

These factors are known contextual vulnerabilities for young people and increase the risk of both familial and extra familial harm. In addition to the curriculum offer which supports young people to learn how to keep themselves safe, EMAT schools work closely with the safeguarding partners (Social Care, Police and the Local Authorities) to help protect pupils from harm.

### **4 Governance Arrangements for Safeguarding**

KCSiE refers to the safeguarding policies and procedures that governing boards should ensure the school has in place. Central to this is an effective Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which refers to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. TT work collaboratively with school leaders and DSLs across all EMAT settings to regularly update the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy template to ensure it is up-to-date with current EMAT practices and national legislation and guidance. When changes have been made, Trustees have ratified the policy. The central Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy template is refined by DSLs to reflect their school context and local safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding Policies for all EMAT schools can be found on the individual school websites. EMAT governance, Trustees and TT regularly check to ensure that the safeguarding policies housed on school websites are current. The last major amendment to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy took place in September 2022 to reflect changes in statutory legislation. Minor changes have taken place throughout the academic year to reflect internal changes relating to roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

As safeguarding is embedded across all aspects of schools, safeguarding is also embedded into other relevant policies. Safeguarding updates made to other relevant policies are outlined in Section 8.

## 5 Sharing information with Governors and Trustees

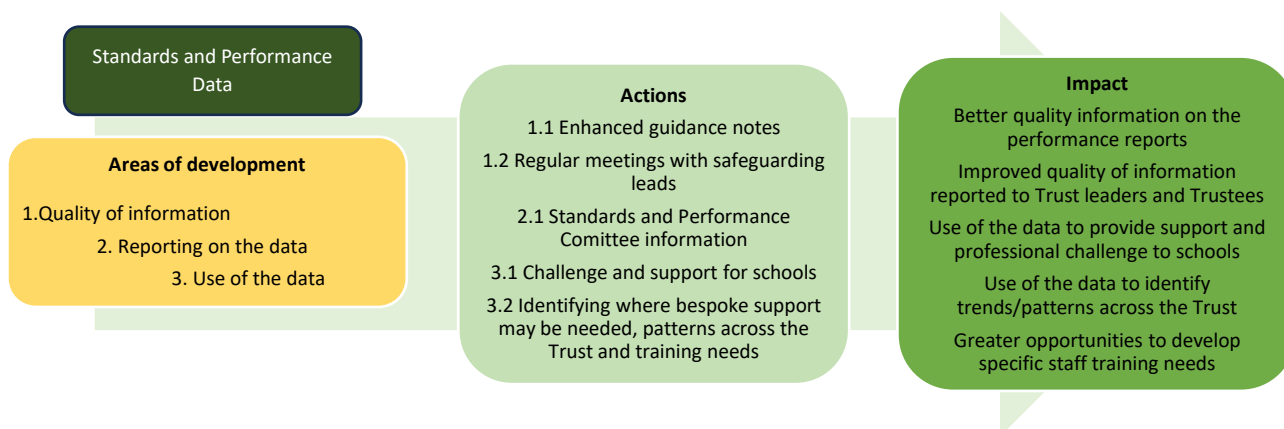
In 2022-23, Headteachers at all EMAT schools presented safeguarding information to governors as a regular agenda item at Local Advisory Board (LAB) meetings. Throughout the academic year, TT provided Trustees with safeguarding information formally through reports presented at the EMAT Standards and Performance Committee meetings. These presentations were in the form of data analysis taken for the half termly performance reports completed by schools. This provided a formal opportunity to review data and information, question safeguarding practices across the Trust, ensure effectiveness of safeguarding practices and provide support and professional challenge on all aspects relating to safeguarding. In addition, a more wholistic safeguarding update was delivered to Trustees in the full board meetings which took place regularly.

The Trustee with safeguarding responsibility, Fiona Wheeler, attends the Safeguarding Forum and Mental Health Working Party led by TT and all Trustees and Governors are invited and welcome to attend. The actions from these meetings alongside resources used are held centrally.

## 6 Standards and Performance Data

The collection of data was already embedded into EMAT practices as were opportunities to question the data which were taken in the Safeguarding Forum. The use of this data and understanding of the context behind the data in order to support DSLs, provide appropriate, professional challenge and identify patterns in the data was an area developed in 2022-23.

TT make extensive use of the Standards and Performance Reports which contain safeguarding data completed half termly by schools. This data is used to keep informed of key safeguarding aspects, to identify any areas of best practice to be shared across the Trust, to identify any areas of support or training needs across the Trust or in individual schools and as the basis of information sharing with Trust leaders including Governors and Trustees.



TT enhanced the quality of guidance notes provided to staff to support completion of reports and met regularly with those responsible for safeguarding in each school to provide professional challenge, gain clarification and question the context behind the data. This has provided safeguarding leads across the Trust with a better understanding of the requirements regarding the level of detail needed on the reports. It has ensured safeguarding leads across the Trust have thorough and detailed knowledge and understanding of safeguarding within their setting and led to an increased

quality and level of detail of information on reports, allowing for better dissemination of safeguarding information to Trustees.

The improved quality of the data has enabled Safeguarding Leads, TT and Trust leaders to identify areas of best practice, any aspects where individual schools need support and patterns of safeguarding concerns across schools. As a result, TT have improved the quality of information shared with Trust leaders, Governors, and Trustees, shared best practice and provided appropriate training. Professional challenge is embedded across the Trust. Those in lead safeguarding roles respond well to this challenge and to the resulting support provided.

The quality of the information now detailed in the standards and performance reports also enabled us to improve the quality of information shared with Trustees, resulting in greater accountability, support, and challenge for safeguarding both Trust wide and in schools.

## 7 Safeguarding Forum

In 2022-23, TT led the safeguarding Forum. The purpose of this forum is to allow those in lead safeguarding roles to share safeguarding data, best practice and lessons learned, and to provide opportunities for networking, supervision and professional challenge by the CEO and Head of Education. The forum provides an opportunity to ensure all safeguarding leads are up to date with current legislation and guidance. The opportunity to develop practice across the Trust also forms part of this forum.

In the academic year 2022-23, the forum:

- Updated the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to reflect national changes
- Developed the categories on MyConcern for increased consistency across the Trust
- Identified training needs across the Trust
- Provided key Trust and National updates and/or changes to policy and legislation
- Provided train the trainer sessions on safeguarding update training (Mental health, Child on child including sexual harassment, Sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour, and Allegations against staff)
- Established sharing of best practice and lessons learnt

## 8 Strengthening Accountability and Ensuring Consistency

Accountability and consistency were strengthened through work undertaken on policies and procedures, the monitoring of effectiveness, evaluation of impact and quality assurance processes.

### 8.1 Policies and Procedures

Policies are reviewed and updated regularly in line with the review process and or changes in national legislation, guidance or EMAT practices. The key policies reviewed in 2022-23 in relation to safeguarding were:

POLICY	DETAILS OF POLICY UPDATES
Safeguarding and Child Protection	Updated regularly to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align with other relevant policies</li> <li>• Reflect internal changes</li> <li>• Ensure national updates are reflected in the policy</li> </ul>

POLICY	DETAILS OF POLICY UPDATES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect individual school context</li> </ul>
Dealing with Allegations against Staff	Aligned with Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations against the Headteacher</li> <li>• Low level concerns</li> </ul>
Intimate Care	Reviewed for safeguarding content
Online Safety	Reviewed twice: 1 <sup>st</sup> – to ensure safeguarding content was fit for purpose and followed current guidelines 2 <sup>nd</sup> – updated following changes to KCSiE
Anti-Bullying	Reviewed for safeguarding content
Mental Health	Written by the Mental Health Working Party
Relationships and Sex Education	Reviewed for safeguarding content following changes in statutory legislation
Staff Code of Conduct	Reviewed twice 1 <sup>st</sup> - for safeguarding content 2 <sup>nd</sup> – added paragraph to support staff who are parents/carers with children in the school

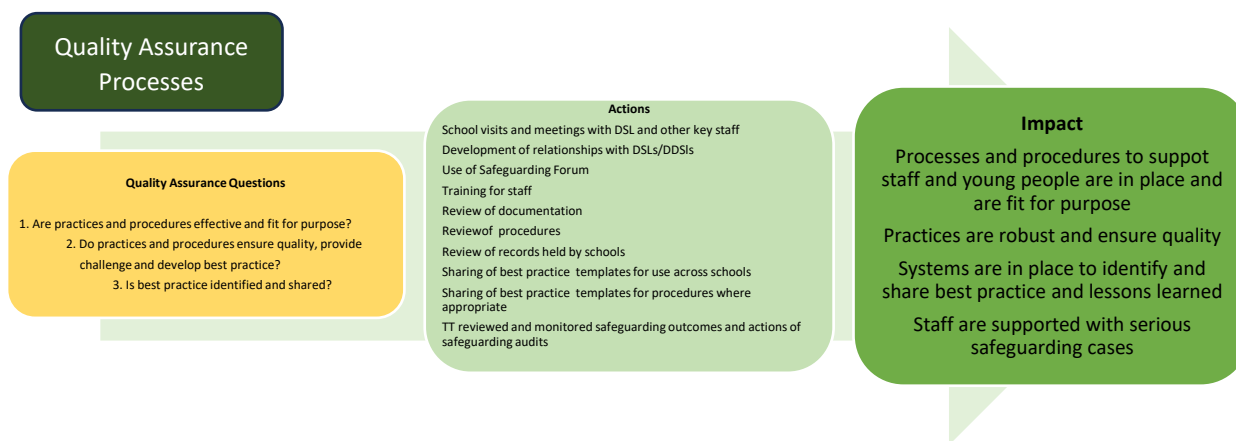
All significant amendments to policies have been ratified and received formal approval by Trustees.

## 8.2 Monitoring of effectiveness, evaluation of impact and quality assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) practices are a continual process. These are used to ensure that safeguarding practices are always improving/developing and that these practices continue to enhance and develop the safeguarding culture across EMAT schools.

TT's range of approaches to quality assurance monitors the effectiveness both of their own work Trust wide and that of the individual schools.





The QA of safeguarding cases is an ongoing aspect of the work TT does alongside those with lead responsibility for safeguarding. Monitoring cases, reviewing data and talking through serious cases is a continuous process.

In addition, the monitoring of effectiveness, evaluation of impact and quality assurance process in 2022-23 focused on 3 main areas:

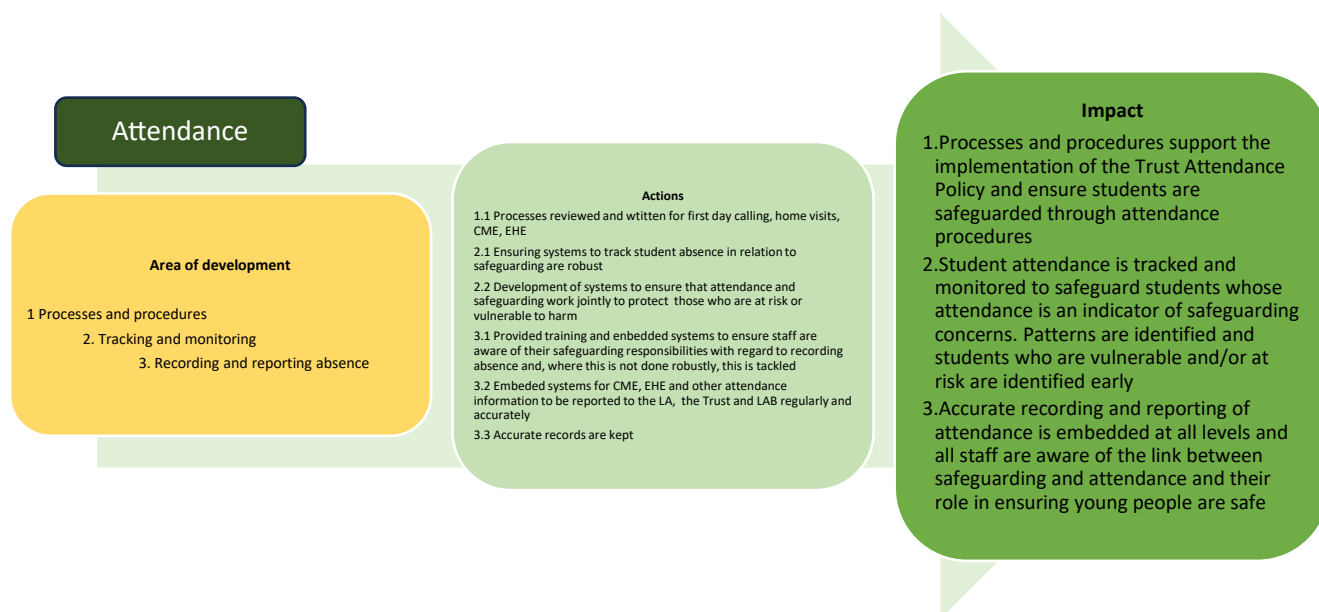
- Attendance Procedures
- Risk Assessments
- Alternative Provision

TT reviewed current practice in these three areas. Where support and/or development was needed, some, or all, of the following development activities took place across the individual schools.

### 8.3 Attendance Procedures

TT developed an effective Trust wide attendance policy which outlines safeguarding responsibilities in relation to attendance. 'Working together to improve school attendance'<sup>3</sup> recognise children missing from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. The Attendance Policy developed consistency around processes for first day calling, home visits, reporting and recording Children Missing in Education (CME) and families who chose Elective Home Education (EHE).

<sup>3</sup> Working together to improve school attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities Published: May 2022 Applies from: September 2022



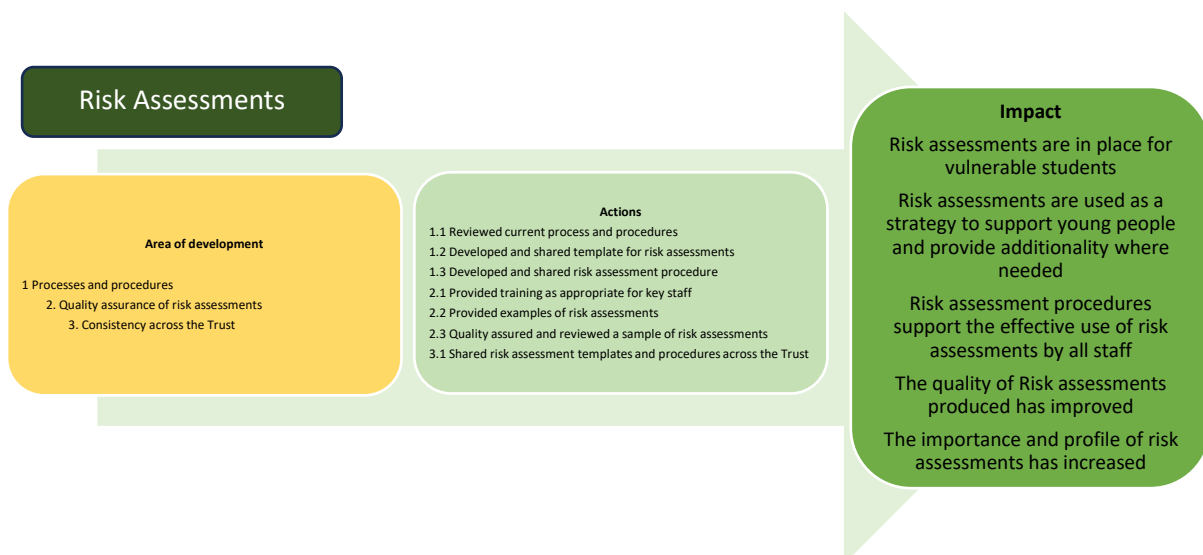
Attendance and safeguarding are closely linked. TT have worked with schools to ensure that systems and processes are in place across EMAT schools and that these systems act as a protective factor for children. Staff understand and acknowledge their duty of care to take action where concerns are raised. Processes and procedures ensure that non-attendance, persistent absence or unauthorised absence results in safeguarding action where needed.

Overall, attendance for 2022-2023 across EMAT schools was above national figures. The only exception was NIA where this will continue to be a focus for 2023-2024. Persistent Absence will continue to be an area of focus in some schools for 2023-24.

Pupil Attendance	CA	HA	NIA	OA	PWS	SA	SAA	National 2022/23
Overall Attendance	96.0	95.2	89.1	93.8	92.4	93.8	95.2	Secondary 90.7% Primary 94%
Overall Persistent Absence	13.1	6.1	P:19.7 S:24.7	11.9	32.4	17.9	13.1	Secondary 28.3% Primary 17.2%

#### 8.4 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are used to support young people and those around them. Risk assessments should be used to ensure vulnerable students have some additionality in terms of support as well as to mitigate risk and enable them to attend school safely.

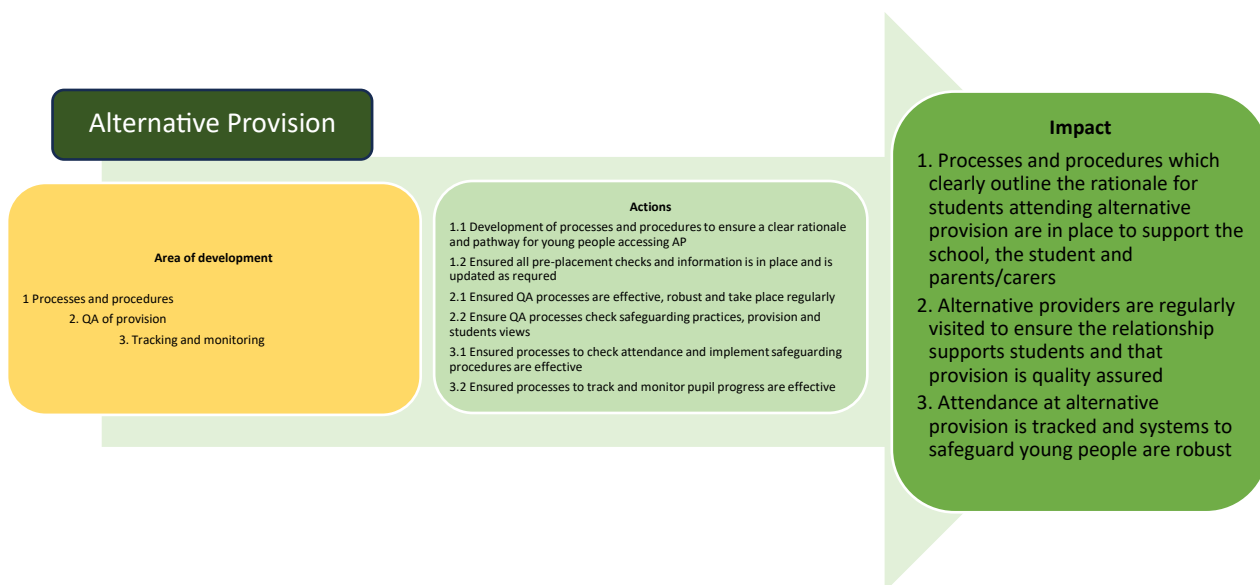


TT have worked closely with school staff to ensure that the processes for risk assessments across EMAT schools is fit for purpose and is robust. These processes and procedures aim to support the student themselves, other students in the school, and staff to keep themselves and others safe and mitigate any risk. Following a Local Authority visit to NIA, the template was taken by the LA to share across Northampton schools as an example of best practice.

Risk assessments were further refined for use with KS1 pupils and families. The wording in the risk assessment along with an amended title of ‘support plan’ for these students is used as this is more appropriate for younger students and less alarming for parents/carers.

### 8.5 Alternative Provision

Young people attending alternative provision often have significant, complex vulnerabilities. Effective safeguarding arrangements are made for pupils in light of their higher vulnerability to safeguarding risks. We aim to ensure that young people attending alternative provision are safe and their provision is effective in promoting progress.



TT ensured that a responsibility-based model with collective decision-making was used and TT promoted and supported the development of professional links and relationships with the school,

the alternative provider and the Local Authority. The view that no ‘one size fits all’ was embedded to ensure that the right approach for young people and their families was adopted on an individual basis.

TT have worked with EMAT school leaders to review AP provision across the Trust.

A clear vision and rationale for AP as a preventative and supportive measure has been established which increased confidence into how AP is used. A review of provision took place to ensure that a broad range of quality pathways for students was available alongside the development of Quality Assurance (QA) processes enabling pupils to achieve good outcomes and make a successful transition to further education, employment, adult life or back to mainstream education.

Adopting a responsibility based model ensured that the needs of the students were at the heart of decision making and that the school retained responsibility for all AP students. Effective links and relationships were formed across the school, AP and Local Authority and with the families of students attending AP. The tracking of attendance for students attending AP was improved as were the processes to ensure that the quality of provision was assured. In addition, processes to ensure that this is maintained and robust are embedded. Where provision was deemed unsuitable, students were reallocated to more appropriate provision. Where appropriate, students were reintegrated back into the mainstream setting reducing the numbers of students attending AP. Lower numbers and effective and accurate forecasting for future need where possible resulted in a financially sustainable model. Ultimately, young people have improved opportunities to secure the outcomes needed for their next steps.

## 9 Safeguarding Training

TT have developed training materials which have been shared and/or delivered to staff across all settings. This is to ensure that:

- All staff accessed quality safeguarding training
- Safeguarding updates are delivered regularly to staff
- Updates to statutory safeguarding legislation had been shared
- All staff received a consistent message across all EMAT settings
- Key areas/messages have been addressed across all settings and/or where there is a need for training
- Key staff have appropriate training relevant to their needs

Staff Training Log 2022-2023 (Safeguarding)				
Training produced by Thompson Team	Delivered to	Delivered by	Date	Notes
Full Core training	Core Team	Thompson Team	September 2022	This provided refresher training and updates to KCSE
Governor and Trustee training	All Governors and Trustees	Thompson Team	September 2022	Live training was delivered for all Governors
Safeguarding Governor training	Safeguarding Governors	Thompson Team	September 2022	This focussed on reading school data provided on the Trust reports and how to provide strategic support and challenge to schools

Governor Safeguarding induction Training	New Governors	Thompson Team (online, self-paced module)	September 2022-July 2023	TT produced a self-paced module and quiz for safeguarding governors new to role in year to complete
Safeguarding update – including changes to statutory legislation	All School Staff	Safeguarding Leads across settings	September 2022	This was delivered across all settings and is used as an induction tool for new staff
Bitesize Module – Mental Health Awareness	All School Staff	Safeguarding Leads across settings	December 2022	This module was sent to DSLs for them to deliver in their settings
Bitesize Module – Child-on-Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviours	All School Staff	Safeguarding Leads across settings	February 2023	This module was sent to DSLs for them to deliver in their settings.
Safeguarding Update/Refresher	All School Staff	Safeguarding Leads across settings	March 2023	Regular updates to ensure safeguarding knowledge, understanding and awareness is refreshed
Risk Assessment Training	Key staff at NIA	Thompson Team	February 2023	To ensure risk assessments are quality and fit for purpose
Senior Mental Health Leads	Senior Mental Health Leads	Thompson Team	February 2023	To ensure all EMAT schools have a fully trained SMHL in each school
Accurate Registers	PWS	Safeguarding Lead	February 2023	This was originally produced for NIA and was shared with PWS following a safeguarding visit from TT
Bitesize Module - Allegations against staff	All school staff	Safeguarding Leads across settings	March 2023	This module was sent to DSLs for them to deliver in their settings. This included low-level concerns and was to ensure staff understood appropriate actions to take
Youth Mental Health First Aid Refresher	Hardingstone	Mental Health First Aiders	May 2023	Delivered to relevant staff at Hardingstone who had recently undergone MHFA training and required refresher training
Youth Full Mental Health First Aid	All EMAT schools (excl Hardingstone)	Mental Health First Aiders	June 2023	Full Mental Health First Aid delivered to relevant staff in all EMAT schools

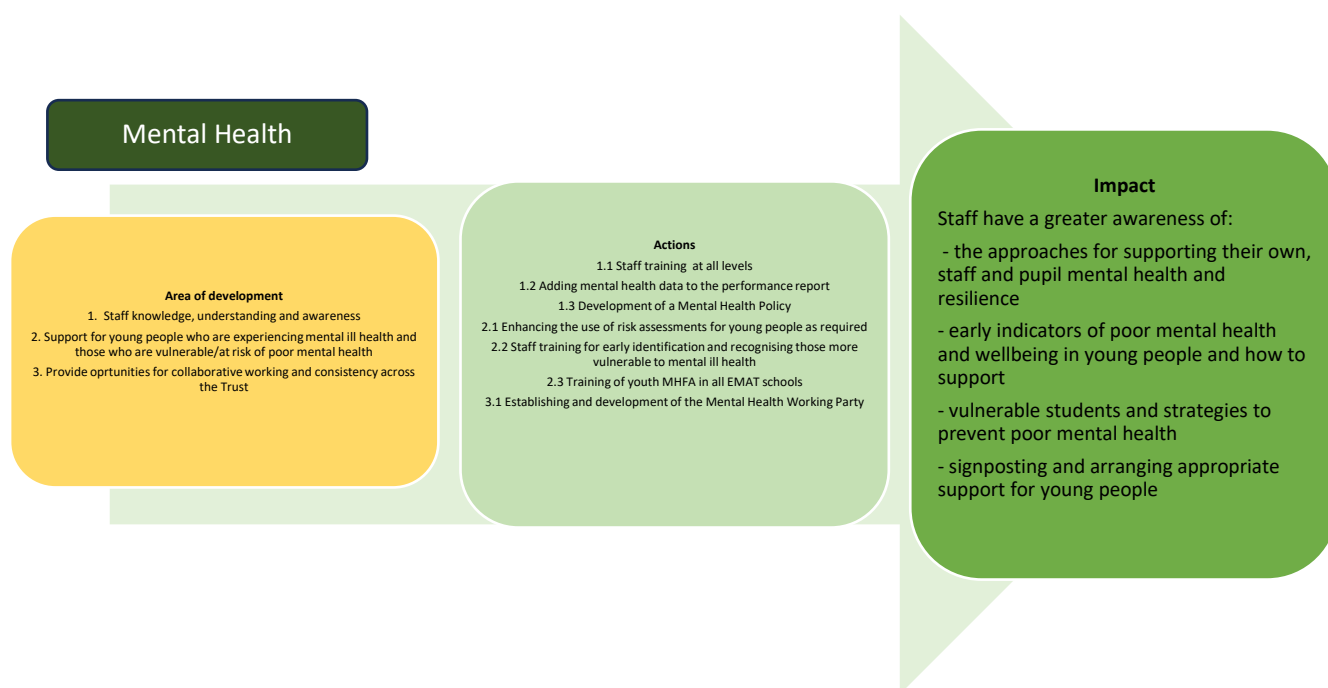
## 10 Mental Health

Good mental health is important for helping children and young people to develop and thrive as well as ensuring their readiness to learn. The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey (2020) found 1 in 6 children aged 5 to 16 years to have a probable mental health disorder. EMAT schools aim to provide high quality education and pastoral care to enable young people to develop into resilient adults with good mental health.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people across the Trust has been a focus area in 2022-23. The total number of known mental health concerns across all settings is 128. The main known causes in secondary students are:

1. Bullying/anxiety surrounding safety in school and out of school
2. Friendship/peer/relationship issues
3. School refusal/school avoidance/non-attendance due to anxiety and/or depression
4. Suicidal ideation and self-harm
5. Exam stress

A number of actions have taken place to improve the provision and support for those young people experiencing mental ill health and those who are at risk or vulnerable to poor mental health.



TT are assured trainers for DfE Senior Mental Health Lead training. They have delivered training across all EMAT schools. At least one Senior Mental Health Lead has been trained in each school with most having two members of staff trained. A member of the EMAT central HR team has also undergone this training. All EMAT schools also have at least one member of staff trained as a Mental Health First Aider. In addition, TT have developed a module for DSLs to deliver to all staff in each EMAT school to increase mental health knowledge, understanding and awareness across each setting.

The Mental Health Working Party is made up of Senior Mental Health Leads. The focus on the working party in this academic year has been to:

- Provide group support and supervision

- Keep informed of national and local updates
- Share best practice and lessons learned across the Trust
- Develop a Mental Health Policy
- Begin website development

## **11 Supervision**

TT provide regular supervision for staff in key safeguarding roles. This includes Headteachers, DSLs, DDSLs, SENDCOs and Mental Health Leads. These sessions are optional but the uptake is good with 6 schools having allocated staff accessing supervision regularly and 1 school (PWS) preferring sessions as required. In addition, supervision sessions are offered on an 'ad hoc' basis for any staff who are referred to TT or following an incident where a session would support that member of staff.

In the academic year 2022-23, 47 supervision sessions took place with 19 members of staff accessing supervision across the Trust.

## **12 Supporting schools with serious safeguarding cases**

TT support schools with serious safeguarding cases through sharing best practice and providing professional support and challenge.

Professional relationships have been developed which enable schools to contact TT to talk through serious cases. This may be done by their own choice or they may be directed to discuss cases by the CEO, the Head of Education, HR or their Executive Head.

This has ensured consistency of decision making across the Trust with regards to referring cases that meet MASH threshold and cases that do not meet threshold but require further monitoring or referral to alternative external agencies for professional support. DSL's, DDSL's, Headteachers and Executive Headteachers have reported that the additional support provides reassurance and confidence in their own decision making processes. These cases have often been used within individual school settings to provide additional CPD.

## **13 Key Safeguarding Team achievements 2022-23**

TT has provided intensive support for Northampton International Academy focussing on many of the aspects above which have then been shared across the Trust. NIA has undergone a significant period of change with regards to leadership and staffing. TT have remained a consistent within the academy and have worked with key staff to review and embed procedures and policies, provide staff training to support the implementation of procedures and policies and to act as line managers to model effective leadership and provide challenge and support. TT have led and guided safeguarding across NIA to ensure that it remains effective. This has been demonstrated by positive reviews by the Local Authority. Aspects developed within NIA are now being used as examples of best practice and disseminated across other schools within the Trust.

TT have worked hard to develop and build working relationships with staff in lead safeguarding roles across the Trust. These relationships have enabled effective support and professional challenge to take place regularly. Following completion of half termly standards and performance report data, TT meet with each DSL to provide professional support and challenge on data. Data is discussed at each safeguarding forum to allow the opportunity for DSL's and Trust leaders to provide professional support and challenge to each other. This also provides an opportunity to share best practice and lessons learnt.

Quality of information sharing has been improved. Various systems and practices have become embedded this academic year to improve the quality of information sharing. These have included:

- Reviewing of policies
- Establishing mental health working parties
- 2 day Senior Mental Health Lead training to form stronger networks and professional relationships
- Regular online and face to face meetings with key safeguarding staff
- Development of the safeguarding forum to include networking opportunities, group supervision and sharing of best practice and lessons learnt
- Delivery of EMAT safeguarding training to ensure consistency of messages

#### **14 Looking forward 2023-24**

- Consistency of reporting (MyConcern)
- Ensure the effective use of Trust wide systems to support safeguarding (Arbor, MyConcern, Smartlog, SAMpeople)
- Mental health will continue to be a focus
- Continued staff development and training
- Implementing the requirement outlined in key statutory legislation and guidance 2023
- Continuing to build on and embed the good practice
- Make effective use of the standards and performance data
- Continue to provide support and professional challenge
- Quality assurance processes and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of impact
- Support schools to take action following safeguarding audits
- Further develop the safeguarding forum and mental health working party
- Continue to offer supervision