

# Safeguarding link governor/trustee role description

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| **National Governance Association**  The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and clerks of state schools in England.  We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.  We represent the views of governors, trustees and clerks at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.  [**www.nga.org.uk**](http://www.nga.org.uk) |

## Purpose of role

**This role description is intended as a guide for those wishing to learn about the role of safeguarding link governor/trustee. It is not definitive and should be adapted to suit the needs of your school or trust. We recommend that you also read our** [**governance of safeguarding guidance**](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Pupil-success-and-wellbeing/Pupil-wellbeing/Safeguarding.aspx) **which details governing board safeguarding responsibilities and legal duties in full.**

One of the most important duties that a governing board fulfils is to ensure that their school or trust is creating safe environments for pupils through robust safeguarding practices.

Governing boards must appoint a governor or trustee to take leadership responsibility for their school or trust’s safeguarding arrangements.

Where academy committees within multi academy trusts have sufficient delegated management responsibility, NGA recommends each academy committee also appoints a safeguarding lead to help maintain trust wide oversight.

**The appointed governor/trustee should take the lead on safeguarding. However, the governing board retains collective responsibility for making sure that safeguarding procedures are properly followed.**

## Safeguarding governor/trustee duties:

### Work with the designated safeguarding lead

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a senior member of the school/trust leadership team who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The safeguarding governor/trustee is the board’s main point of contact with the DSL and so they should:

## build an effective relationship with the DSL that allows for appropriate support and challenge

## arrange monitoring visits with the DSL to learn about the school or trust’s context and how this influences the approach to safeguarding

## through discussion with the DSL (and other stakeholders within the school community), understand the school/trust’s safeguarding strengths and areas for development

## meet with the DSL termly to discuss (without specific pupil details) any safeguarding incidents; conversation should be around the suitability of policies and whether any amendments are necessary

* use meetings and visits with the DSL to monitor progress on any strategic safeguarding priorities
* ensure the DSL has received the training they need and is well supported to carry out their role
* talk to the DSL about staff safeguarding training, seeking assurance that staff are up to date with policy and practice and know what steps to take if they have concerns about a pupil

### Understand how safeguarding works in practice

The safeguarding governor/trustee should be aware of the legal duties that schools, and their governing boards, must comply with to keep pupils safe. It’s also important to build an understanding of how safeguarding procedures work in practice. This should focus around:

* reading and understanding [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) (KCSiE), the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance (this is a requirement for all governors and trustees)
* building a knowledge and understanding of the school or trust’s safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring these are effective, regularly reviewed and updated
* observing (through arranged visits) how the culture of safeguarding is working within the school
* understanding how safeguarding is built into the school curriculum and how pupils are taught about staying safe (including online safety)
* using any safeguarding assessments or audits (sometimes conducted by local authorities) to help ascertain the robustness of safeguarding procedures and systems
* using data (often supplied within DSL safeguarding reports) to spot trends, for example, absence rates for looked-after children

**We recommend that all governors and trustees undertake safeguarding training** such that everyone has the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities. NGA provide [safeguarding e-learning](https://www.nga.org.uk/Training-and-Development/NGA-Learning-Link-e-learning/Learning-Link-modules/Compliance/Safeguarding-the-governors-role.aspx) for Learning Link subscribers.

### Report back to the board and keep them up to date

As the board’s specialist on safeguarding and child protection, the safeguarding link governor/trustee should:

* stay up to date on relevant guidance and policy (including local guidance), ensuring the board are made aware of any changes to their safeguarding responsibilities
* report to the governing board following monitoring meetings with the DSL and any visits/interactions with staff and pupils
* ensure safeguarding is given suitable coverage and prominence within the board’s strategic discussions
* feed in to governing board discussions, ensuring that decision making is based on a sound understanding of both the legal requirements and the school/trust procedures and culture
* ensure that the results of safeguarding audits are shared with the board and any concerns addressed
* support the board’s oversight of the school/trust record of pre-appointment checks (the single central record); often this oversight comes from DSL reports to the board (not through the board directly administrating the record)