



Department
for Education

Department for Education
Yorkshire and the Humber
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Email enquiry form:
www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

Date: 24 March 2026

St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Hallam Pastoral Centre
St. Charles Street
Sheffield
S9 3WU

Company Number: 13589684
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Notice to Improve: ST CLARE CATHOLIC MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

I am writing to you in your capacity as the [REDACTED] St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust (the Trust), to inform you that the Department for Education has assessed that the Trust's breaches of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) relating to safeguarding non-compliance are significant enough to warrant a Notice to Improve. On that basis, I am issuing the Trust with a Notice to Improve on safeguarding grounds. I understand that this decision may be disappointing and want to assure you that I recognise the positive action the Trust has taken to date to address the concerns.

In January 2026 you shared a report resulting from an external investigation following the serious incident at All Saints Catholic High School on 3 February 2025, where a pupil was fatally stabbed on the school site. This review found that:

- There were weaknesses in the school's organisational structure and systems which contributed to a series of oversights, assumptions and misjudgements; and affected safeguarding decision-making.
- Government guidance for off-site provision was not followed.
- The requirements for information sharing as set out in the government's statutory frameworks for safeguarding children, or the guidance for arranging managed moves were not followed.
- There was a lack of clarity about who was responsible for the implementation of the policy for searching, screening and confiscating.

- Government guidance for recording searches and informing parents was not well implemented and lacked the precision and detail expected in the guidance.
- Government guidance for searching, screening and confiscation was not followed.
- Government guidance in respect of a report of possession of weapons was not followed.
- There were multiple instances of poor record keeping and communication with relation to safeguarding matters.
- There was at least one instance of an unlawful suspension.

Paragraph 1.14 of the Academy Trust Handbook outlines the Safeguarding measures that a trust needs to have in place.

1.14 Academy trust boards have a duty to:

- *safeguard and promote the welfare of children*
- *have regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding, issued by the Secretary of State for Education*
- *ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors*

Given the seriousness of the findings of the external review, it is clear that the Trust board has failed to comply with the safeguarding measures outlined in paragraph 1.14 of the Academy Trust Handbook.

I recognise the cooperation and extensive discussions that have taken place between the Trust and officials. However, this notice will be in place until such time as I have full assurances that there are appropriate and compliant safeguarding controls at the Trust.

This letter and its annexes serve as a written Notice to Improve safeguarding at the Trust (Notice to Improve or “the Notice”). It reflects the findings and recommendations in the Trust commissioned external review, and the concerns on governance and oversight by the Board.

The Trust is required, pursuant to the provisions of the ATH and the Funding Agreement (FA), to comply with the terms of this Notice. These terms are set out in Annex A and Annex B.

We will monitor progress made towards meeting the requirements of this Notice. We will lift the Notice when the requirements set out in the annex have been met in full.

We will support the Trust as it implements the required changes through regular contact and clear routes of escalation to resolve any questions or queries you might have. However, if the Trust is unable to deliver the necessary improvement or fails to make sufficient progress against the original conditions, we reserve the right to issue a revised Notice and add further specific conditions. Should it become evident that the Trust is unlikely to fulfil the conditions and / or requirements set out in this Notice and / or within the agreed timescales, we will explore the contractual intervention options available.

In the event that the Trust fails to meet the requirements of this Notice, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, it will be considered to have failed to comply with the terms of the ATH. This will amount to a breach of the terms of the FA and may lead to termination.

If continued non-compliance with the ATH occurs, we may also refer the case to the Charity Commission for further investigation, as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter by email within three working days of the date of this letter to [REDACTED]. The Trust is required to publish the Ntl on its website within 14 days of it being published on gov.uk and retain it there until the Ntl is lifted.

I recognise that this may be an uncertain time for the Trust and its staff. I am mindful of creating additional pressures on individuals involved. Therefore, we ask the Trust to ensure appropriate provision is in place to support all its staff, as necessary. You may find the Education staff wellbeing charter (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>) helpful.

We will continue to keep clear and regular lines of communication open with you. As such, [REDACTED] will be in contact shortly to answer any questions you may have, and to discuss the next steps in more detail including any support the Trust may require to drive the necessary improvements. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Department for Education

CC. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Notice to Improve

The Department for Education (DfE) has decided to issue a Notice to Improve (the 'Notice') as a consequence of St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust (the 'Trust')

- Failing to adhere to the Safeguarding conditions as outlined in paragraph 1.14 of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH)

1.14 Academy trust boards have a duty to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- have regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding, issued by the Secretary of State
- ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors

Conditions

1. The Trust is required to comply with all of the conditions set out in Annex B.

Governance requirements

2. The Trust is responsible for its own oversight, control and governance and is expected to take appropriate action to strengthen the weaknesses identified and return to compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook.
3. The Trust should take all appropriate actions to ensure the action plan agreed with the DfE is fully implemented.
4. The DfE must be satisfied that the Trust is doing everything it can to rectify the weaknesses identified.

Monitoring and progress

5. The Trust is required to submit the evidence for the specific conditions to the timescales outlined in Annex B to enable the DfE to monitor compliance and progress.
6. Should it become evident that the Trust is unlikely to fulfil the conditions and / or requirements set out in this Notice and / or within the given timescales, the DfE will begin to consider and explore the contractual intervention options available.

Compliance and the end of the notice period

7. As outlined in Annex B, the Trust is required to submit evidence to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of this notice, which the DfE will use to monitor the Trust's progress. Annex B sets out the detail of the evidence required to fulfil the condition and the timescales to submit this evidence to the DfE.

8. When the Trust meets all the conditions outlined in this Notice, is fully compliant with the most recent edition of the ATH and no other breaches have been identified, the DfE will write to the Trust to confirm that the Notice has been lifted.

Annex B

ST CLARE CATHOLIC MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Table of conditions

The table below summarises the conditions that have been placed upon St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust (“the Trust”). It sets out the evidence the Trust must provide, and the timescales the Trust must meet, to show that they have complied with the Notice to Improve (“the Notice”). All conditions set out in the table must be met before the Notice can be lifted.

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
<p>1. The Trust must review and update (where necessary) its current safeguarding policies and establish a process for regular updates and compliance checks. Any updated policies must be approved by the trust board.</p> <p>This process should include arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• scheduling annual updates to child protection policies (KCSIE para 98-99) aligned with KSCIE updates• ensuring other safeguarding policies are revised following updates to guidance, legislation etc• Regular policy reviews and sign off and implementation through the trust board	<p>The Trust must submit a copy of its policies to DfE by 22 April 2026.</p> <p>The Trust must submit an approved process for regular review and update of policies to DfE by 05 May 2026.</p>	<p>10 days from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p> <p>4 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff training on appointment and following trust policy updates or updates from other sources e.g. DfE, local safeguarding partnership. 		
<p>2. The Trust must commission an external review of safeguarding to identify any gaps and recommendations for improvement.</p> <p>The terms of reference of the review and the outcome must be shared with the DfE. The scope of the review should include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust safeguarding arrangements: (as a minimum, an assessment of the oversight exercised by the trust board, a skills & training audit of the current staff and trustees, arrangements and training for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies). Trust safeguarding procedures and policies and their implementation. Trust recruitment processes, including compliance with all statutory requirements. <p>The review should consider the above areas in view of the regulatory framework governing academies and provide assurance on the level of compliance with those requirements. In particular, the trust's Funding</p>	<p>The Trust must submit a copy of the remit for the review to be agreed by DfE; evidence of procurement and commissioning; and share the report/findings with DfE by 19 May 2026.</p>	<p>6 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
<p>Agreement, the Academy Trust Handbook, Keeping children safe in education, Working together to safeguarding children and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>Where non-compliance or improvements are identified, the Trust should provide DfE with an action plan and timeline to address those issues.</p>		
<p>3. The Trust must ensure that a director/trustee(s) with leadership responsibility for safeguarding is appointed by the board.</p>	<p>Evidence of appointment and training plan for the safeguarding director/trustee provided to the DfE by 05 May 2026.</p>	<p>4 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>
<p>4. Ensure that proper arrangements are in place, whereby the Trust board has the appropriate skill set and processes in place to challenge and hold to account the safeguarding leads and other members of the executive management team and evidence this.</p>	<p>The Trust board to provide a skills audit for all directors (trustees) along with a scheme of delegation outlining areas of responsibility and lines of accountability by 05 May 2026.</p>	<p>4 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>
<p>5. The Trust must ensure that all designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and deputy DSLs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training, including training aligned with the latest <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> (KCSIE) statutory guidance. 	<p>Provide evidence of effective monitoring and quality assurance, showing how the Trust routinely checks that safeguarding practice is implemented consistently, accurately, and in line with statutory requirements, by 05 May 2026.</p>	<p>4 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a systematic cycle for reviewing safeguarding training, ensuring it is refreshed at appropriate intervals and updated when statutory guidance changes. • Ensure that information gathered through safeguarding activity is consistently and accurately fed back into the school’s safeguarding systems, including record-keeping platforms and internal reporting structures. • Ensure safeguarding practice is fully compliant with all requirements set out in KCSIE, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information sharing ○ record-keeping ○ early identification of risk ○ inter-agency working ○ leadership oversight and accountability 		
<p>6. The Trust must ensure that all arrangements for transfers, offsite directions, managed moves and reintegration meetings following suspensions comply with statutory safeguarding guidance.</p>	<p>The Trust must provide the department with evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fully compliant, transfer and managed move process is in place. 	<p>4 weeks from issue of Ntl (not including school holiday period)</p>

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are receiving and acting on relevant information prior to a pupil starting, and monitoring arrangements (including standing safeguarding agenda items) are embedded. • Staff facilitating reintegration meetings are trained in relevant behaviour support strategies. • Action tracking mechanisms are in place and ensure timely completion and escalation. 	
<p>7. The Trust must consider in full all recommendations set out in the external investigation report shared with the department in January 2026 and any subsequent investigations.</p>	<p>If the Trust decides not to implement any recommendation, in whole or in part, the Trust must provide the department with a written justification, demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rationale for the decision; • how the Trust has assured itself that the alternative approach sufficiently mitigates the safeguarding, operational or leadership risks identified; and 	<p>Until the Ntl is lifted</p>

Condition	Evidence required to show compliance with the notice	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the Trust will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its chosen approach. <p>The Trust must supply the department with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A detailed implementation plan, setting out how each recommendation will be addressed, by whom, and by when, by 22 April 2026; and 2. Termly evidence of progress, or written justification where the Trust has chosen not to implement a particular recommendation. 	