

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2024



This statement is made on behalf of the Esteem Multi-Academy Trust (company number 11403922) pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our slavery and human trafficking statement. This statement relates to actions and activities during the year April 2024 – March 2025.

Esteem recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. The organisation is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking within its activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out Esteem’s actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its business and supply chains.

Structure, Business and Supply Chains

Esteem is a multi-academy trust (MAT), working within some of the most economically deprived areas of the country. The list of our academies can be found on our Esteem website: www.esteemmat.co.uk. Esteem has three main areas of operations:

- A national level which oversees the business as a whole;
- A regional level which is responsible for a group of academies;
- A local level – e.g. an individual academy.

Our suppliers are UK based and key supply areas cover catering, maintenance/repairs, agency staff and cleaning.

Our Approach

We work to the highest professional standards and comply with all laws, regulations and rules relevant to our business. We expect the same high standards from those we work with and are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains or in any part of our business. We act ethically and with integrity in all of our charitable and business relations.

Policies, Documentation and Key Relationships

Where appropriate, our policies detail our approach to protecting our pupils and staff from modern slavery and ensuring our supply chains are free from modern slavery.

In addition, we follow School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD), National Joint Council (NJC) and Derbyshire Single Status pay schemes. This helps reduce risk by improving employee working and pay practices in line with the scheme expectations.

Our audit and risk management processes are reported to Trust Board, and they have overall oversight of the process and practices embedded within Esteem to reduce modern slavery and in ensuring our supply chains, which rely on people, can demonstrate adherence with local and national laws and regulations, including paying the minimum wage.

Identifying and Addressing Risks

We recognise as a Trust that there are two main avenues of risk through which modern slavery could impact Esteem. The first is through matters of a safeguarding nature which covers child sex exploitation or human trafficking which can directly impact our pupils and staff. The second is our supply chain and the staff of our vendors we contract.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the golden thread at Esteem; woven through everything we do. We take our safeguarding responsibilities incredibly seriously, ensuring that we uphold our statutory duties and strive to safeguard our staff, pupils and their families through our strong culture of safeguarding. We have a Director of Safeguarding at Trust level as well as Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding teams in every academy. Collectively these colleagues work together to implement policy and secure practice across the Trust. These colleagues are skilled, experienced and supported to ensure our practices are robust and accessible to all. Every academy proactively works with the local authorities, the local safeguarding partnerships, the LADO and local stakeholders to minimise the impact of local risks and identified safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Best practice is shared across the Trust and the focus of safeguarding training always includes detailed information about early identification of those at risk of exploitation. Esteem have developed their own Early help service called FASST (Family and Student Support Service) who are able to work with young people and their families to develop strategies to promote safety and overcome challenges. The FASST Team also have a website where information on staying safe and getting the right support at the right time is accessible.

The quality and impact of our safeguarding practice is reviewed at every School Improvement and Development visit Safeguarding policy and practice is reviewed at Local Governing Board meetings in our academies and a very detailed evaluation from our Director of Safeguarding is provided to the Executive Leadership Team and Trust Board. In addition, the Chief Education Officer meets regularly Director of Safeguarding.

Statutory safeguarding practices and impact on keeping children safe are formally reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding and audited through our Trust Safeguarding Audit.

Safeguarding is an agenda item at every full Board of Trustees Meeting and we have a named Trustee with portfolio responsibility for Safeguarding.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. It is fully compliant with all statutory requirements and guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023). Procedures are individualised at academy level to ensure they reflect the needs of the academy and its wider community, these are shared on all of the academy websites.

Supply Chain and Vendors

Esteem's procurement regulations set out the requirements we have in relation to our engagement with suppliers. Our suppliers are expected to comply with all local and national laws and regulations. This includes paying their staff the minimum wage, and any on-site staff passing an appropriate level DBS check. We publish our standard terms and conditions to ensure providers looking to contract with us are aware of our standards. Should suppliers fail to meet our minimum requirements, or be unwilling to make any changes, we may cease to trade with them.

Procurement is subject to internal audit review, as well as assessed by our external auditors annually. Frameworks via public sector buying organisations are being considered for all tenders and these meet the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by default. In the event we opt not to use an existing

framework all tenders go through Deputy CEO at which point the modern slavery risk will be considered and incorporated into the tender evaluation criteria.

We will complete a desk-based audit of our key suppliers' statements to reassure ourselves they continue to operate in accordance with the requirements of the act. We continue to ensure that we support staff in working with existing and new suppliers through training and understanding of our processes embedded in our procurement practices to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking, and fully understand our duty as a Trust as prescribed in legislation namely in the form of e-learning. Safeguarding colleagues also cover modern slavery within their CPD programme.

Key Performance Indicators to Measure Effectiveness of Steps Being Taken

Training

E-learning will be completed at induction and biennial as part of our mandatory training cycle. Staff will be and are required to declare annually that they have read and understood this Modern Slavery Statement and they have received appropriate training.

In addition, Esteem also has a Whistleblowing Policy which enables those with concerns about any wrongdoing or breaches of law, to raise these concerns in confidence without fear of disciplinary action.

Throughout the year the annual safeguarding training plan across the Trust includes a detailed focus upon on early identification of those at risk of exploitation and training to help all staff know what to do if they become aware of any potential risks. We are fully satisfied that through our robust safeguarding training that staff could identify and act appropriately for at risk pupils, staff and contractors.

This is not an area for complacency however and we keep under closely scrutiny and evaluation our safeguarding policy and practice. This enables us to refine and develop excellence in all we do.

In this Modern Slavery Statement for 2024, we recognise the ongoing impact of the pandemic is not to be underestimated as we continually enhance the knowledge of our staff to prevent slavery and human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

We evaluate our processes for raising concerns to ensure that there are clearly identified ways to report concerns of whistleblowing or modern slavery which are available to all our stakeholders.

Reporting

To date, no referrals have been made in relation to modern slavery.



Signed:

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 06 March 2024