CASE STUDY

The Greenwood Academies Trust goes online to enhance safeguarding training compliance

A Virtual College Case Study

GREENWOOD
ACADEMIES TRUST

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>
> Wayne Oldfield, Trust Safeguarding Manager,
> Greenwood Academies Trust

The **background**

The Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT) currently has 31 open academies educating approximately 16,000 pupils across eight local authority areas including Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Derby City, Leicester City, Northamptonshire, Peterborough, Lincolnshire and Central Bedfordshire.

The Trust's mission is to enable every child within its academies to be the best they can be.

The Trust is a 'not for profit' organisation. Support services for finance, ICT, procurement, human resources, catering, data, curriculum development, staff development, health and safety and extended opportunities are led by a Central Team operating across the Trust.

The **challenge**

Safeguarding is a major consideration for any academy or Multi Academy Trust and the Greenwood Academies Trust is one of the few trusts in the country with a dedicated Safeguarding Manager with overview for the strategic development of safeguarding within the Trust.

With so many different academies catering for thousands of pupils spread across diverse local authorities, the safeguarding training provision varied enormously across the Trust's academies with each academy sourcing and implementing its own different solution.

"Many of our academies are within areas needing high levels of pupil support," explained Wayne Oldfield, Trust Safeguarding Manager at the Greenwood Academies Trust.

"I wanted to ensure we could achieve consistency and quality in our safeguarding training provision throughout all of our academies."

The **solution**

Wayne was already aware of Virtual College's safeguarding courses through his links with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board, one of the earliest adopters of online learning solutions and one of the most active and highly engaged safeguarding partners of Virtual College.

Wayne commented: "We researched other safeguarding providers but I was impressed by the quality and wide range of courses provided by Virtual College.

"This would allow us to deliver accredited training appropriate to staff with different levels of needs."

The Greenwood Academies Trust chose Virtual College's safeguarding package which provided unlimited access to over 50 safeguarding courses for over 3,000 staff across its 31 academies.

The training would be delivered via Enable, Virtual College's learning management system (LMS), which also provides the important tracking and reporting capabilities required to manage the training across a large number of staff in different academies and deliver the control for internal assurance processes.

Regardless of their job role, all staff are assigned 4 mandatory safeguarding courses but the Trust's training provision is also role dependent so they can map additional courses to the specific needs of the person's job role. For example, an academy's designated safeguarding lead will take the online Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect course.

"Our blended approach uses online learning to provide underpinning knowledge which is complemented, where appropriate, with face to face sessions," explained Wayne.

"The amount of both online and face to face provision has increased within our Trust as safeguarding training continues to increase in scope and importance."

The **results**

Within the first 3 months, almost 14,000 online courses had already been allocated to the Trust's staff from Virtual College's suite of safeguarding titles.

"With over 3,000 members of staff across multiple sites, the Virtual College LMS is vital to our efficient and effective administration, allowing us to track and report on learning and compliance quickly and easily," explained Wayne.

"Each academy is responsible for ensuring that their safeguarding training is up to date so each academy has administrative access but I can also use the LMS centrally to review training progress and send out reminders. It also helps us to identify any issues. For example, we may have different language requirements for the training."

The Trust also uses the LMS to distribute some of its own specific online content and plans to make additional time and costs savings by taking PowerPoint slides previously delivered via a face to face course and making a simple online course available instead.

"It is proving to be really useful to be able to roll out online safeguarding training to our community business and work experience partners who also have contact with our students," said Wayne.

"The key driver for choosing Virtual College's online safeguarding training was value for money rather than cost saving but buying centrally for the Trust has allowed us to achieve significant cost savings compared to buying individually and provides an economical solution for our academies, " explained Wayne.

"Ofsted will visit our academies individually but will also review the Trust. Having the online learning courses and Enable reporting gives us confidence that we are able to respond quickly and appropriately to Ofsted's information requests."

"The solution provides a complete cycle of safeguarding operations – we can identify appropriate courses from Virtual College to fill any training need gaps.

"We can then see that the training has been completed and understood so that we can deliver feedback and reports to the Trust board."

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Phone
01943 605976

Email
info@virtual-college.co.uk

Web
www.virtual-college.co.uk

About Virtual College

With over 2 million online learners, Virtual College is one of the leading providers of e-learning in the UK. For over twenty years, we have provided online courses to individuals and companies across the world, breaking down the boundaries of traditional learning to deliver cost reducing, time efficient training. Unlike many other e-learning providers, our training extends to actual programme and qualification creation and delivery - resulting in a unique blended solution. The knowledge, experience and feedback that this delivery provides helps ensure that we strive to continually improve our solutions.

Virtual College Ltd
Marsel House, Stephensons Way
Ilkley, West Yorkshire
LS29 8DD, England