This policy was amended in consideration of the following UN Convention on the rights of the child articles; Article 1 (all articles)

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Designated Safeguarding Lead	J Richards – BUA S O'Neill - BLA		**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**	S Harper-Penman – BUA F Chittock - BLA
Designated Safeguarding Governor	D O'Donoghue		**Policy Author**	G Smith
Policy Number	0021		**Policy Ownership**	Finance & Operations
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> "Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child."
>
> (Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

This Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- the Behaviour policy
- the Staff Code of Conduct
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children *(everyone under the age of 18)* is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Our school has a whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and it underpins all systems, processes and policies. We will always listen to and advocate for children and ensure that our work reflects the voice of the child.

It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents/carers, governors and the wider school community. We believe that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to plan in safeguarding them and that, only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 *(Section 157 for Independent schools)* places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students of the school.

In addition to national statutory guidance, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures. Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance *(this is not an exhaustive list)*:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2026)
- Generative AI: product safety expectations (DfE, 2026)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions (DfE, 2026)

- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges (DfE, 2026)
- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Mobile phones in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2025)
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (DfE, 2025)
- Behaviour in schools (DfE, 2024)
- Information Sharing (DfE, 2024)
- Teaching online safety in schools (DfE, 2023)
- Searching, screening and confiscation in schools (DfE, 2023)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, 2017)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE, 2024)
- Early help and effective support (Essex Safeguarding Children Board, 2026)
- Education Access Team - Children Missing Education / Home Education policy and practice (Essex County Council, 2023)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Victims and Prisoners Act 2024
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989

Roles and responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools, the Local Authority and other agencies who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

The Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for safeguarding in our school. It ensures that our safeguarding arrangements comply with all legal duties and that our policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and that it is reviewed at least annually.

There is a named governor for safeguarding arrangements and they are also named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at trust board level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and a 'whole-school approach' to this. The Trust Board ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place.

The Trust Board ensures the school engages with statutory safeguarding partners and contributes to multi-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It understands the importance of sharing information in keeping children safe and ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Trust Board ensures that all adults in our school (including governors / trustees) who work with children receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The Trust Board ensures our students are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We teach our children how to keep themselves safe and we work in accordance with statutory guidance to help children recognise and respond to risk and to prevent them from coming to harm. We comply with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age students) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age students) and Health Education (for all students in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The Trust Board has specific duties around online safety and ensures we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to keep our children safe online. These arrangements are reviewed at least annually to ensure they are effective.

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that adults in our school are suitable – this is done by:

- ensuring we have in place safer recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children
- ensuring we meet statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and have recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information)
- ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised in school
- online safety (including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this)

It also ensures there is an appropriate Staff Code of Conduct Policy in place, so that adults when they start work with us are clear of the boundaries within which they operate. The Trust Board ensures all staff are aware they must follow this policy and that appropriate action is taken where this does not happen.

The Headteacher

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. Our Headteacher works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Trust Board are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in our school. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards) managing and sharing safeguarding information and child protection files and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that any referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub)

and / or the Police are made in a timely way and in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead/leads is able to act in their absence.

All school staff

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our children can learn. We recognise the need to identify concerns as they emerge so we can stop them from escalating and all staff are therefore aware of how to identify children who may benefit from early help. They are particularly alert to children who may have additional need for support either in community-based early help or through access to other agencies.

All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Our staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and they understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home or our setting and also online.

Our staff members are aware of and follow school safeguarding processes (as set out in this policy) and also know how to make a referral to Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. This may be because they are embarrassed, scared or do not recognise they are experiencing abuse. We understand that other children as well as adults can cause harm and that there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety. We also understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding) and recognise that abuse and neglect rarely occur in isolation and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap.

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse that they are taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are causing a problem.

Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education describes abuse as 'a form of maltreatment of a child'. It sets out that:

"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse."

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

- **Physical**: a form of abuse causing physical harm to a child – this includes where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child
- **Emotional**: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development
- **Sexual**: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities (through actual physical or online contact)

- **Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development

In addition, Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains important information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Some of these, and our approach to them, are explained here:

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Essex has adopted the following definition for CCE: *'Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 years. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.' (Home Office, 2018)*

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

CSE is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

"Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".

We recognise that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

Risk in the community (RIC)

Risk in the community is the Essex partnership approach to tackling criminal and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors in the community, outside a child's home or our school. All staff are aware of 'contextual safeguarding' and we are therefore mindful of things in a child's life which may be a threat to their safety and / or welfare. We always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and will share it with other agencies when appropriate, to support better understanding of a child and their family. This is to ensure that our children and families receive the right help at the right time and to help keep our children safe.

Child on child abuse (including sexualised behaviours)

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, harmful sexual behaviours, gender-related abuse, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate harmful behaviour of any kind in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur. We do not normalise abuse, and it is not tolerated in our setting. Our culture is very much one of kindness, compassion, hope, connection and belonging.

Any incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and we will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as necessary and ensure that appropriate agencies are involved when required.

Our school recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. We understand there are many factors which may lead a child to display abusive behaviours towards other children, and that these matters are sensitive and often complex. We recognise our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of some children, particularly those who have experienced harm and trauma. We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, it is in the context of providing appropriate support to all children in our school where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will always take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour.

We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these. We use lessons and assemblies to teach children about healthy, positive relationships, how to report concerns, and to help them understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is. We aim to provide children with the language to report abuse and to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. We never assume, if abuse is not being reported, that it is not occurring in our school – we are vigilant to signs of abuse and promote a culture of safety and understanding.

Children who are absent from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. We recognise that good attendance begins with our school being somewhere our children want to be, and also that some children find it harder to attend school for a range of reasons. We will always try to understand underlying reasons for absence and will work collaboratively with other partners to support children to attend school and to ensure that they receive the right help at the right time.

A child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and we follow the procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. We believe that early intervention to address absence from school is vital, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where this does not happen, we will attempt contact with parents (parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to). Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Child Missing Education Team, Social Care or Police). Our school must inform the local authority of any student who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (*see Appendix C*), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can involve a wide range of behaviours and can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, and that it can take place inside or outside of the home.

Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse (either by witnessing or experiencing it) can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners, and we receive and share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family, or be placing a child at risk of harm.

As part of our safeguarding arrangements and our work with safeguarding partners, our school has signed up to Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is a national initiative which aims to provide support to children who have experienced domestic abuse. It means the Police inform us if they have attended an incident of domestic abuse which involves a child on our roll, so that appropriate support can be put in place. Any information in relation to this will be held on the child's child protection file, as with any other safeguarding information.

In Essex, the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) is responsible for designing and implementing the Domestic Abuse Strategy and provides advice, guidance and resources to support work around domestic abuse.

Harmful sexual behaviour

We understand that children's sexual behaviours exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate / developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, either in person or online. We recognise that children who display harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and we will support them accordingly.

Our school has a 'zero-tolerance' approach to harmful sexual behaviour of any kind, and any inappropriate behaviour is challenged and addressed to prevent it from escalating. We do not accept misogynistic or misandrist behaviours and work in accordance with all statutory guidance in relation to such behaviours and with other agencies as appropriate.

We seek to teach our students about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe (on and offline).

Mental health

We recognise that good mental health for all our children and staff is very important, and we understand the part our school plays in this. We aim to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all children and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which can increase someone's vulnerability and also protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in someone's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are needed to counter-balance these to promote resilience and keep children safe.

We understand that mental health issues can, on occasions, develop into safeguarding concerns. Equally, our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents/carers to support the wellbeing of our students. We expect parents/carers, if they have any concerns about the wellbeing of their child, to share this with us, so we can ensure that appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

Online safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. Whilst this presents many positive and exciting opportunities, we recognise it also presents challenges and risks, in the form of:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online. We understand any child can be vulnerable online, and that their vulnerability can vary according to age, developmental stage and personal circumstances. We aim to equip all our students with the knowledge they need to use the internet and technology safely, and we want to work with parents to support them to keep their children safe online.

Children must be safeguarded from inappropriate and potentially harmful content online. We have systems in school to filter information and block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. These systems are monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective, and all staff are trained in online safety and how to report concerns.

Prevention of radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015) placed a duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. If a child on roll at our school is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

Our school operates in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to the Police, Social Care and/or the Channel Panel.

Serious violence

Serious violence may involve physical assault or carrying, threatening with or using a weapon. It can also be associated with Child Criminal Exploitation and our staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime.

As with any other safeguarding issue, we will assess risk based on information received and our understanding of potential and actual violence. Any concerns will be addressed to help safeguard all children and we will work with other appropriate agencies to do so. We will always take a proportionate approach to such matters, whilst ensuring that all children and staff are appropriately safeguarded.

Honour or faith-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

Honour or faith based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. We understand that this form of abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of FGM where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school operates in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

A *forced marriage* is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

Procedures

Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This may be a co-ordinated offer of community-based early help when additional needs of children are identified or contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional 'Family Help' support through a Child in Need plan or at a Child Protection plan level.

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected or actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred, must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2026)
- Early help and effective support - Essex Safeguarding Children Board
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via Essex Effective Support. We may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to another agency, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for an external agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

All staff understand that, if they continue to have concerns about a child, feel a concern is not being addressed or that a situation does not appear to be improving for a child, they should raise this with the designated safeguarding lead.

Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff members have access to urgent safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them. We also provide information on safeguarding to any visitor to our school, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

Children potentially at risk of greater harm

We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be:

- children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care
- children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues
- children requiring support with mental health
- young carers
- children with medical needs
- children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- children who are questioning their gender

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and / or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and that barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect for these children. These can include:

- that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability
- that they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- that they may be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- potential communication difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or recognising that abuse is occurring
- potential additional risks due to higher dependency on adults and / or need for intimate care
- issues with understanding the risks online and how it may influence their behaviour

We work with Social Care and other relevant agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for all children and that they receive the appropriate help and support.

Training

In line with statutory requirements, the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our school receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding / child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors.

The school ensures that the designated safeguarding lead and deputies also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a vital part of safeguarding work and we understand that decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our school is signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol which includes information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

We understand that no individual knows everything about a child or family.Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and are regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

A member of staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including parents/carers or students) about a safeguarding concern, nor promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to share information on individual child protection cases with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

Information sharing can help to ensure that a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address.

Child protection records

Accurate records are an essential aspect of effective child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records relating to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the student file). All child protection records are stored electronically and will be retained for 25 years after the student's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.

In line with statutory guidance, where a student transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new setting. This will either be shared through CPOMs with settings using compatible platforms or will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving setting's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

Where a student joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

Multi-agency working

We understand the importance of agencies working together to keep children safe, and there is a legal requirement to do so.

We work with other relevant agencies, such as Social Care, the Virtual School, Police and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our school (or who was previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure our school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation, linking with the Essex Virtual School, which has strategic oversight of this group of children. Where our school is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure we are represented, provide appropriate information and contribute to the plan at these meetings. We will report on the child's progress in school, and any concerns about them will be shared at the meeting, unless to do so would place them at risk of harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead would speak with the child's key-worker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern.

Allegations about members of the children's workforce

We ensure all staff members (including agency staff) are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in our Staff Behaviour policy / Code of Conduct. All staff are regularly reminded of this through updates and training, and are also informed about our Whistleblowing Policy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2026) set out the procedures in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

These procedures should be followed where an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children,

and/or

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Any concerns about an adult in our setting should be reported to the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will then decide how to take this forward. In some cases, it might not be clear whether an incident constitutes an allegation. If this is the case, it will be necessary for us to explore the concerns to establish some facts – this initial fact-finding is not an investigation, it is to clarify information and to direct our response to the concern.

Where an allegation against a member of staff is received, and it is felt that any of the above criteria apply, the SET procedures (ESCB, 2026) require this to be reported to the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Essex Children's Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@essex.gov.uk. We may not carry out any investigation before a Children's Workforce Allegations Team referral has been made.

In the event of an allegation relating to the conduct and behaviour of an agency member of staff, the Headteacher (or deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process, to facilitate a joint investigation or enable the agency to move this forward.

Any concern relating to the Headteacher should be reported directly to the CEO, who will refer the matter to the Children's Workforce Allegations Team.

Staffing matters are confidential and the school operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection. We do not share information about any individual staff member with anyone other than appropriate statutory agencies.

Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

Our Behaviour Policy sets out our approach to behaviour for all children and also for those with more difficult or harmful behaviour. We recognise there are some children who have needs that require additional support and a more personalised approach and we always consider all behaviour, and our response to it, in the context of safeguarding.

We work in accordance with the DfE guidance: Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (DfE 2026) and our approach to this is set out in our Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force Policy.

Mobile Phones

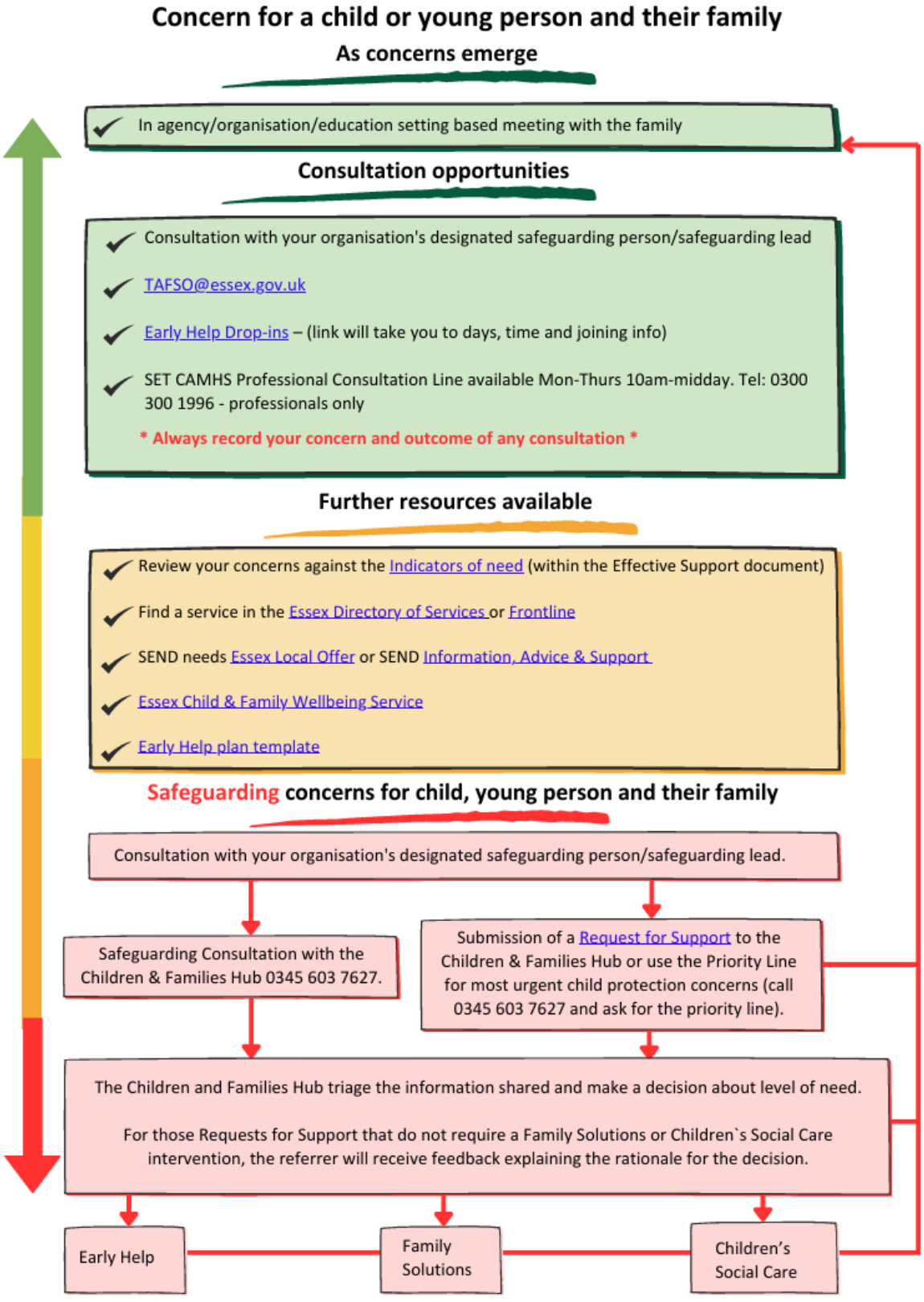
In line with the Mobile phones in schools (DfE 2026), our school is a phone-free environment. Our approach to this forms part of our wider safeguarding arrangements and is detailed in our Behaviour Policy / Mobile Phone Policy.

Whistleblowing

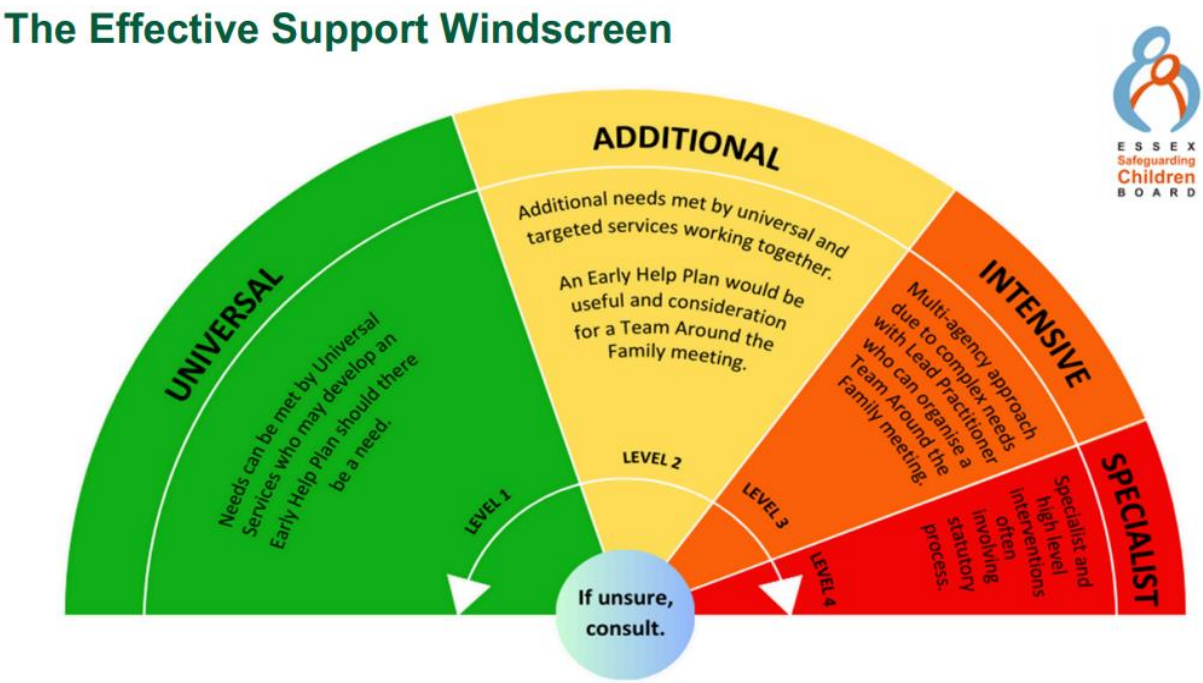
All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place and these are available in the Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Appendix A:


Concern for a child or young person and their family
As concerns emerge
In agency/organisation/education setting based meeting with the family
Consultation opportunities
Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead
TAFSO@essex.gov.uk
Early Help Drop-ins – (link will take you to days, time and joining info)
SET CAMHS Professional Consultation Line available Mon-Thurs 10am-midday. Tel: 0300 300 1996 - professionals only
* Always record your concern and outcome of any consultation *
Further resources available
Review your concerns against the Indicators of need (within the Effective Support document)
Find a service in the Essex Directory of Services or Frontline
SEND needs Essex Local Offer or SEND Information, Advice & Support
Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service
Early Help plan template
Safeguarding concerns for child, young person and their family
Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead.
Safeguarding Consultation with the Children & Families Hub 0345 603 7627.
Submission of a Request for Support to the Children & Families Hub or use the Priority Line for most urgent child protection concerns (call 0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line).
The Children and Families Hub triage the information shared and make a decision about level of need.
For those Requests for Support that do not require a Family Solutions or Children`s Social Care intervention, the referrer will receive feedback explaining the rationale for the decision.
Early Help
Family Solutions
Children's Social Care

Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accordance with their needs.

Children with **Additional** needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools, organising additional support with local partners as needed. When an agency is supporting these children, an Early Help Plan and a Lead Professional are helpful to share information and co-ordinate work alongside the child and family.

For children whose needs are **Intensive**, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, involving either an Early Help Plan or a Shared Family Assessment (SFA), with a Lead Professional to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require. Examples of intensive services are children's mental health services and Family Solutions.

Specialist services are where the needs of the child are so great that statutory and/or specialist intervention is required to keep them safe or to ensure their continued development. Examples of specialist services are Children's Social Care or Youth Offending Service. By working together effectively with children that have additional needs and by providing coordinated multi-disciplinary/agency support and services for those with intensive needs, we seek to prevent more children and young people requiring statutory interventions and reactive specialist services.

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol – arrangements for children who have missing episodes

Definition
The definition of missing used in Essex is *'anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and his or her well-being confirmed'*

*(*College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

Introduction
A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, multiple episodes of children who go missing can be an indicator of wider concerns (for example: exploitation, difficult home lives or poor mental health).
This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other education settings, hereafter referred to as education settings. Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from education settings. When this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures. This document should be read in conjunction with the education setting's Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).
Essex Schools Infolink – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
Essex Safeguarding Children Board – for the SET Procedures and other resources
Education settings should consider missing episodes like any other child protection concern and take action as appropriate. This may include contacting parents/carers, the Children & Families Hub (CFH) consultation line or, in an emergency, the CFH priority line and / or the police. It may be appropriate to use the Early Help Procedures (including holding a Team Around the Family meeting) to identify underlying reasons for the missing episodes, address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought from appropriate partners, and concerns should be escalated if there is no improvement.
Education setting staff may be asked to attend strategy meetings for a missing child and should prioritise attendance at these meetings. Where children missing frequently are open to Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the education setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a child goes missing
When it is suspected that a child is missing from an education setting, this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, attempting contact with the child by phone, text and social media and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, they must be reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, **or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm.** It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.
Education setting staff must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where the child has a Social Worker, they should also be informed. After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the child is found
If the child is found by education setting staff, or if the child returns to the setting of their own accord, the police must be notified immediately by dialling 101 or 999 if the matter is an emergency. It is important that this action is prioritised, as the child will remain classified as a missing person until seen by the police.

Essex Police
On receiving a report of a missing child, Essex Police will classify the child as missing and will respond based on the level of risk involved.

Essex Police will conduct a vulnerability interview for all children who have been missing and have returned. It may be that the child refuses to engage or speak with police. On these occasions the parents/carers can assist by reporting to officers their observations on the child's return, e.g. did the child shower, have gifts, appear unwell or under the influence of any substance etc. The setting may also be able to contribute to this process and should provide the police with any relevant information or observations.

Missing Chats

Each child years that is ten or older that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child.

Useful contacts:

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk
Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Appendix 1: indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation

Abuse, including neglect and exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap. It can include ill treatment that is not physical such as, witnessing ill treatment of others including seeing, hearing or experiencing the affects of domestic violence.
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Appendix 2: allegations of abuse made against staff

Section 1: allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This is concerning any incidence or situation where it may indicate or is alleged that anyone working in the school in their current position or capacity would pose a risk of harm.
This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the Academy that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This includes behaviour that may have happened

This relates to members of staff, supply staff and volunteers who are currently working in any school or college regardless of whether the academy is where the alleged abuse took place. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works will be undertaken and if necessary advice will be sort from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Allegations of this nature should always be reported to the Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher (DSL). The Headteacher will be appointed as the case manager, where the Headteacher is the subject of an allegation the chair of governors will act as case manager.

Initial response to an allegation

Where it has been identified a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, we will contact children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately as per the processes explained earlier in the policy.
There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

- Looking after the welfare of the child:
  - o the designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care.
- Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation:
  - o the case manager will discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, the academy will:

- apply common sense and judgement;
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently; and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

Before the LADO is contacted, the case manager will ensure all basic enquires are made in line with local procedures to help establish the facts and determine any foundation to the allegation.
Other Considerations:

- When to inform the individual of the allegation should be on a case by case basis, guidance should be sort from the LADO and if appropriate social care and the police.
- If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should consider that teachers and other academy staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.
- If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

• If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should consider that teachers and other school and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Further information about the use of reasonable force can be found in Part 2 of KCSiE 2026 and on GOV.UK.

• Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the member of staff's family, they should discuss these concerns with the designated safeguarding lead and make a risk assessment of the situation. It may be necessary for the designated safeguarding lead to make a referral to children's social care.

• Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children's social care is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that is the case, the Case manager will discuss next steps with the LADO.

No further action

Where the initial discussion and enquires leads to no further action, case manager and the LADO should:

• Record the decision and justification for it; and

• Agree on what information should be put into writing to the individual concerned and by whom

Further Enquires

• Where further enquires are required to reach a decision the case manager and the LADO will discuss how and by whom the investigation should be undertaken. A member of the Senior leadership team will be asked to undertake the investigation in a straightforward case.

• Local Authority can provide support in the form of an independent investigator if the nature or complexity of the allegation requires

• Progress of the investigation will be monitored by the case manager and regular reviews take place on progress, ideally fortnightly or monthly intervals. The first review should take place no later than a month after initial assessment. The LADO will be consulted to support.

Supply Teacher and all Contracted Staff

Schools and colleges as employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide them with a named contact if they are suspended.

Where the Academy is not the employer of an individual they still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that they liaise with relevant parties as the academy disciplinary procedures may not fully apply. Agencies may have r=their own policies and procedures.

Whilst the academy is not the employer of supply teachers, It is essential that any allegation of abuse is dealt with properly and in a timely manner into consideration the following:

• It is dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

• That the decision to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns should not be made without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to find a suitable outcome.

• The Academy will take the lead in investigation any allegation as agencies do not have direct access to students, staff or access to the information required by the LADO. However, the academy will ensure the agency is fully involved.

• When using agencies, the academy will inform them of its process for managing allegations.

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of Supply staff) or volunteer posing a risk of harm to children, then:

• this should be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher;

• In the event that this is not possible this should be referred to the DSL in the normal way.

Allegations against Governors

If an allegation is made against a governor, schools and college should follow their own local procedures. Where an allegation is substantiated, they should follow the procedures to consider removing them from office.

In the event of any allegation being reported against any employee at the Academies, suspension should not be an automatic response. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to this step - Please see the academies disciplinary policy in relation to this procedure. School leaders can also find guidance in **KCSiE 2026 Part 4.**

Supporting those involved

Duty of Care

The welfare of a child is paramount and this will be the prime concern in terms of investigating an allegation against a person in a position of trust. However, when an allegation or safeguarding concern is being investigated it is likely to be a very stressful experience for the adult subject of the investigation, and potentially for their family members.
The Academy recognises that it has a duty of care to staff and recognises the sensitivity of any such situation. Information is confidential and should not ordinarily be shared with any other party who are not directly involved in the investigation.
Parents and Carers of the child or children involved should also be informed of the allegation and the processes involved.

Confidentiality and information sharing

In line with earlier guidance on information sharing in relation to any allegations reported the following guidance may be referred to if an allegation is made:

- In an allegation management meeting or during the initial assessment of the case, the agencies involved should share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim
- If the police are involved, wherever possible the academy will ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer's disciplinary process.
- Children's social care should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation are in need of protection or services,
- The academy will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Please see KCSiE 2026 Part 4 for further guidance regarding reporting on incidents.

Allegation Outcomes

Any outcomes will be made in line with the academy's disciplinary policy however the following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of the allegation

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation;
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence; or,
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Further guidance for Academy Leaders relating to allegation outcomes can be found in KCSiE 2023 Part 4

Other Outcomes

- Where there has been a criminal investigation the academy will work inline with the police and the LADO. Joint assessments will be made regarding the case whether any further action is appropriate. Information

supplied by any other agencies will be processed and decisions will be made in line with the academies disciplinary policy

• Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or malicious allegations: If the allegation is deemed to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious the academy will work with the LADO to consider if the child / or person the allegation is against need any support or help, or may have been making a cry for help. The academy will take appropriate action including referrals to Social Care

• If the report is deemed to be deliberately invented or malicious the academy will consider appropriate disciplinary action in line with the academy's behaviour policy.

Managing the Situation, exit arrangement & references

• All guidance and procedures relating to exit arrangements or other management aspect will be under the guidance of the Academy HR department, governors and in line with the academy disciplinary policy.

• Any false, unsubstantiated or unfounded allegation should not be included in references. Any substantiated allegations should be included provided the information is factual

Further guidance for Academy Leaders relating to managing the situation and exit arrangements can be found in KCSiE 2026 Part 4.

Record Keeping

Further guidance for Academy Leaders relating to record keeping can be found in KCSiE 2026 Part 4.

Non-recent allegations

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the police.

Where an adult makes an allegation to a school or college that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non-recent allegations made by a child, should be reported to the LADO in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The LADO will coordinate with children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – Low Level Concerns

Where there are concerns which are not deemed to meet the harm threshold they will be dealt with in line with the following academy polices: Code of Conduct, Disciplinary policy, Complaints policy, Grievance policy, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding policy, Whistleblowing policy

Low Level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out in the previous section

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

• is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and

• does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour can be found in appendix O and in the Staff Code of conduct

The academy encourages an open and transparent culture where all concerns about adults in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the academy including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors are shared responsibly with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Sharing Low Level concerns

Any low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor should be reported to the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not available then the report should be made to the DSL

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing in line with the Academies HR process, and stored securely and confidentially.

Responding to Low Level concerns

When a concern has been raised it will be responded to in accordance with processes laid out in the staff code of conduct, Whistleblowing policy and the academy disciplinary policy. The Headteacher will collect as much information as possible speaking with those who raised the concern and any potential witnesses' Low-Level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If the safeguarding team are in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with their LADO

Promoting positive mental health and resilience in school

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school wants to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all students and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter balance and promote further growth of resilience.

The academy's Wellbeing centre and Mental Health leads support a whole school approach to mental Health, supporting students and staff mental health. Concerns can be reported through a clear triage system via HOY or directly to the Wellbeing team via CPOMs

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our students. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

Use of reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, persistent and or unexplained absences from education, serious violence, radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes can be signs that children are at risk. Below are some safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff.

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education, particularly those with unexplainable and or persistent absences, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a

child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child sexual exploitation Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

Early help assessment will take place to ensure the correct support is in place.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others – for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a student is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/student already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues A girl:
    - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
    - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
    - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
    - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
    - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
    - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
    - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
    - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
    - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
    - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
  A girl:
    - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
    - Having limited level of integration within UK society
    - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"

- Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
- Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
- Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
- Being unexpectedly absent from school
- Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

- **Radicalisation** is the process of a person legitimising support or use of terrorist violence.
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces
- **Terrorism** is an action that:
    - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
    - Causes serious damage to property; or
    - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

    The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our students to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a student is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a student, they will follow our procedures set out in this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in this policy, as appropriate.

Serious violence

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a student being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

Children and the court system

Sometimes children are required to give evidence for ether, crimes committed against them or they have witnessed.

Guides to support students can be found in the links below:

ywp-5-11-eng.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

ywp-12-17-eng.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Cyber crime

Cyber crime is a criminal activity committed using computers and are broadly categorised as either cyber enabled (crimes that happen offline but are enabled at scale and speed online) and cyber dependant (crimes committed using a computer)

Cyber dependant can include:

- Unauthorised access to computers e.g.: accessing school system to look for a past exam paper or change grades
- Denial of service attacks, attempting to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with traffic
- Making, supplying, or enabling malware with the intent to cause a further offence.

Children with particular skills and interests in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray in to cybercrime.

If there is a concern in this area, the DSL may refer into the cyber choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the home office:

Cyber Choices - National Crime Agency

Appendix 5: Missing Child Protocol – arrangements for children who have missing episodes

Definition

The definition of missing used in Essex is *'anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and his or her well-being confirmed'*

*(*College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance).

Introduction

A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, multiple episodes of children who go missing can be an indicator of wider concerns (for example: exploitation, difficult home lives or poor mental health).

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other education settings, hereafter referred to as education settings. Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from education settings. When this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures. This document should be read in conjunction with the education setting's Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

- Essex Schools Infolink – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board – for the SET Procedures and other resources

Education settings should consider missing episodes like any other child protection concern and take action as appropriate. This may include contacting parents/carers, the Children & Families Hub (CFH) consultation line or, in an emergency, the CFH priority line and / or the police. It may be appropriate to use the Early Help Procedures (including holding a Team Around the Family meeting) to identify underlying reasons for the missing episodes, address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought from appropriate partners, and concerns should be escalated if there is no improvement.

Education setting staff may be asked to attend strategy meetings for a missing child and should prioritise attendance at these meetings. Where children missing frequently are open to Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the education setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a child goes missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an education setting, this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, attempting contact with the child by phone, text and social media, and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, they must be reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, **or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm.** It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

Education setting staff must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where the child has a Social Worker, they should also be informed. After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the child is found

If the child is found by education setting staff, or if the child returns to the premises of their own accord, the police must be notified immediately by dialling 101 or 999 if the matter is an emergency. It is important that this action is prioritised, as the child will remain classified as a missing person until seen by the police.

Essex Police

On receiving a report of a missing child, Essex Police will classify the child as missing and will respond based on the level of risk involved.

Essex Police will conduct a vulnerability interview for all children who have been missing and have returned. It may be that the child refuses to engage or speak with police. On these occasions the parents/carers can assist by reporting to officers their observations on the child's return, e.g. did the child shower, have gifts, appear unwell or under the influence of any substance etc. The setting may also be able to contribute to this process and should provide the police with any relevant information or observations.

Missing Chats

Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.

Useful contacts:

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk
Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

Appendix 6: Contextual Safeguarding – Staff Quick Reference Guide

✅ DO

- ✓ build a positive relationship with students and home.
- ✓ communicate with home
- ✓ report concerns promptly
- ✓ record concern with DSL/DDSL by logging on CPOMS or emailing safeguarding@
- ✓ speak directly with the DSL/DDSL if there is an immediate risk of harm.
- ✓ keep accurate registers and amend accordingly; but do not change pre generated attendance marks.
- ✓ challenge inappropriate language and behaviour in and out of the classroom.
- ✓ wear Hi Vis while on duty, attend duty point promptly and be highly vigilant while on duty.
- ✓ be mindful of your own social media profile pictures and social media content

❌ DON'T

- X use slang or swear words in conversations with students; including not repeating back what they have said.
- X offer to keep things confidential to try and get students to open up.
- X share information about other students with students or parent/carers
- X share negative opinions on other staff members with students or home.
- X allow students to use staff swipe cards or keys.
- X communicate with students via private email
- X respond to request for work for home from students or parents/carer unless authorised by attendance or SLT
- X accept requests on social media from students
- X allow open communication during use of TEAMS
- X leave desktop screens open unsupervised.

IF A PUPIL DISCLOSES	RECORD & REPORT
✅ **DO**	**WHO • WHAT • WHERE • WHEN**
• Stay calm and listen.	Record:
• Let them speak in their own words.	• Date and time
• Use open, non-leading questions.	• What you saw, heard or were told
• Reassure them they have done the right thing.	• Child's exact words where possible
• Explain you must share the information to keep them safe.	• Who was involved
• Report immediately.	• Immediate actions taken
Helpful phrases	**Good Practice**
"Thank you for telling me."	✅ Record promptly
"You've done the right thing."	✅ Be factual and specific
"Can you tell me more about that?"	✅ Use the child's words
"I need to share this to help keep you safe."	✅ Complete a CPOMS entry
❌ **DON'T**	**Avoid**
• Promise confidentiality.	❌ Opinions
• Ask leading questions.	❌ Assumptions
• Investigate yourself.	❌ Diagnosing concerns
• Contact parents or alleged perpetrators.	❌ Delayed reporting
• Show shock, anger or disbelief.	
• Make assumptions.	

BE PROFESSIONALLY CURIOUS	REPORT IMMEDIATELY
Be alert to:	**LISTEN → RECORD → REPORT**
• Changes in behaviour, mood or attendance	
• Anxiety, withdrawal or distress	Report all concerns via **CPOMS** and inform the **DSL/DDSL**.
• Requests to speak privately	
• Concerns relating to peers, online activity, exploitation, community risks or home life	**Immediate Risk of Harm?**
	Speak directly to a **DSL, DDSL or SLT member immediately.** Do not wait to submit CPOMS first.
KEY MESSAGE	
IF IN DOUBT, REPORT IT	A small concern today may be the missing piece of information needed to safeguard a child.

Appendix 6: CPOMS Quick Guide for Staff

Select the Student

- Search for and open the student record.
- Click **New Incident**.

Record the Concern

- Choose the most appropriate **category and subcategory**.
- Record:
    - What happened
    - Date and time
    - Location
    - People involved
    - Any actions taken

Add Additional Information

- Link any other students involved.
- Use the **body map** for injuries.
- Upload any supporting documents (statements, risk assessments, meeting notes, etc.).

Assign and Alert

- Keep the status as **Active**.
- Assign the concern to the appropriate colleague:
    - Safeguarding concerns → DSL/DDSL
    - Bullying/Respect concerns → Head of House
    - SEND concerns → SENCO
    - Attendance concerns → AHT Attendance
- If you are unsure who should receive it, select **DSL**.

- Click **Submit Incident**.

Key Reminders

- ✓ Record concerns as soon as possible and by the end of the school day.
- ✓ Concerns should be factual, clear and detailed.
- ✓ For any immediate safeguarding risk, contact a DSL/DDSL/SLT member directly before completing CPOMs