



St John's C of E Primary School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Mr Toby Power
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Mrs Lois Barrett Mrs Rachael Anderson Mrs Jenny Whitelaw
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	Mr Ashley Wall
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	Mrs Christine Nicholson

Model Essex County Council Policy	September 2024
School Staff were consulted on this document	Summer 2026
It was reviewed by the Full Governing Body	Summer 2026
To be reviewed	Autumn 2026

Headteacher's Signature	Mr Toby Power
Chair of Governor's Signature	Mrs Sarah Lawrence

Section	Changes
Summer 2026 — Interim update linked to Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy	Wording added to strengthen safeguarding procedures around mobile phones, smart devices, pupil images, recordings, online safety, harmful content, staff/visitor use of personal devices, and reporting routes to the DSL/DDSL. The full statutory safeguarding policy will be reviewed in Autumn 2026 following updated annual guidance.

Changes to this version of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Document
Autumn 2025

Section	Summary of Change	Page(s)
Front cover & contacts	DSL/DDSL list updated: now Mr Toby Power as DSL; deputies expanded (Lois Barrett, Rachael Anderson, Jenny Whitelaw).	1–2
Vision & Values	Same values retained, but wording streamlined and re-ordered to emphasise whole-school safeguarding approach.	4
Intro	Updated references: now cites KCSIE 2025 instead of 2024; “Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy” updated to Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.	4–5
Statutory Framework	Updated to reflect KCSIE 2025, Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE 2024), Information Sharing (DfE 2024) and other 2024/25 statutory guidance. Outdated links replaced.	5–6
References & Hyperlinks	All hyperlinks reviewed and updated to current GOV.UK, DfE, Home Office, ESCB, and ECC links.	Throughout
Terminology	‘Peer-on-peer’ replaced with ‘child-on-child’ in line with KCSIE 2025. DSL/DDSL language aligned with Essex model policy.	Throughout
Online Safety	Expanded section covering annual review of filtering/monitoring, misinformation/disinformation/AI risks, smart technology policy, and cybersecurity standards.	15–16
Gender Questioning Children (NEW)	New section introducing DfE/KCSIE 2025 guidance on a cautious, partnership-based approach with parental involvement and clinical advice.	15
Children in Kinship Care	Added under Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm; DSL must liaise with the Virtual School Head.	17
Mental Health	Strengthened link between mental health and safeguarding; removes outdated grant/funding references.	14
Child-on-Child Abuse	Clarified zero-tolerance stance; accessible pupil reporting systems added.	11–12
Domestic Abuse	Expanded to include teenage relationship abuse and child-to-parent abuse; added Operation Encompass.	13
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Strengthened section linking to RSHE curriculum; reinforces zero-tolerance approach.	14
Attendance	Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE 2024) now referenced as statutory safeguarding guidance.	6
Allegations Against Staff	Updated to KCSIE 2025; clarified DBS referral duty; strengthened low-level concerns guidance; updated to ESCB 2025.	19–20
Training	Now includes responsibility for filtering and monitoring within staff induction and annual updates.	17
Information Sharing	Updated to DfE 2024 guidance clarifying lawful information-sharing bases; data protection not a barrier to safeguarding.	8
Prevent Duty	Updated to Prevent Duty Guidance 2023; confirms referral pathways and local contacts.	16
Appendices & Contacts	LADO details, DSL/DDSL list, and contact numbers reviewed and updated; duplicated text removed.	1–2, A–F
Formatting & Consistency	Aligned structure and terminology with Essex Model Policy (2025–26); improved readability and accessibility.	Throughout

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR

NAME: Mr Toby Power – Acting Headteacher

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

DEPUTY DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR

NAME: Mrs Lois Barrett – Assistant Headteacher

Mrs Rachel Anderson – SENCo

Mrs Jenny Whitelaw – School Business Manager

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION

NAME: Mr Ashley Wall

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The **Children and Families Operation Hub** is available for advice and consultation on Child Protection matters:

0345 603 7627

The **CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING SERVICE** is also able to provide advice and consultancy to educational settings and must be consulted within 24 hours whenever complaints, concerns or allegations of a child protection nature are made against staff or volunteers linked to the school: **03330 139797**

REFERRAL INTO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Where schools have **URGENT** and **IMMEDIATE** concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person during office hours telephone **0345 603 7627**

To make **URGENT** referrals **OUT OF OFFICE HOURS** telephone **0345 606 1212**

For all **NON – URGENT** referrals and enquiries telephone **0345 603 7627**

PREVENT Referrals

To make Prevent referrals or seeking advice please call: **03330139859**

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St John's C of E Primary School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Our Vision

Learn Together • Achieve Together • Celebrate Together

"And let your light shine." Matthew 5:16

Our Mission Statement

To enable all children to achieve their true potential in a caring and inclusive community based on Christian values.

Our Values

Respect • Responsibility • Kindness • Truthfulness • Perseverance

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals 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, 2025)

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, 2025)
- the school's Behaviour Management Policy;
- the Code of Conduct;
- Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy;
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour / Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Procedure for Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations Against Adults in the School

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 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 underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents / carers, governors and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92232/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023-statutory-guidance.pdf) 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 five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 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 pupils of the school.

In addition to the 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*):

[Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2024\)](#)

[Children Act \(1989\)](#)

[Children Act \(2004\)](#)

[Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#)

[Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)

[Education Act \(2002\)](#)

[Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2006](#)

[Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2018\)](#)

[Essex Effective Support \(2024\)](#)

[Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 \(S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015\)](#)

[Filtering and Monitoring Standards \(DfE\)](#)

[Information Sharing \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)

[Let's Talk: Reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2022\)](#)

[Prevent Duty Guidance \(2023\)](#)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)

[Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)

[Suspension and permanent exclusion in schools, academies and PRUs, including pupil movement \(DfE 2024\)](#)

[Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

[Understanding and Supporting Behaviour – a good practice for schools \(ECC 2025\)](#)

[Use of Reasonable Force \(2013\)](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#) [Statutory Guidance, KCSiE]

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#)

3. 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 and 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 governing body

The governing body ensures that the 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 is reviewed at least annually.

The lead and deputy governors for safeguarding arrangements are named on the front cover of this document. These governors take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on the front cover).

The governing body ensures the school contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The governing body ensures that all staff members adults in our school who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The governing body ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body and school leadership team are responsible for:

- 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. These must be reviewed at least annually, with clear roles and responsibilities assigned. Oversight includes consideration of risks such as misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, harmful online content and the use of emerging technologies, including generative artificial intelligence (AI). The governing body also ensures that the school has a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technologies.

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. The Headteacher works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The designated safeguarding lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. 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) 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 timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) 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/deputies designated safeguarding lead is 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 will act in their absence.

The DSL (DDSL) are responsible for:

- Lead responsibility for the school's mobile and smart technology policy, ensuring it is implemented effectively.
- Oversight of filtering and monitoring systems, including ensuring these are reviewed annually and concerns are escalated appropriately.
- responding to safeguarding concerns linked to mobile phones, smart devices, school-owned devices, pupil images, videos, audio recordings, online bullying, harmful content, inappropriate messaging, nude or semi-nude images and any recording or sharing of content without consent;
- advising staff on the appropriate response where a device may contain safeguarding-related information or evidence;
- ensuring that concerns involving devices, images or recordings are recorded appropriately and shared with external agencies where required;
- ensuring that staff, volunteers and visitors understand that personal devices must not be used to take, store or share images or recordings of pupils, except in exceptional emergency circumstances set out in school policy.

All school staff

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, so we are able to identify children who may need help or protection. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, missing education and consensual/non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk. In addition, we recognise that any child may benefit from additional help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it.

Staff

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

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, perhaps because they are embarrassed or they may not always recognise that they are being abused. We recognise there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We also understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse / victims of 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.

4. 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. 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"

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Systems are in place which are well-publicised, accessible and easy for pupils to use, so that they can confidently report abuse knowing they will be taken seriously and supported.

Keeping Children Safe in Education refers to four 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.

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse / victims of 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.

In addition, Annex B 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.

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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (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 Child Sexual Exploitation (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.

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.

Child-on-child abuse may involve the use of mobile phones, smart devices, school technology or online platforms. This may include online bullying, harmful or threatening messages, sharing images or recordings without consent,

recording others, pressuring others to share images, misuse of smart devices, or the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images. Any such concern will be treated as a safeguarding concern and responded to in line with this policy, the Behaviour Management Policy, the Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and the Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy.

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, at all times, 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.

Policies we have in place to help prevent child on child abuse are:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

Children missing 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. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will 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 and other partners to keep children in school and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

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.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil 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 F), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Contextual safeguarding and the risk in the community

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and we are therefore mindful of whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. We always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and 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

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/ 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.

Children can themselves be victims of domestic abuse, either in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse) or through the impact of abuse within their home. We recognise the long-term impact this can have on health, wellbeing, and learning.

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. We work in accordance with all statutory guidance in relation to such behaviours and with other agencies as appropriate.

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

Policies we have in place to help prevent harmful sexual behaviour are:

RSHE Policy

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Mental health

All staff should be 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. Staff are well placed to observe children day to day and identify those whose behaviour may suggest they are experiencing a mental health problem or are at risk of developing one.

Where mental health concerns indicate that a child may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, staff must treat this as a safeguarding concern and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Schools can access a range of advice to help identify children in need of extra mental health support, including working in partnership with external agencies.

Gender Questioning Children

In line with KCSIE 2025, our school takes a cautious approach when supporting gender-questioning children. We will consider the broad range of each child's individual needs, working in partnership with parents/carers (unless this would place the child at risk of harm). We will take account of clinical advice where available, and address wider vulnerabilities such as bullying or mental health concerns. Staff will be alert to the additional barriers to disclosure these children may face and create a culture where they feel able to share concerns.

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, but 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, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example 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 pupils 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.

Our school seeks to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Computing Policy.

Our online safety policy includes an annual review of filtering and monitoring arrangements. Roles and responsibilities for online safety are clearly assigned. The policy also covers the use of mobile and smart technologies, recognising that many children have unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks. Risks considered include harmful content, harmful contact, harmful conduct and commercial exploitation, as well as misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories. The school also follows national cyber security standards to protect systems and data.

The school's Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy supports our safeguarding approach by setting clear expectations for pupils, staff, visitors and parents/carers. Pupils are not permitted to use personal mobile phones or smart devices on the school site. Where a pupil is permitted to bring a basic call-and-text phone for travel or safety reasons, it must be switched off, handed in on arrival and collected at the end of the school day.

Staff must not use personal devices to take, store or share photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils, except in exceptional emergency circumstances where this is necessary and proportionate. School-owned or school-approved devices and systems must be used for pupil images and recordings.

Any safeguarding concern linked to a phone, smart device, image, video, audio recording, online content, message or social media activity must be reported to the DSL or DDSL immediately.

Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new 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 pupils 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.

Our school works 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.

Any suspicion of radicalisation must be reported to Essex Police immediately by calling 101 or in an emergency 999.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

So-called ‘honour-based violence’ (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

So-called ‘honour’-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 female genital mutilation

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.

Any suspicion of radicalisation must be reported to Essex Police immediately by calling 101 or in an emergency 999.

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.

5. Procedures

Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support (through a Child in Need or a Child Protection plan).

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / 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, 2025)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- 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 the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The school 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 Children's Social Care, 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.

Where a safeguarding concern involves a mobile phone, smart device, school-owned device, image, video, audio recording, message, online content or social media activity, staff must report this immediately to the DSL or DDSL. Staff should not view, copy, forward, download, print, share or delete potentially harmful, sexualised or illegal content unless this is unavoidable in order to safeguard a child. Where possible, the device or content should be secured and left for the DSL/DDSL to decide the appropriate next steps. The DSL/DDSL may seek advice from children's social care, the police, the local authority, the LADO or other relevant agencies depending on the nature of the concern. Where a device may contain evidence linked to a safeguarding concern or possible criminal offence, it may be retained securely and passed to the appropriate agency in line with school policy and relevant guidance.

All staff that, if they continue to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, they should press for re-consideration of the case 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.

6. 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, those previously in Care, those in kinship care, or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care, the Virtual School Head and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake Level 3, or equivalent through another training agency, 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 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 is kept for all staff and governors.

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training, which includes online safety and their responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, at induction. This training will be regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive at least annual safeguarding and child protection updates to keep their knowledge and skills current.

Photographs, videos and audio recordings of identifiable pupils are personal data. Where an image, video, recording, message or online content relates to a safeguarding concern, it must also be treated as safeguarding information and handled confidentially. Such information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis and through approved school or statutory safeguarding routes.

Staff, volunteers and visitors must not store, send or share pupil images, recordings or safeguarding-related content using personal devices, personal email accounts, personal messaging apps, personal cloud storage or personal social media.

8. Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and 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. This protocol enables us to share and receive information with the Local Authority in a legal, safe, and secure way, to support our work in keeping children safe.

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 must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils) or 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.

9. Child protection records

Well-kept 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.

Safeguarding concerns involving phones, smart devices, school-owned devices, images, videos, audio recordings, messages, online content or social media activity must be recorded in line with the school's safeguarding recording procedures. Records should include the nature of the concern, who was involved, what action was taken, whether parents/carers were informed, whether external advice was sought, and any follow-up actions required.

Where digital content forms part of a safeguarding concern, the DSL/DDSL will determine how this should be recorded, stored or shared. Staff must not copy, forward or store such content on personal devices or personal accounts.

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

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school'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 contact the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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

10. Interagency working

It is important that agencies work together to keep children safe, and there is a legal requirement to do so.

We work with other relevant agencies, including where a child on roll (or 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. Where the 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.

11. 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 2025) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2022) 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

Concerns about an adult's use of mobile phones, smart devices, cameras, personal accounts, images, videos or recordings may constitute a safeguarding allegation or low-level concern depending on the circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, using personal devices to take, store or share images or recordings of pupils, inappropriate communication with pupils or parents/carers through personal devices or accounts, or failing to follow the school's Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy.

Such concerns must be reported in line with this policy, the Code of Conduct and the school's low-level concerns procedures. Where the concern meets the allegations threshold, the school will follow the relevant LADO/Workforce Allegations procedures.

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 raised.

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, 2025) require this to be reported to the Essex Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@essex.gov.uk. This should be done by the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or the Chair of Governors within one working day (or sooner via 03330 139797 if immediate safeguarding is required). We will not carry out any investigation before a 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 Chair of Governors, who will refer the matter to the 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 any appropriate statutory agency.

All low-level concerns will be managed in line with the school's low-level concerns policy. The school has a legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person is dismissed or removed from working with children due to a safeguarding concern or would have been had they not resigned. Failure to make such a referral is a criminal offence.

12. 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.

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children and young people for a variety of reasons, this may include:

- to comfort a child or young person in distress (*appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment*);
- to direct a child or young person;
- for curricular reasons (*for example in PE, Music, Drama etc*);
- in an emergency, to avert danger to the child or young person or others;

The guidance produced by the Department for Education [Use of Reasonable Force \(DfE, 2013\)](#) states that:

*"Schools **should not** have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a child or young person or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a child or young person causing harm."*

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 (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

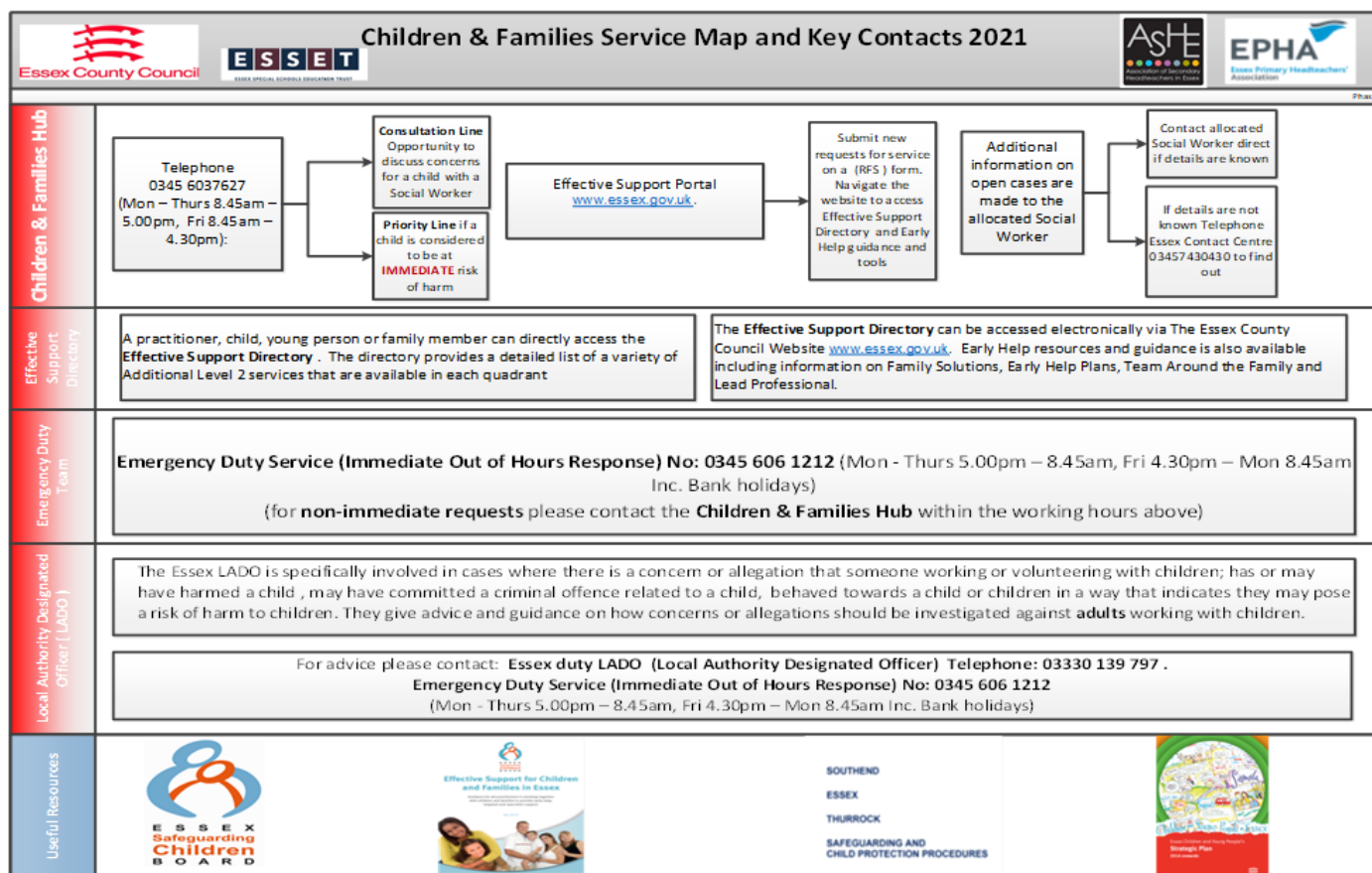
13. Whistleblowing

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 school 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.

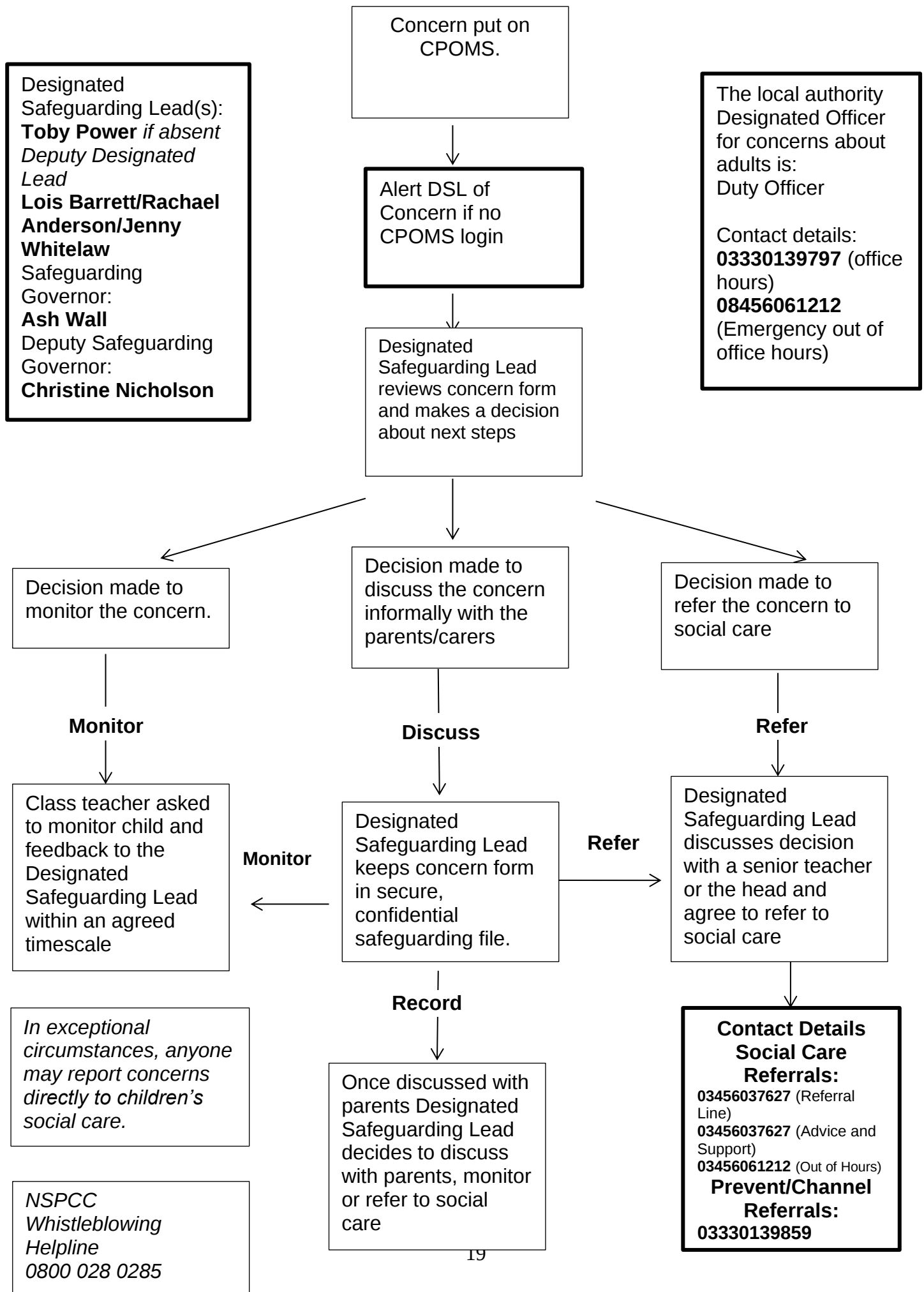
Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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.

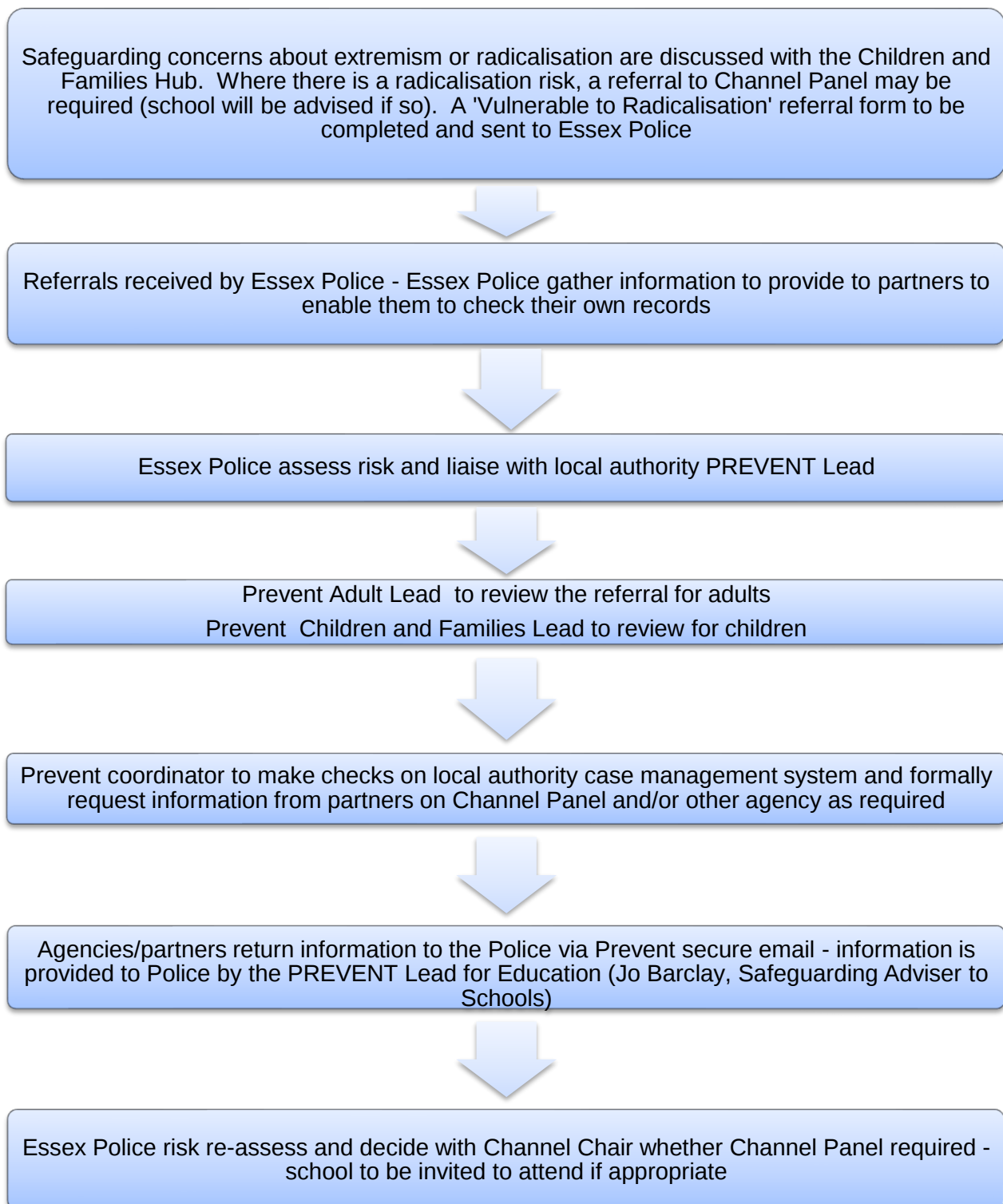
Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



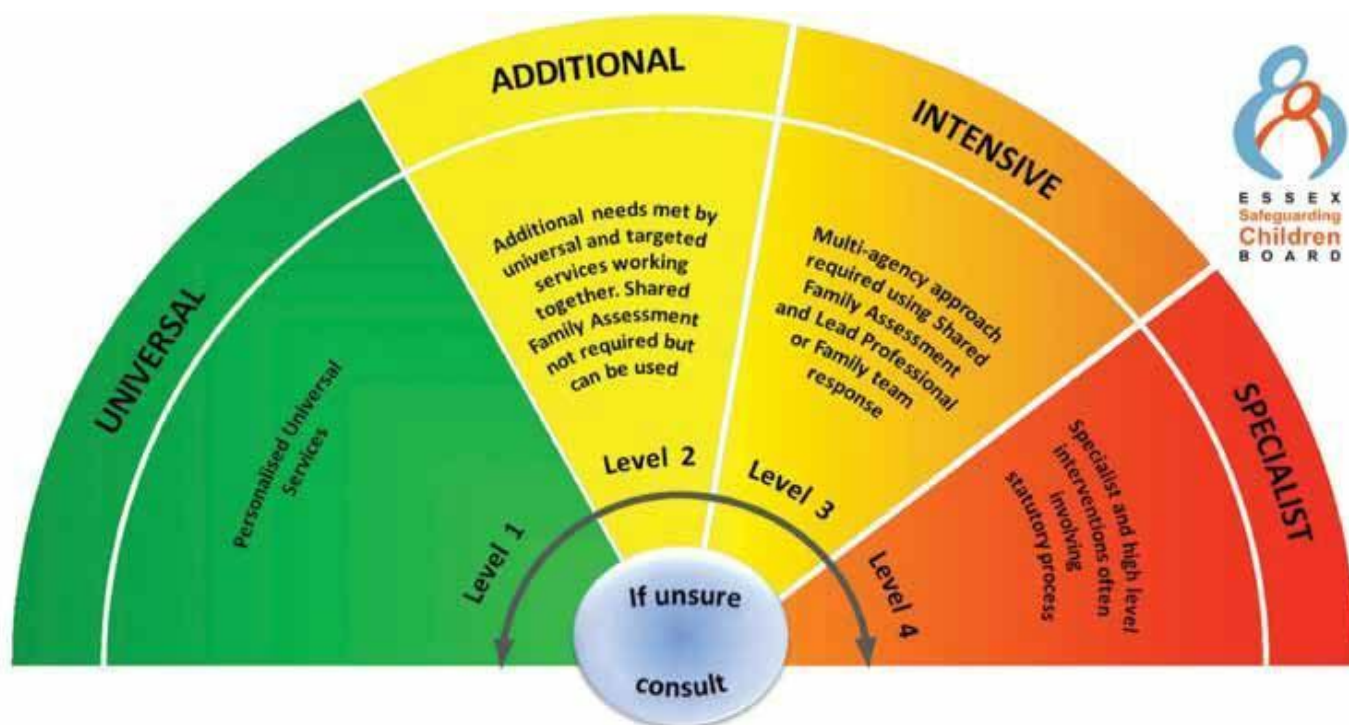
Appendix B FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD



Appendix C: PREVENT Referral Flowchart



Appendix D: 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

Essex Child Sexual Exploitation Arrangements

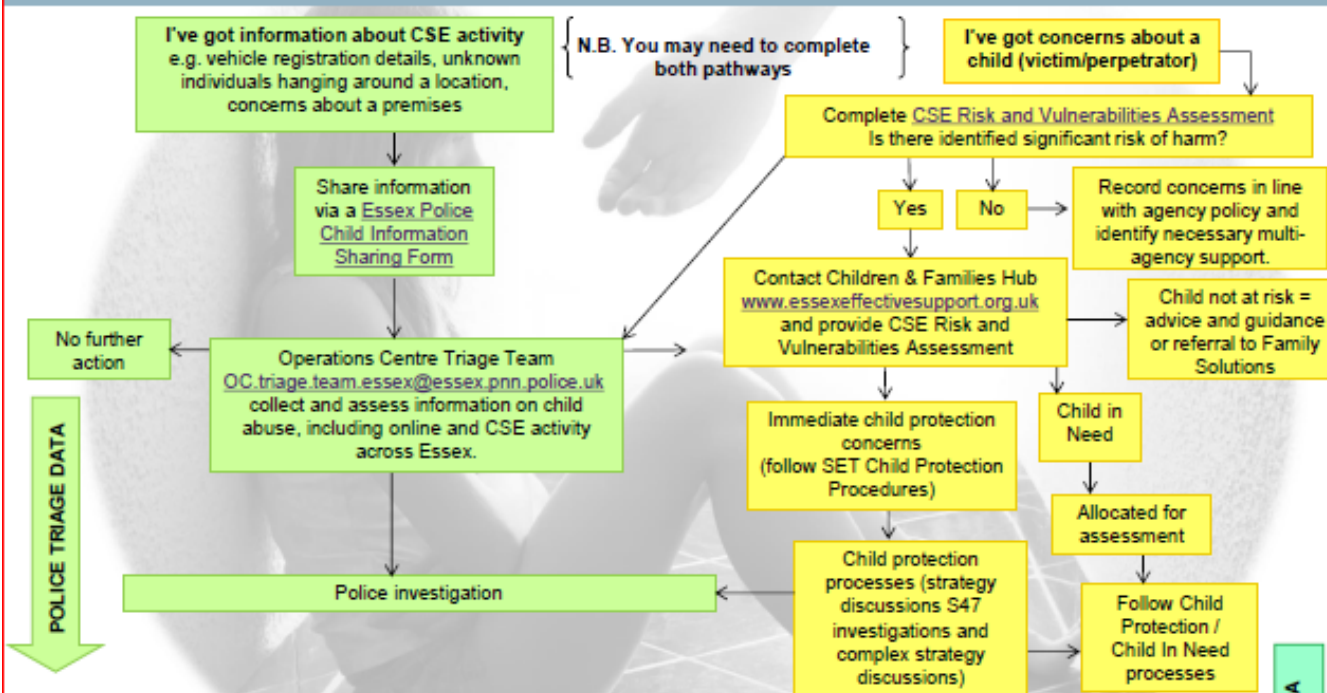
DEFINITION

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where 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) 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. (Home Office Definition for 2017)

INDICATORS OF CSE (For more information see SET CSE Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment)

- ❖ You may notice a change in a young person's behaviour, they may be disruptive or hostile, and associating with older men or women.
- ❖ Their health or mental health might change, for example you may notice marks or scars which they try to conceal or increased health / sexual related problems.
- ❖ Their behaviour might change and you may notice them concealing their use of the internet, exclusion from school or unexplained absences and sexualised risk-taking, including on the internet or mobiles, or association with gangs.
- ❖ Their possessions may change including having unexplained amounts of money, credit, gifts, having multiple phones, sim cards and possession of hotel keys or keys to unknown premises.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REFER TO FULL ESSEX CSE & MISSING ARRANGEMENTS ON WWW.ESCB.CO.UK



CRITERIA FOR MACE: Children and young people known to be being exploited, those who are considered our most vulnerable to CSE due to missing episode(s), children and young people assessed as **HIGH RISK** to exploitation (including sexual exploitation).

Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) Meetings (A meeting held in 4 quadrants; Mid, North, South and West)

MACE part 1 (monthly): Focus on individual case discussion. Provides opportunity for multi-agency senior management oversight and comment for our most vulnerable young people, considers plans, further disruption opportunities and collection of evidence to support prosecutions

MACE part 2 (bi-monthly): Considers wider operational activity necessary to tackle CSE threats through analysing local trends, patterns and hotspots. Responsible for building a local problem profile to better understand what threats exist locally and how these can be managed.

ESCB Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee oversees the statutory functions of local agencies to drive forward work across Essex around Child Exploitation and Missing. This multi-agency strategic group reports directly to the ESCB and it is responsible for overseeing a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Missing Action Plan.

District Councils (DC) & Community Safety Partnerships (CSP)

Local Councils have a range of functions such as housing, anti-social behaviour and nuisance, licensing, environmental health, which should all be considered in effectively tackling local threats of CSE. DC regulatory powers can be used to detect, disrupt, and in the collation of evidence, to support prosecutions. Each District has a CSP who has a statutory responsibility to develop and produce crime and disorder reduction strategies. CSPs can support in local community engagement, including supporting victims and their families and awareness raising projects. Representatives from DCs and CSPs attend quadrant MACE meetings.

Stay Safe Groups

Leads for Partnership Delivery attend quadrant MACE Part 2 meetings, this provides the mechanism for themes to be shared to support, training and develop the wider workforce.

Arrangements for children who go missing during the school day

Definition of Missing

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)

1. Introduction

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other educational settings, hereafter referred to as educational settings.

Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational 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 educational 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

A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, a child going missing frequently could be an indicator of underlying exploitation or other forms of child abuse.

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

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 educational setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

2. When a child goes missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an educational setting this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, contacting the child by phone, text and social media, and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, then 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.

Staff at the educational setting must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where there is a Social Worker allocated to the child, 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.

3. When the child is found

If the child is found by educational 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.

4. 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.

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