



## St John's C of E Primary School

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

|                                                 |                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:</b>            | Mr Toby Power                                                 |
| <b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS:</b>    | Mrs Lauren Youles<br>Mrs Lois Barrett<br>Mrs Rachael Anderson |
| <b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:</b>        | Mr Ashley Wall                                                |
| <b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:</b> | Mrs Sarah Lawrence<br>Reverend Jacqui Jones                   |

|                                              |                       |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Model Essex County Council Policy            | <b>September 2026</b> |
| School Staff were consulted on this document | <b>Autumn 2026</b>    |
| It was reviewed by the Full Governing Body   | <b>Autumn 2026</b>    |
| To be reviewed                               | <b>Autumn 2027</b>    |

|                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Headteacher's Signature</b>       | <b>Mr Toby Power</b>      |
| <b>Chair of Governor's Signature</b> | <b>Mrs Sarah Lawrence</b> |

## Log of Changes – Autumn 2026

This log records the substantive changes made as part of the Autumn 2026 review, aligned with the September 2026 Essex model policy and KCSIE 2026.

| Section                              | Summary of Change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Front Cover & Key Contacts           | Safeguarding team updated: Mr Toby Power confirmed as substantive Headteacher and DSL; Mrs Lauren Youles added as DDSL alongside Mrs Lois Barrett and Mrs Rachael Anderson; Mrs Jenny Whitelaw removed. Terminology and safeguarding contacts updated. |
| Introduction                         | Updated to KCSIE 2026 and Essex September 2026 model; DSL Annex reference updated and explicit commitment to listening to and advocating for children added.                                                                                           |
| Statutory Framework                  | Updated national and local statutory guidance and legislation, including Working Together 2026, attendance, generative AI, mobile phones and restrictive-intervention guidance.                                                                        |
| Roles & Responsibilities             | Strengthened governing-body strategic safeguarding responsibility, DSL/DDSL arrangements, multi-agency working, information sharing and whole-school safeguarding responsibilities.                                                                    |
| Abuse & Specific Safeguarding Issues | Updated definitions and guidance relating to exploitation, modern slavery, CCE/CSE, Risk in the Community, child-on-child abuse, prejudice-based harm and harmful sexual behaviour.                                                                    |
| Children Absent from Education       | Updated terminology and strengthened focus on underlying causes of absence, early intervention and safeguarding risk.                                                                                                                                  |
| Domestic Abuse                       | Updated Operation Encompass section to reflect the statutory police notification duty introduced in November 2025.                                                                                                                                     |
| Mental Health                        | Expanded safeguarding guidance relating to mental health, self-harm, suicidal ideation, warning signs and urgent support routes.                                                                                                                       |
| Online Safety                        | Updated four areas of online risk, including generative AI, misogyny/misandry, self-harm and harmful online content; school-specific device and image-capture safeguards retained.                                                                     |
| Prevent & Serious Violence           | Updated Prevent referral wording and strengthened safeguarding response to serious violence, weapons and risks around the school day.                                                                                                                  |
| Children at Greater Risk             | Expanded vulnerable groups and SEND safeguarding barriers, including young carers, medical needs, higher dependency on adults and online vulnerability.                                                                                                |
| Training                             | Updated KCSIE Part One reading expectations for all staff and retained filtering and monitoring training requirements.                                                                                                                                 |
| Information Sharing & Records        | Strengthened requirements for proportionate information sharing, secure handling of digital safeguarding information and recording decisions and rationale.                                                                                            |
| Multi-agency Working                 | Updated terminology and strengthened reference to Social Care, Police, Health and Essex Virtual School involvement.                                                                                                                                    |
| Allegations Against Adults           | Updated to KCSIE and SET 2026; clarified arrangements for supply staff, agency staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, low-level concerns and LADO referrals.                                                                                |
| Reasonable Force                     | Updated to DfE 2026 restrictive-interventions and reasonable-force guidance.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Mobile Phones – NEW                  | New standalone section added confirming the school's phone-free approach and cross-referencing the school's Behaviour and Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture policies.                                                                     |
| Whistleblowing                       | Renumbered and updated NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line information; duplicated wording removed.                                                                                                                                                       |
| Appendices                           | Updated to September 2026 Essex model structure; current Essex service information, Windscreen of Need and Missing Children Protocol inserted; school CPOMS safeguarding flowchart retained and updated.                                               |
| Formatting & Consistency             | Outdated references, terminology, staff roles, duplicated wording and drafting errors corrected throughout.                                                                                                                                            |

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## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

### DESIGNATED CHILD SAFEGUARDING LEAD

NAME: Mr Toby Power – Headteacher

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

### DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

NAME: Mrs Lauren Youles – Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Lois Barrett – Assistant Headteacher

Mrs Rachael Anderson – SENCo

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

### NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION

NAME: Mr Ashley Wall

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 222173

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB

For safeguarding consultation and referrals to Children's Social Care: **0345 603 7627**. Current Essex referral routes and support pathways are set out in **Appendix A**.

### CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Concerns which may meet the allegations threshold must be referred in accordance with Section 11 to the **Essex Children's Workforce Allegations Team / Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**: [LADO@essex.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@essex.gov.uk).

### PREVENT

The school follows local Prevent procedures and will seek advice from the Local Authority Education Prevent Lead or other appropriate agencies. Where necessary, concerns will be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

### IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or danger, call **999**.

# **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 rooted in 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, 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 school's Behaviour Management Policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy;
- the Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy;
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B 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.

We will always listen to and advocate for children and ensure that our work reflects the voice of the child.

## 2. 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. In Essex, these arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). The statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and the NHS Integrated Care Board covering the county.

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 guidance and legislation (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

### Guidance

- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2026)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (DfE, 2026)
- [Working together to improve school 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 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

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them, promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture and 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 has strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding in our school. It ensures that our safeguarding arrangements comply with all legal duties and that our policies, procedures and training 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 and deputy governor for safeguarding arrangements and they are named on the front cover of this document. The safeguarding governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and leads on a 'whole-school approach' to this. The governing body ensures there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in place.

The governing body 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 governing body ensures that all adults in our school (including governors) who work with children receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated.

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 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 and Health Education mandatory for primary-age pupils.

The governing body 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 governing body 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 volunteer roles are appropriately assessed and that all required safeguarding checks are completed, including an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information where the volunteer is undertaking regulated activity;
- ensuring appropriate strategic oversight of online safety, including filtering and monitoring systems.

It also ensures there is an appropriate Staff Code of Conduct in place, so that adults, when they start work with us, are clear about the boundaries within which they operate. The governing body ensures all staff are aware that 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. 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 Designated Safeguarding Leads)**

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 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, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is able to act in their absence, so that there is always appropriate safeguarding cover.

### **The DSL/DDSLs are also responsible for:**

- leading responsibility for the school's mobile and smart technology arrangements and ensuring they are 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; and
- 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 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 Family Help and 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 school and also online. Our staff recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination, and the effect these experiences may have on them.

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 Children's 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 a 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, exploited or neglected. This may be because they are embarrassed, scared, threatened or do not recognise that what they are experiencing is harmful.

There may also be barriers to disclosure linked to a child's vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation or language. These barriers will not prevent staff from maintaining professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL/DDSL where they have concerns.

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 and recognise that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues 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. Staff will maintain professional curiosity and seek to build trusted relationships which enable children to communicate concerns.

#### **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. 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 by 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. This may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling.
- **Sexual:** forcing, causing or inciting 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. Neglect may also occur during pregnancy.

Abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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)**

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. CCE and CSE 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 or 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 and it can be committed by an individual or an organised network. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the Department for 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.

CCE and CSE may be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and a child may identify themselves as being part of that group. Children cannot consent to being exploited, abused or trafficked and may not recognise that exploitation is happening to them. Exploitation and trafficking may constitute modern slavery and relevant child protection and modern slavery referral procedures will be followed where a potential victim is identified.

We recognise that victims of exploitation are not always identified as such and may be criminalised for actions they have taken whilst under coercion. Our response will recognise and address the child's vulnerability and safeguarding needs.

### **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 harassment, violence and sexualised behaviours)**

Child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways and may occur in person and/or online. This may include bullying, including cyberbullying; physical abuse; physical or sexual assault; harmful sexual behaviours; upskirting; the making

or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes; initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals; and discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse and other prejudice-based incidents.

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 to prevent them from escalating. We do not normalise harmful behaviour or abuse and it is not tolerated in our setting. Harmful or abusive behaviour will never be dismissed as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'.

Our culture reflects our school values of Respect, Responsibility, Kindness, Truthfulness and Perseverance and our commitment to ensuring that all children feel safe, valued and able to let their light shine.

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 making or 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, outside of school or online. 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. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the child alleged to have caused harm. We recognise that a child displaying harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse, exploitation or trauma.

We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, they will always be considered in the context of providing appropriate support to all children where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will always take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse is preventable. Early recognition of concerning behaviour and timely, evidence-based support can help prevent harmful behaviour from escalating. Staff will remain alert to occasions when children may be at greater risk, including around the beginning and end of the school day.

We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these. We use lessons, Collective Worship and other opportunities 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 support the prevention of and response to child-on-child abuse include:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour / Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy

## **Children who are absent from education**

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational 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/carers should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where this does not happen, we will attempt contact with parents/carers. Parents/carers are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school to enable us to communicate with someone if necessary.

Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency, including the Children Missing Education Team, Social Care and/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, included at 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 may be a single incident or multiple/ongoing incidents. It can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child-to-parent or caregiver 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 children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right and that seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse can have a serious and long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. Young people may also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships.

We work with other key partners and receive and share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or may be placing a child at risk of harm.

## **Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and relevant education settings. Since November 2025, the police have a statutory duty to notify a child's education setting where they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be a victim of domestic abuse.

This includes children connected to a household where the police have attended a domestic abuse incident, whether or not the child was physically present at the incident. The purpose of the notification is to enable the school to have up-to-date information about the child's circumstances and to provide timely and informed support according to the child's needs.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals. Where appropriate, the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or other agencies where there are concerns about a child's welfare. Any Operation Encompass information received by the school will be treated as confidential safeguarding information and held securely within the child's safeguarding record.

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 pupils about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe on and offline.

Relevant school policies include:

- RSHE Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour / Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

### **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 work 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, 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. This may include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to diagnose a mental health problem. School staff are, however, well placed to observe children day-to-day and to identify potential warning signs, which may include significant changes in behaviour, ongoing difficulty sleeping, withdrawal from social situations, loss of interest in activities a child would usually enjoy, physical signs of self-harm or signs that a child is neglecting themselves.

Not every child displaying these behaviours will have a mental health concern or be suicidal. However, staff should remain professionally curious and ensure that potential warning signs are considered and responded to appropriately. Where a concern about a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, staff must follow this Child Protection Policy and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, emergency assistance will be sought through 999 or appropriate urgent medical support. Where a child requires urgent mental health support but the situation is not an emergency, advice may be sought through NHS 111 and the mental health option.

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 pupils. We expect parents/carers, if they have concerns about the wellbeing of their child, to share this with us so 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 content, for example pornography, racism, misogyny, misandry, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation, including fake news, and conspiracy theories
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate such interaction; for example peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising, or adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending or receiving explicit images, AI-generated or altered harmful material, 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 that 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 work with parents/carers 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.

Our school seeks to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways. Further information about our approach is set out in our Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and our Computing Policy.

Our Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology 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**

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 the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and promotes community cohesion
- be safe spaces in which children 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 individuals 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 a meeting 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 the Local Authority Education Prevent Lead or other appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to the Police and/or Social Care.

### **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.

Any concern about a child carrying or using a weapon, or expressing an intention to do so, must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL/DDSL will consider the risk to the individual child and to others and take appropriate safeguarding action. Depending on the level of risk, this may include a safety and support plan, action to de-escalate peer conflict and involvement of other agencies.

Staff recognise that children involved in serious violence may themselves be victims and require safeguarding and support. Staff will also be alert to points at which children may be at heightened risk around the school day, including immediately before or after school.

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 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.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a duty on teachers 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 are used and is a crime. We will always report any concerns that a child may be or has been subjected to a forced marriage and will work with the appropriate agencies.

## 5. Procedures

Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This may be a coordinated 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 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, a 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
- 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 a 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/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 may 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/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 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 a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed around 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 Designated Safeguarding Leads 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 include:

- children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care
- children in kinship 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
- children who are pregnant and/or are parents themselves
- children who have exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- children showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement, organised crime or county lines
- children who are frequently missing from education, home or care
- children who have experienced repeated removal from the classroom, multiple suspensions, a part-time timetable, or are at risk of permanent exclusion or placement in Alternative Provision
- children at risk of exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- children at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- children with a parent or carer in custody, or who are affected by parental offending
- children living in family circumstances which present challenges, including drug or alcohol misuse, adult mental-health difficulties or domestic abuse
- children who are themselves misusing alcohol or other drugs
- children at risk of honour or faith-based abuse, including FGM or forced marriage
- privately fostered children.

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:

- assumptions 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 disproportionately impacted by things such as 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 a need for intimate care
- issues with understanding risks online and how online experiences may influence their behaviour.

We work with Social Care, the Essex Virtual School 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.

## **7. Training**

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads 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).

School leaders and those staff who work directly with children should also read the “Annex: Further information” which follows Part One of KCSIE 2026. This contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding issues.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, at induction. This training is regularly updated.

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.

We keep records of any safeguarding/child protection training undertaken by staff and governors.

The school ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

## **8. Information sharing and confidentiality**

Sharing information is a vital part of safeguarding work and we understand how important it is and its role in safeguarding arrangements. We will always use our professional judgement to ensure that information shared is focused and proportionate. We work in accordance with the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol, which includes how to share and receive information 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 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, do not prevent information sharing 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 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 pupils, 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 or a Deputy 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 a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead 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.

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.

## **9. Child protection records**

Accurate and 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.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing. Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- any action taken
- decisions reached and the reasons for those decisions
- the outcome and any required follow-up.

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 and giving the date, time and location. Where appropriate, a body map may be used. Records will include the action taken and will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will decide on appropriate action and ensure this is recorded.

Child protection records are kept securely and confidentially and separately from the pupil's general school record. They 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 or educational setting, including college, their child protection records will be securely forwarded to the new setting. We will obtain evidence that they have been safely received and then destroy any records which should no longer be retained by our school. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may make contact with the new setting in advance of the child's move to enable planning so that 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. 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, Police, the Virtual School and Health/mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our school, or sometimes a child who was previously with 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 discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional wellbeing, 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 will 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 supply staff, agency staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors, are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in our Staff 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 they 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 Staff 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/Children's 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 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 will 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 or supply member of staff, the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher where appropriate, will liaise with the agency/employer while following due process, to facilitate appropriate joint working and investigation.

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

All low-level concerns will be managed in line with the school's low-level concerns procedures.

The school will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the legal criteria for referral are met, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant legislation.

Staffing matters are confidential and the school operates within the statutory framework around Data Protection. We do not share information about individual staff members other than with appropriate statutory agencies where this is required.

## **12. Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force**

Our Behaviour Management 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 *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools* (DfE, 2026). Our approach to physical intervention and the use of reasonable force, including recording and reporting arrangements, is set out in our Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy and should be read alongside our Behaviour Management Policy.

## **13. Mobile phones**

In line with *Mobile phones in schools* (DfE, 2026), St John's C of E Primary School is a phone-free environment. Our approach forms part of our wider safeguarding arrangements and is detailed in our Behaviour Management Policy and Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy.

## **14. Whistleblowing**

All members of staff and the wider school community should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and have confidence that any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team.

We have whistleblowing procedures in place and these are available in our Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their genuine concerns have not been addressed, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available as an alternative route.

Staff can call **0800 028 0285**. The line is available from **08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends**, or staff can email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Parents/carers or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on **0808 800 5000** or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 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](mailto: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.

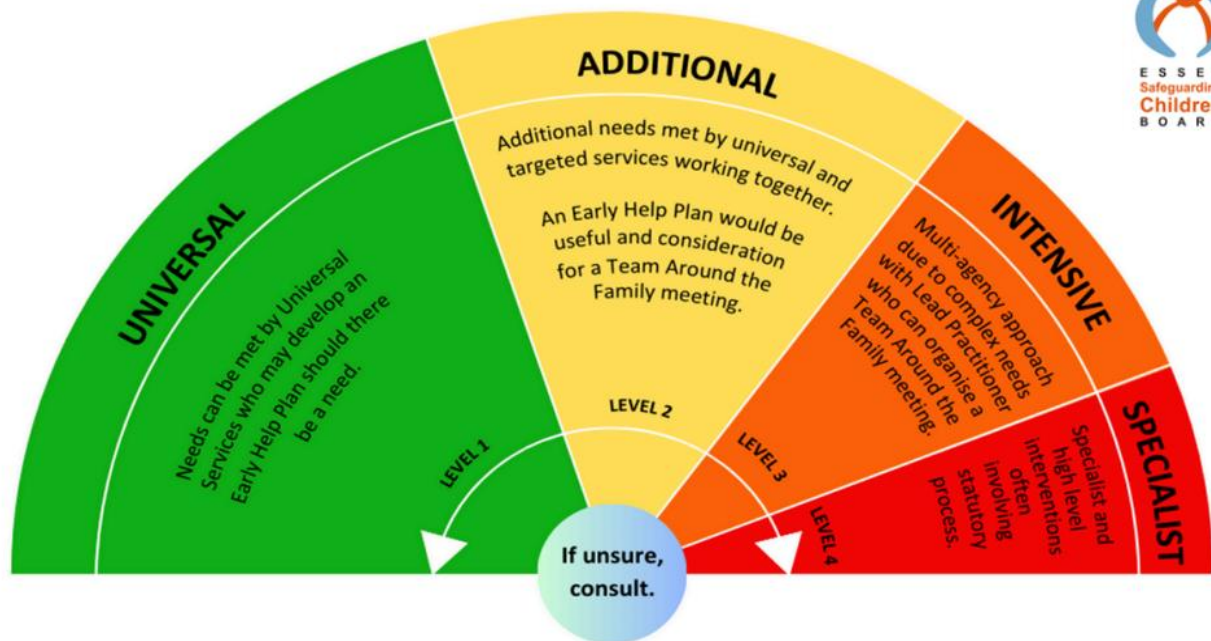
For those Requests for Support that do not require a Family Solutions or Children's Social Care intervention, the referrer will receive feedback explaining the rationale for the decision.

Early Help

Family  
Solutions

Children's  
Social Care

## The Effective Support Windscreen



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 aged ten or older who returns from being 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:**

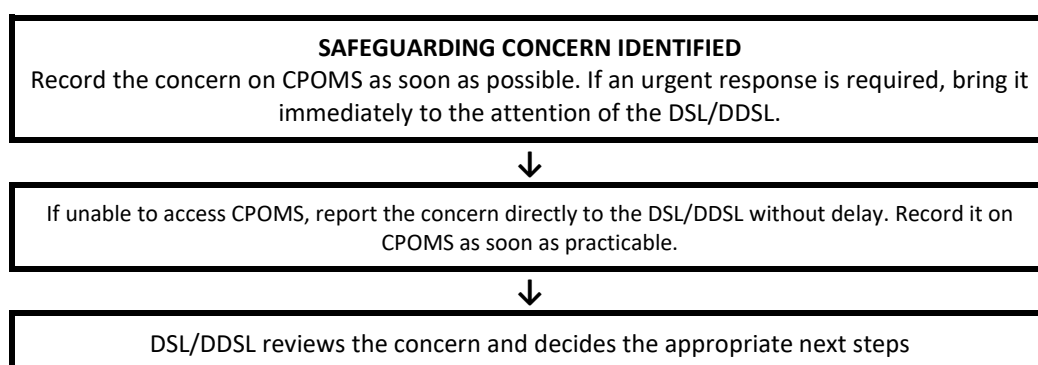
Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: [shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk](mailto:shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk)

Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: [lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk)



## St John's Procedure for Raising a Safeguarding Concern

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b><br/>Toby Power – Headteacher</p> <p><b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)</b><br/>Lauren Youles – Deputy Headteacher<br/>Lois Barrett – Assistant Headteacher<br/>Rachael Anderson – SENCo</p> <p><b>Safeguarding Governor</b><br/>Ashley Wall</p> <p><b>Deputy Safeguarding Governor</b><br/>Sarah Lawrence<br/>Reverend Jacqui Jones</p> | <p><b>Current safeguarding contacts</b></p> <p><b>Children &amp; Families Hub / Social Care:</b><br/>See Appendix A</p> <p><b>Concerns about adults / LADO:</b><br/>See Section 11 and Key Contacts</p> <p><b>Immediate danger or serious harm:</b><br/>999</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



| <b>MONITOR / SUPPORT</b>                                                                                                                                | <b>DISCUSS</b>                                                                                                                                                 | <b>REFER</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DSL/DDSL agrees appropriate monitoring or support, identifies relevant staff and sets a clear review timescale.                                         | Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, the DSL/DDSL discusses the concern with parents/carers and records the discussion and outcome on CPOMS.             | DSL/DDSL makes a referral to the Children & Families Hub and/or Police where appropriate and records the referral and outcome on CPOMS.                                |
| Relevant staff monitor/support the child and report back to the DSL/DDSL within the agreed timescale. All follow-up and outcomes are recorded on CPOMS. | Following discussion, the DSL/DDSL may continue to monitor/support, seek further advice, or make a referral. The decision and rationale are recorded on CPOMS. | If a referral is made, the DSL/DDSL follows up as required and keeps the child's circumstances under review. If concerns persist or escalate, further action is taken. |

| <b>AT ALL STAGES</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Keep the child's circumstances under review, record decisions and rationale on CPOMS, and re-refer or escalate where appropriate. The child's best interests must always come first. |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Any individual may refer directly to Children's Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm.</p> <p>Action must not be delayed because the DSL/DDSL is unavailable.</p> <p>Any action taken should be shared with the DSL/DDSL as soon as practicable.</p> | <p>NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:<br/><b>0800 028 0285</b></p> <p>See Section 14 for full whistleblowing arrangements.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|