




Child Protection Policy

(incorporating Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy)

This Child Protection Policy was created in September 2024 by Jo Barclay, Safeguarding Manager for Schools and Early Years, Essex and revised in November 2024.	November 2024
It was ratified by the Board of Trustees on:	13 th January 2025
Signed by the Chair of Trustees:	
This Policy will be reviewed by the Trust annually. Next review date:	September 2025



Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

Registered office: The Alderton Infant School, Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton, IG10 3HE

Company No. 11240455

<p>Designated Safeguarding Lead:</p>	<p>The Alderton Infant School: Tara Bristow Alderton Junior School: Kirsty Johnson, Laura Carroll-Bastian Buckhurst Hill Primary School: Kiel Richardson Chigwell Row Infant School: Lisa Anstey Epping Upland Primary School: Julia Ferguson Hereward Primary School: Renette Fourie High Beech Primary School: Kate Mortimer Hillhouse Primary School: Joanne Willcox Ivy Chimneys Primary School: Rebecca Sigston Lambourne Primary School: Joanne Willcox Limes Farm Infant School: Samantha Taylor Oak View School: Tina Kearney St John's Primary School: Jonathan Furness Staples Road Primary School: Nick Mallender Theydon Bois Primary School: Andre Rall White Bridge Primary School: James Kenyon</p>
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<p>Designated Safeguarding Trustee</p>	<p>Lesley Duffin</p>
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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, 2024)

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- the school Behaviour Policy;
- the school Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing 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 Trust 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 \(DfE 2023\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board



(ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

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

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

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act (2004)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2018\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion in schools, academies and PRUs, including pupil movement \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and Supporting Behaviour \(ECC 2024\)](#)
- [Filtering and Monitoring Standards \(DfE\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)



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 Trust with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on page 2 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 local governing committee of each school in the Trust

The local governing committee ensures that the policies, procedures and training in each 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 Trustee and school Governors for safeguarding arrangements are named on page 2 of this document. They take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our Trust. Each school's local governing committee ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place.

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 local governing committee ensures that all adults in our schools 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 local governing committee ensures our pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe (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 mandatory.

The local governing committee 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 to support this)

The Headteacher

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (including 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/Deputies)

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 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 lead/leads is / are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy/deputies designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

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 be in need of 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.

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 they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, perhaps because they are embarrassed, scared or they may not always recognise



that they are being abused either at home or out in the community. 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 (DfE, 2024) defines 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"

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

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

In addition, Annex 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".

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our Trust 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.

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 schools recognise 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 schools 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.

Please see Appendix D for the Trust's Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy.

Children who are absent from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that 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 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 schools 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 C), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

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 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 Trust 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.

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 Trust 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).

Please see Appendix D for the Trust's Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy.

Mental health

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our Trust aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

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

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



Online safety

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

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

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online. We understand any child can be vulnerable online, and that their vulnerability can vary according to age, developmental stage and personal circumstances. We aim to equip all our 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.

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

Prevention of radicalisation

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.

It 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. If a child on roll at our school is referred to



the Channel Panel, a representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

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

Serious violence

All staff are aware of the risk factors and 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.

As with other safeguarding issues, we work with other relevant agencies to share information and address concerns, to help safeguard all children.

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 FGM where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school operates in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

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

5. Procedures

Our schools work 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, 2022)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- 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 another agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

All staff understand that, if they continue to have concerns about a child, or feel a concern is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, they should press for reconsideration 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



or previously in Care or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care 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 schools understand that children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or 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 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors/Trustees receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our school receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding/child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors/Trustees.

Our schools ensure that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

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 Wider Eastern Information Stakeholder Forum (WEISF), which enables us to share and receive information 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 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 and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) 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 essential to good child protection practice. Our schools are clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our schools and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

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

Any records related to child protection are kept on 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 make contact with 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 schools, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

10. Interagency working

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

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 ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

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 2024) 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

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, 2022) 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.

12. Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

Our schools' 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 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



Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

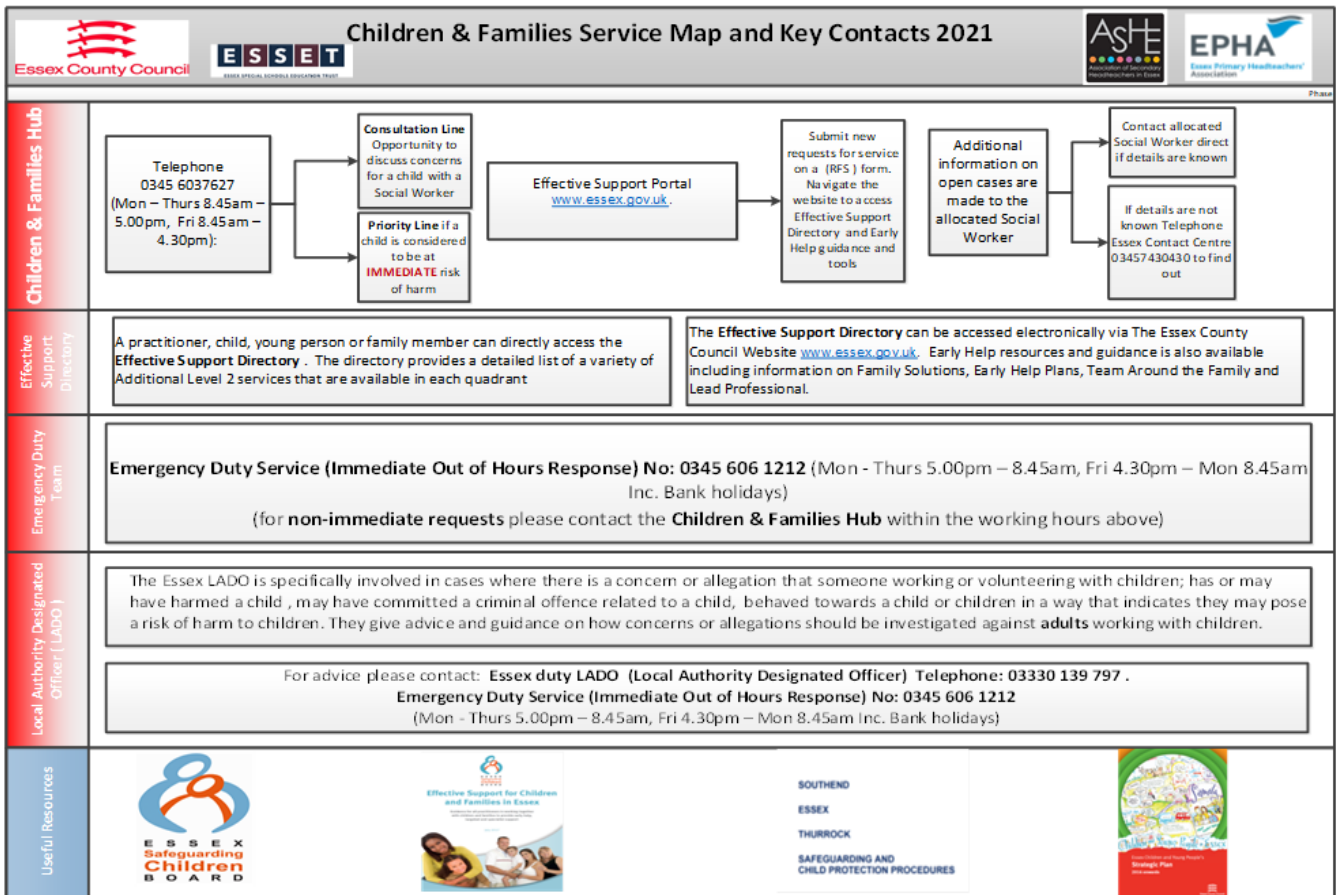
Registered office: The Alderton Infant School, Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton, IG10 3HE
Company No. 11240455

team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place and these are available in the Trust's 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](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

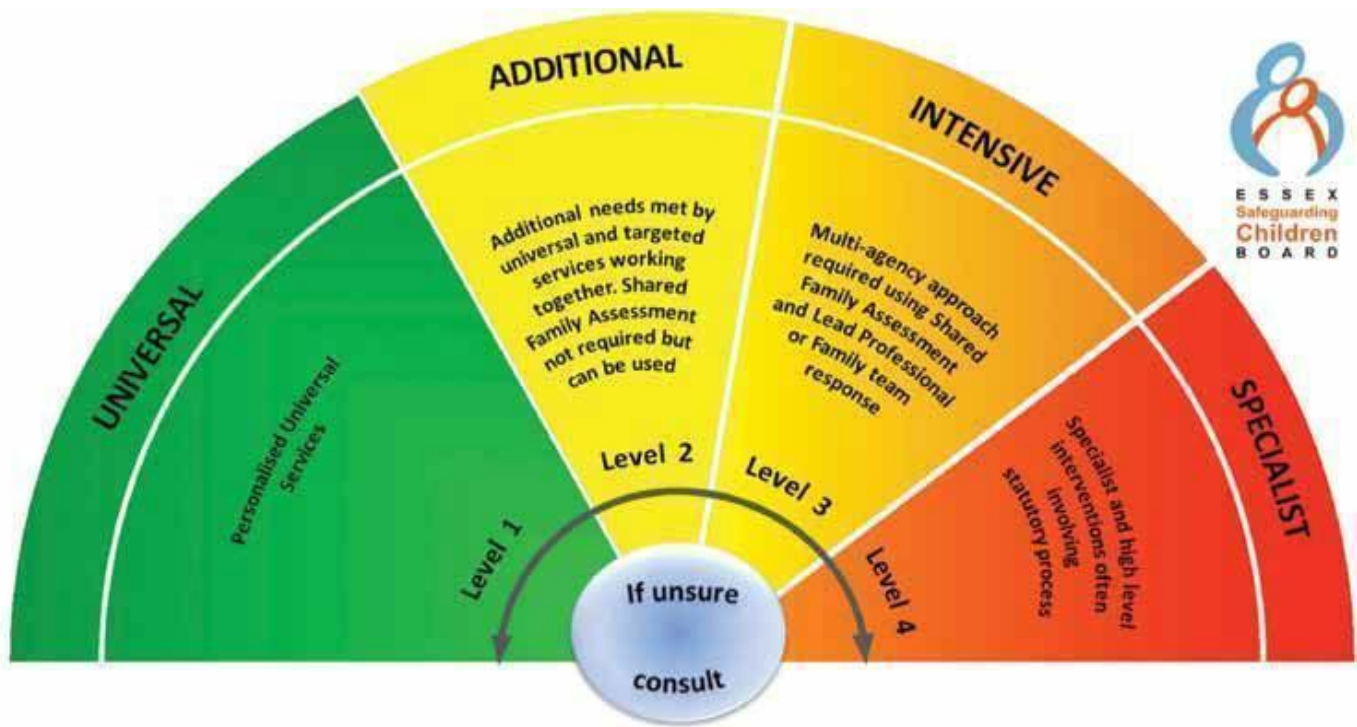
Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.



Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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



Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

Arrangements for children who 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



Appendix D: Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

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3	<u>Whole school approach to harmful sexual behaviour</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Children</u>▪ <u>Parents and carers</u>▪ <u>Staff</u>▪ <u>Online Safety</u>
4	<u>Procedures for responding to harmful sexual behaviour</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Confidentiality and information-sharing</u>▪ <u>Anonymity</u>▪ <u>Recording incidents</u>▪ <u>Brook Traffic Light Tool</u>▪ <u>Risk Assessment</u>▪ <u>Principles</u>▪ <u>Safeguarding and supporting a victim</u>▪ <u>Safeguarding and supporting an alleged perpetrator</u>▪ <u>Information to parents and carers</u>▪ <u>Ongoing support for our children</u>
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1. Introduction

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum. It ranges from normal and developmentally expected (age-appropriate), to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent. Problematic, abusive, and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. This is known as Harmful Sexual Behaviour, which children can experience in various settings, including at school, at home (or in another home), in public places, online or in person, or simultaneously. Our Trust recognises that children are vulnerable to, and capable of, harmful sexual behaviour.



We take any allegation of abuse between our children seriously and follow our child protection procedures if a report of harmful sexual behaviour is made. This may include seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. Decisions are made taking into account the age and developmental stages of any child involved. We also consider any other factors as appropriate and balance this with our duty and responsibilities to protect all children.

Within this policy we use the following widely-used and recognised terms in places: 'victim(s)' and 'alleged perpetrator(s)'. We recognise that a child who has disclosed abuse may not consider themselves to be a victim and may not want to be described in this way. We also recognise that a child who is reported to have displayed harmful or abusive behaviour may not consider that they have done so, and that they will also need a safeguarding response. When managing reports of abuse, we are mindful of the language used, particularly when speaking with children, and will adapt this according to the needs of the child.

2. What harmful sexual behaviour means

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes statutory guidance for all education settings: [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE). Part five of this statutory guidance sets out how schools should manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment (harmful sexual behaviour).

Sexual violence

This means sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- rape;
- assault by penetration;
- sexual assault (which includes inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching); and
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent (consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose – a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity).

Sexual harassment

This means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school, including:

- sexual comments (telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names);
- sexual 'jokes' or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, or interfering with someone's clothes;
- displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture or video under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, and / or to cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm (this is a criminal offence).



Online harmful sexual behaviour

This can be a single event, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and / or sexual violence. It may include:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (this is a criminal offence);
- sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats; and
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online.

3. Whole school approach to harmful sexual behaviour

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly online and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive way.

[*Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education \(DfE, 2021\)*](#)

Children

We use lessons and assemblies to teach children in an age-appropriate way about healthy, positive, and respectful relationships. We help our children to understand what is meant by boundaries and privacy, online and offline. We aim to provide children with the language to report abuse and explain how they can report concerns and tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

We balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (online and offline), whilst being clear that abuse is never the fault of a victim, and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects complement our delivery of health education, including physical and mental health and wellbeing, and are part of our whole-setting approach to safeguarding our children.

Parents and carers

It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour and that they reinforce key messages from school at home. We work in partnership with parents and carers to support our children and want to help them to keep their child/ren safe. Parents and carers should understand:

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the effects of harmful sexual behaviour on children;
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place; and



- what to do if it is suspected that child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour has occurred.

Further information to support parents and carers in relation to harmful sexual behaviour is available online, including on the [NSPCC](#) and [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#) websites.

Staff

Our staff undertake annual safeguarding training to ensure they are aware of the signs of abuse and how to recognise them. Staff also receive regular updates on a number of safeguarding issues, including harmful sexual behaviour. The training ensures that our staff know what to do if they receive a report that harmful sexual behaviour may have occurred, including how to support our children.

Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. 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.

4. Procedures for responding to harmful sexual behaviour

How we respond to harmful sexual behaviour is very important. The wellbeing of our children is always central to our approach. Any child reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We always reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. No child will ever be made to feel that they are creating a problem by reporting harmful sexual behaviour or to feel ashamed.

We will do this by:

- wherever possible, managing any report of harmful sexual behaviour with two members of staff present. This will usually include our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- listening carefully to a child in a non-judgemental way and ensuring we are clear about how the report will be progressed. We will ensure our children know they can speak to our staff again if they wish to provide more information, or for any other reason.
- where a report includes an online element, we will work to the government advice in [Searching screening and confiscation](#) and [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people](#). We will never view an illegal image of a child as part of our response to a report of harmful sexual behaviour, unless absolutely necessary in exceptional circumstances. We will never forward an illegal image of a child.
- working in partnership with other agencies (including statutory partners) to ensure that concerns are appropriately managed. Where a child already has Children's Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child In Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will take the lead in our setting where harmful sexual behaviour has occurred. They will liaise with other agencies as appropriate, including the statutory agencies for safeguarding when required. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that accurate safeguarding records are kept and that all relevant information is included in the Child Protection file of any child involved.



Confidentiality and information sharing

Our staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including children or parents/carers) 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 our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by a statutory agency (police and / or Social Care). Parents and carers will normally be informed about any report of abuse, unless we consider that this may place a child at greater risk.

In some cases, where we may need to involve another agency, this may be against the wishes of a child and / or their parent(s) / carer(s). In such cases, we will explain our reasons for doing so and support them accordingly.

Anonymity

It is important that any child (victim or perpetrator) is safeguarded when an incident of harmful sexual behaviour has occurred. We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of all children involved and will make decisions about sharing information, and with whom, based on the individual circumstances.

We are aware of the potential impact on safeguarding where a victim or perpetrator's identity is exposed and will take all necessary action to prevent this from happening in order to keep children involved safe. Where the use of social media becomes a factor and compromises the safety of any child, we will address this and involve other agencies as appropriate.

Recording incidents

It is essential that we record all reports about harmful sexual behaviour within our school, as with any other child protection concern, in line with our Child Protection Policy. Any member of staff receiving a report of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this 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. The record will then be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, our staff will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) first as soon as possible, and deal with recording afterwards.

Risk Assessment

We will usually complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour. Our risk assessment will include the following considerations:

- the victim, and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them;
- whether there may have been other victims;
- the alleged perpetrator(s);
- the time and location of the incident(s), and any action required to make the location(s) safer; and
- all other children (and, if appropriate, our staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harm.



Our risk assessment will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. Wherever possible, the victim, alleged perpetrator, and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and subsequent reviews of the risk assessment.

At all times, we will be actively considering any risks that are identified through our risk assessment, and its ongoing review, to our children. We will put measures in place to protect our children accordingly.

Principles

We will, at all times, take a balanced and proportionate approach to harmful sexual behaviour, based on the principle that it is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Our approach will help us to ensure that all children are protected and supported appropriately.

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 sexual behaviour has occurred. 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.

Cases of harmful sexual behaviour will be considered carefully on an individual basis, and in conjunction with other agencies when they are involved. The safety of all our children is paramount and we have a duty of care to all pupils.

The following principles will guide us:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether harmful sexual behaviour has been displayed;
- the ages and developmental stages of all children involved;
- consideration of any power imbalance between the children involved;
- consideration of whether the alleged incident is a one-off or part of a sustained pattern of abuse;
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children;
- the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents;
- consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff; and
- consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

Safeguarding and supporting a victim

We will assess what short-term and long-term support a child may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident, and to recover from what they have experienced. A child's existing support network



will be central to this work; we will work with other partners as appropriate and in accordance with a child's wishes and, wherever appropriate, in discussion with parents and carers.

We will consider what is necessary to support a victim straightaway. For example, making adaptations to their timetable and in-school support and taking steps to protect them from attention or peer pressure they may experience due to making a report. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all children involved.

It may be necessary to make requests for support to mental health and wellbeing services or for therapeutic intervention. We may also need to liaise with other agencies to remove inappropriate material from the Internet, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#).

Safeguarding and supporting an alleged perpetrator

We will also protect and support children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering a child's needs, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family.

Some children may not realise they have behaved abusively. We aim to avoid language that may make them feel judged or criminalised and to ensure that any intervention will effectively address the behaviour at the appropriate level of need. We want to ensure that children receive the right help at the right time.

We will carefully consider when to inform an alleged perpetrator(s) about a report of harmful sexual behaviour made against them. Where contact with Children's Social Care and / or the police is required, our Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to those agencies to discuss next steps, including when and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. This will not prevent us from taking immediate action to safeguard children, where required.

We will consider appropriate sanctions using our behaviour policy, and work with a child and their support network to consider measures that may help to address their behaviour.

Information to parents and carers

In line with our child protection procedures, we inform parents or carers about reports of harmful sexual behaviour, unless to do so may place a child at additional risk. We will seek advice from other safeguarding partners in individual cases based on the circumstances of the individual case. Where we have been advised that parents / carers should not be immediately informed, we will continue to support any child involved, according to their needs. This is likely to be with the support of Children's Social Care and / or the police and any other appropriate specialist agencies.

Ongoing support for our children

We will consider what ongoing support our children may need, and tailor this on a case-by-case basis, according to the needs of all children involved. Support, where it is required, may include pastoral support, counselling services, provision of a trusted adult or a referral to an external specialist agency. Where other agencies are involved, decisions about support will be made in the context of partnership working, with the needs of the child central to these discussions.

We may also need to provide support to children who have witnessed harmful sexual behaviour, or who have otherwise been affected. This will be informed by our risk assessment and our ongoing work.



We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole-setting approach for our children, or with the wider community of our setting.

5. Outcomes

We will always seek to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to an actual or alleged incident, liaising with our safeguarding partners as appropriate.

The following scenarios may apply:

Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children involved are not in need of early help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other school policies in addressing matters, for example our child protection / behaviour / anti-bullying policies, and provide pastoral support where appropriate.

Early Help

Where statutory intervention is not required or agreed, we may use an early help approach instead. This means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. We will work with parents and carers and other relevant partners when following this approach, which can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation.

Requests for support to Children's Social Care

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a request for support to Children's Social Care. We will inform parents and carers of this unless to do so may put a child at additional risk. We will seek advice from other safeguarding partners in individual cases.

If we make a request for support, Children's Social Care will consider whether the children involved need protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are undertaken, the school will work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as appropriate. Partnership working helps to ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. If a statutory assessment is not considered appropriate by Children's Social Care, we will consider what other support for the children involved may be required. We will make further requests for support to Children's Social Care if we consider that a child is at risk of harm.

Reporting to the police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, we are required to report it to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. However, the police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where we have made a report to the police, we will consult with them and agree what information can be disclosed to our staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the police and other agencies as appropriate to support all children involved (including potential witnesses). This will help to ensure that any actions we take do not jeopardise a police investigation. Sometimes the police will decide that further action is not required. In these circumstances we will continue to engage with other agencies to support the children involved.