Sep 2026

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Information for Parents: This policy is available on the website and a paper copy is available on request from the school office.

Key Contacts Within the School:

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL): (including for EYFS)	**Ms Jackson** **Deputy Headteacher** **Part of Senior Management Team** **01277 227152** safeguarding@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DDSL): (Including for EYFS)	**Mrs Joan Thomas** **Teaching Assistant** **01277 227152** deputycpo@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:	**Mrs Louise Margiotta** **01277 268368** louise.margiotta@tsplegal.com
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:	**Mrs Fiona Deery** **01277 227152 (via the School Office)**

Other Key Safeguarding Contacts:

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OPERATIONS HUB:

Advice Line	**0345 6037627**
Referral Team	**0345 6037634**
Out of Hours	**0345 6061212**

Portal (Information and Referrals): www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO):

Essex:	**03330 139797**
Havering:	**01708 431653**
Thurrock:	**01375 652921**

ESSEX SAFEGUARDING CHILDRENS BOARD (ESCB): 0333 013 8936
escb@essex.gov.uk
www.escb.co.uk

POLICE CONTACTS: Emergency 999 Non-Emergency 101
Prevent Team: prevent@essex.pnn.police.uk

Education Lead for Prevent: Jo Barclay, School Safeguarding Manager:
Jo.Barclay@essex.gov.uk

NSPCC Helpline - Report Abuse in Education: 0800 136 663 or help@nspcc.org.uk

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All staff, including administrative, premises and support staff, are required to read this policy in conjunction with Part One of KCSIE 2026 (which forms Appendix A to this document) in full and confirm that they have understood the content.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child."

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

This Safeguarding and 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 Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy/Procedures;
- the school IT Acceptable Use Policy, E-Safety and Social Networking policy;
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the school Staff Code of Conduct, including Low-Level Concerns Policy;
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCISE)

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

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

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

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

2. SCHOOL ETHOS

We recognise that for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse. Our school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- create an environment in the school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, gender, religion, culture or home background.
- create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our pupils is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all our children.
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- encourage children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- establish, maintain and promote a culture where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- ensure pupils receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating.
- include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse including online and to develop healthy and safe relationships. This will include the use of the PSHE scheme, Jigsaw.
- include in the curriculum material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases (or suspected cases) of child abuse.
- support children who have either been abused or are in need.
- make staff, parents, volunteers and governors/trustees aware of (and have a clear understanding of) the school's responsibilities, policies and practice for safeguarding children and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort is made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- protect children from harm and ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others.
- facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government.
- provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations.

The school will not tolerate bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. There is a separate Anti-bullying and Anti-discrimination Policy, which is available via the school's website or from the School Office.

3. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

This Policy applies to the school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Gemma Jackson (DSL) and Joan Thomas (DDSL) are responsible for Safeguarding within the EYFS.

The school's policy on the use of 'Pre-Prep Electronic Devices with Imaging and Sharing Capabilities' in the setting is incorporated into the Staff Code of Conduct which applies to all staff throughout the school. These states:

In the Early Years Setting staff personal use of electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are strictly forbidden. Permission must be requested from the Head of Pre-Prep for mobile phones to be used during contact time with pupils. Children must be protected from any images being used inappropriately.

Our school ensures 'that all practitioners are trained in line with the criteria set out in Annex C. Providers must ensure that practitioners are supported and confident to implement the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures on an ongoing basis.' (Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 3.31)

The Headteacher will notify OFSTED within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere).

4. CURRICULUM

We embed key elements of child protection into our PSHE and ICT lessons and assemblies, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe, including internet safety.

We create within the school a culture of value and respect for the individual. We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

We include in our curriculum guidance to enable children to adjust their behaviours in order to reduce risks and build resilience, including radicalisation with particular attention to the safe use of electronic equipment and the internet.

We use appropriate IT filtering systems which minimises unsuitable or offensive web content and keeps children safe when accessing the internet at school. The governing body will ensure that filtering and monitoring systems are reviewed at least annually and whenever a safeguarding risk assessment identifies a significant change in need. Outcomes of the review will be documented and reported to governors.

The school will check that any visiting speakers who might fall within the scope of the

Prevent duty, whether invited by staff or pupils, are suitable. Visiting speakers will be appropriately supervised.

We provide additional opportunities for children to express their opinions and concerns through 'Pupil Voice', for example the school council, eco council and secure post boxes for them to place notes if they do not wish to approach a member of staff direct.

Where appropriate, and with parent's permission, we arrange for children to have access to a trained counsellor.

The school will actively promote online safety and signpost staff, parents and children to information that will help keep children safe online. This will also be achieved via dedicated training sessions for children and separate sessions for staff and parents. We also participate in the annual Safer Internet Day.

We have a child friendly version of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and a separate Anti-bullying Policy which use age-appropriate language.

5. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE 2026)
Early help and effective support (Essex Safeguarding Children Board, 2026)
Education Act (2002)
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)
Serious Crime Act 2015
Children and Social Work Act (2017)
Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (DfE, 2025)
Crime and Policing Act 2026

Sexual Offences Act (2003)
Information Sharing Duty (DfE, 2026)
Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2024)
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)
Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges (DfE 2026)
Mobile phones in schools (DfE, 2026)
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
Generative AI: product safety expectations (DfE 2026)
Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2025)
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, 2023)
Behaviour in Schools (DfE 2024)
Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force (DfE 2026)
School suspensions and permanent exclusion (DfE 2026)
Searching, screening and confiscation (DfE 2023)
Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
Victims and Prisoners Act (2024)
Education Access Team - Children Missing Education / Home Education policy and practice (Essex County Council 2025)

6. 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 to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. In line with statutory requirements, they also have a duty to work with other appropriate agencies and to share relevant information where it will promote the welfare of and safeguard a child. 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; Ms Gemma Jackson and the deputy designated safeguarding lead; Mrs Joan Thomas) 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 in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and that it is reviewed at least annually.

There is a named governor for safeguarding arrangements (Mrs Louise Margiotta) and they are also named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and a 'whole-school approach' to this. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (the designated safeguarding lead; Ms Gemma Jackson and the deputy designated safeguarding lead; Mrs Joan Thomas).

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 is 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 / trustees) 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 (for primary age pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body 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 will ensure that designated members of leadership and governance understand their responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems and receive appropriate training.

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 volunteers are appropriately supervised in school
- online safety (including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this)

It also ensures there is an appropriate Staff Code of Conduct Policy in place, so that adults when they start work with us are clear of the boundaries within which they

operate. The governing body ensures all staff are aware they must follow this policy and that appropriate action is taken where this does not happen.

The Headteacher

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The designated safeguarding lead takes responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in our school. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards), managing and sharing safeguarding information and child protection files and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that any referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) and/or the Police are made in a timely way 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 is trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead is able to act in their absence, so there is always cover for this role.

All School Staff

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

All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Our staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and they understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home or our setting and also online. Our staff 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 Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell

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

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

7. 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
- 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 (neglect may also occur during pregnancy)

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. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Essex has adopted the following definition for CCE: 'Child Criminal Exploitation is

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

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

CSE is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and it can be committed by an individual or an organised network. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted: "Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".

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

Risk in the community (RIC)

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

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

Child-on-child abuse (including 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 cyber bullying), physical abuse, physical / sexual assault, harmful sexual behaviours, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / 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. Our culture is very much one of a caring school with Christ at its centre. We strive for excellence and every child is encouraged to achieve their potential. We respect and care for each person in our school community, valuing them for who they are and for all that they achieve.

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

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

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. For further information please refer to the school's Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy, Anti bullying and Anti – Discrimination Policy and Behaviour and Discipline 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. We recognise that good attendance begins with our school being somewhere our children want to be, and also that some children find it harder to attend school for a range of reasons. We will always try to understand underlying reasons for absence and will work collaboratively with other partners to support children to attend school and to ensure that they receive the right help at the right time.

A child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and we follow the procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also

recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. We believe that early intervention to address absence from school is vital, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

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

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

Domestic abuse

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

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

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

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

Harmful sexual behaviour

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

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

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

(Please refer to the school's Child on Child Harmful Sexual behaviour policy for further details on our arrangements for harmful sexual behaviour.)

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 to promote resilience and keep children safe.

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

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents/carers to support the wellbeing of our 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.

For further information about our approach to mental health this is available in our mental health policy.

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 this; 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: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying including those generated using AI and online bullying,
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

The school recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging and rapidly developing technology which may be encountered by pupils both within and beyond the school environment. The school is committed to ensuring that any use of AI supports the safeguarding and promotes the welfare of pupils.

The school acknowledges that AI presents both educational opportunities and potential safeguarding risks. These include exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, the generation or dissemination of misleading information, reduced opportunities for independent learning, and risks associated with the sharing of personal data or online interactions facilitated by AI technologies.

In response to these risks, the school implements appropriate safeguarding procedures. Staff receive guidance on the safe and responsible use of AI and understand their duty to identify and respond to any concerns. The use of AI by pupils within school is appropriately supervised and monitored, and is carefully considered in relation to pupils' age, understanding, and stage of development.

Pupils are supported to develop an age-appropriate understanding of AI as part of the school's approach to online safety, enabling them to use such technologies critically, responsibly, and safely. The school makes clear that personal, sensitive, or identifiable information must not be entered into AI systems.

Any concerns relating to the use or misuse of AI, including those which may impact on pupil welfare, are managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and are reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Through these measures, the school seeks to ensure that the use of AI does not compromise the safety or wellbeing of pupils and is managed in a way that is consistent with the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

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.

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.

Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our IT Acceptable Use, e-Safety, AI and Social Networking Policies.

Prevention of radicalisation

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

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of 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 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 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.

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

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

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

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

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. 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.

8. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

All staff should be concerned if they observe a child with any of the following possible signs of abuse or neglect. Whilst these signs may not be evidence themselves, they may be a warning, particularly if a child is exhibiting several signs or a pattern emerges.

(There may be other reasons for a child showing such signs).

- any injury which is not typical of the bumps, scrapes or marks usually associated with an accidental injury.
- unexplained injuries on a regular basis.
- frequently has injuries (even where an apparently reasonable explanation is provided).
- gives confused or conflicting explanations about how injury/injuries were sustained.
- exhibits significant changes in behaviour, academic performance, attitude, demeanour, becomes withdrawn etc.
- indulges in, or talks about, sexual behaviour which is unusually or inappropriately explicit for their age/stage of development.
- has an indication of possible self-harm, for example recurrent cuts, scratches or other marks on the arm.
- has an indication of mental strain, for example stress, depression, lack of motivation which is out of character, extreme tiredness, uncharacteristic outbursts of anger, frequently over emotional.
- disclosures of an incident or incidents in which they may have been significantly harmed.
- any other cause to believe they may be suffering harm.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)
Possible signs that FGM may have taken place include long periods away from school, longer than usual time spent in the toilet, difficulty walking, sitting, standing or running, reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations, recurring urinary tract infections, prolonged absences with a change in behaviour, change in manner/mode of dress, requiring to be excused from PE without support of GP, eating disorders, self-harming

or suicide attempts, disclosure.

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)
Possible signs and vulnerabilities may include low self-esteem/confidence, learning disabilities, chaotic/dysfunctional household, history of abuse, recent bereavement or loss, change in physical appearance, physical injuries, receipt of gifts from unknown sources, self-harm, poor mental health, estranged from family, absence from school, evidence of sexual bullying/vulnerability through internet/social media sites.

Radicalisation and Extremism
Possible signs may include: General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy, changes of friends and mode of dress, use of inappropriate language, possession of violent extremist literature, the expression of extremist views, advocating violent actions and means, association with known extremists, seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Child in Need
The school also recognises that, in addition to children who are being abused or at risk of serious harm, there may be children in need who require support and help. These children may include those:

- coping with a disability
- undergoing certain medical treatments
- parental illness/disability
- family in acute stress
- family dysfunction
- poor body image

These lists are by no means exhaustive. Further information is available within KCSIE, on the ESCB www.escb.co.uk and NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk websites.

9. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

Our school is committed to ensuring that pupils receive the right help at the right time. We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

We will endeavour to support **all** pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage our pupils to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school's behaviour management and anti-bullying policies.
- A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families.
- A commitment to develop open and honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child's best interest as paramount.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff

group, trained to respond appropriately in all matters of child protection.

- Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse, and that staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are also vulnerable and may be in need of support or protection.

10. CHILDREN POTENTIALLY AT RISK OF GREATER HARM

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

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

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

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

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

11. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

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

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

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

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

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

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

Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed 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) 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.

The school publish its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Appendices) on its website. All Governors and staff members are given (and are required to read) a copy of this policy and its appendices. They must acknowledge this by signature or via CPOMS.

Staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through

induction, briefings and awareness training.

When dealing with a disclosure staff should:

- Not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Ask the child to repeat or clarify if you do not understand or need clarification about what they have said.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Listen to what is being said without showing shock or disbelief.
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Listen carefully to the child and consider their views. Keep an open mind (staff should accept what is being said and not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place).
- Never promise confidentiality. Explain (in terms appropriate to the child's age/stage of development) who has to be told, reassuring the child that this is to enable you to help keep them and other children safe.
- Not view or forward illegal images of the child.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault.
- Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Explain (in terms appropriate to the child's age/stage of development) what will happen next.
- Make brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards, which record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, and what has actually been said (wherever possible using the child's exact words, even if they seem childish, rude or inappropriate), not assumption or interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated.
- Complete a Record of Concern Form, attach any original notes and pass them to the DSL/DDSL immediately.
- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
- Record any observed injuries or bruises (using a body map where appropriate). Staff must **NEVER** ask a child to remove or adjust clothing to enable them to view any part of the child's body which is not usually on display. Staff must **NEVER** take photographs of any injuries. A clear, detailed description of any obvious and visible injuries should be recorded.
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate to the 'proper terms').
- Appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations.
- No copies of written records should be retained by the member of staff/volunteer.

All concerns, however minor, should be recorded. CPOMS is used for more general observations, e.g. behaviour, lateness, correct, clean and appropriate uniform, appropriate snacks and lunches provided, medical issues etc. However, if the child already has a child protection folder the concerns can also be recorded on CPOMS as they will have their safeguarding file stored within the CPOMS system. The DSL/DDSL are automatically informed of all incidents via CPOMS.
Disclosures and Incidents of a more serious nature are recorded on a Record of Concern Form and passed to the DSL/DDSL immediately.

Child in Need
In the case of a Child in Need being identified, the DSL/DDSL will immediately go to

the Essex County Council website where we will make a request for support to the Children and Families Hub. A Child in Need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach, or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services, or the child is disabled.

Child at Risk

In the case of a child at risk being identified, immediately the DSL/DDSL will call the Children and Families Hub on **0345 603 7627** and ask for the **Priority Line**, or call the police on **999.** During out of hours (Monday to Thursday 5pm-9am, Friday and Bank Holidays 4.30pm- 9am) we will call **0345 606 1212** or e-mail **Emergency.DutyTeamOutOfHours@essex.gov.uk**

Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

WE DO NOT REQUIRE PARENTAL CONSENT FOR REFERRALS TO STATUTORY AGENCIES.

Our school works with regard to the Prevent Duty and approaches the issue in the same way as any other child protection matter. The school assesses the risk of children being drawn into terrorism and who may be at risk of radicalisation and any concerns that one of our pupils is at risk in this respect will be referred to Children's Social Care (or Channel if appropriate) in line with the current SET procedures. Concerns may also be forwarded to prevent@Essex.pnn.police.uk. Additional contacts for help and advice are 101 (the non-emergency police number) 02073407264 and counter.extremism@eduction.gov.uk (telephone helpline and mailbox for non-emergency advice for staff and governors).

12. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) 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. We keep records of any safeguarding / child protection training undertaken by staff and governors.

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

When new staff, volunteers, peripatetic staff or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the DSL and DDSL and how to share concerns with them. They are given a copy of our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with appendices, Whistleblowing Policy, Lower-Level Concerns, Behaviour & Discipline Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Social Network Policy, IT Acceptable Use, Anti-Bullying Policy, Mental Health and Equal Opportunities Policy. They are told who our DSL/DDSL are and informed how to share concerns with them. They are informed of the procedure for children missing education. There may be other adults in the school, who work supervised or unsupervised on a

regular basis. For those people, the Headteacher will ensure the relevant checks are in place, they receive induction training, they are made aware of the identity of the DSL/DDSL and that they receive a copy of this policy and its appendices (which they will be required to sign to acknowledge receipt of).

Dealing with child protection issues is likely to be a stressful experience. Where appropriate, the DSL/DDSL or the Headteacher will provide support and supervision to staff involved in child protection issues.

13. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information sharing can help to ensure a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address. We recognise that effective multi-agency information sharing is a vital part of safeguarding work and we understand how important it is and its role in our safeguarding arrangements. We work in accordance with all statutory requirements (including the Information Sharing Duty) and ensure that information shared is focused, proportionate and always in the child's best interests. We will never share information where it is not in the child's best interests or where to do so would place a child at increased risk.

We understand that no individual knows everything about a child or family and that, where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information can reduce the risk of harm. It is only when this happens effectively that adults working with a child have a better understanding of their needs and can better assess any risk and safeguard them. We work in a transparent way with parents/carers and will always inform them of any concerns when sharing with other appropriate agencies, unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We will always consider what it is relevant to share and that it is appropriate and proportionate. We recognise our duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and we also understand this is not a barrier to sharing information, where failure to do so could place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent us sharing information where there are 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.

We are signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol which includes how to share and receive information for safeguarding 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 deputy) and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

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

14. CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS

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

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

Any records relating to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child on CPOMS (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.

CPOMS is also used by all staff to record any general observations (i.e. where there is no cause for immediate concern) for those children who do not have child protection files. The DSL/DDSL are notified with every incident inputted on CPOMS which allows an immediate and thorough monitoring process. The DSL/DDSL and the Deputy Headteacher responsible for pastoral care meet regularly to review any information and concerns regarding safeguarding issues. The DSL/DDSL meet once a term with the Safeguarding Governor. The DSL/DDSL meet with the relevant staff who teach children with child protection files at the start of the academic year to pass on any relevant information. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to update other staff members (on a need-to-know basis) who teach their class of any significant matters relating to a child with a child protection file throughout the year.

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 securely forwarded to the new setting. We will obtain evidence that they been safely received by the new school and then destroy any records held in our school. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may also make contact with the new setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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

15. 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 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 the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional 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 would speak with the child's key-worker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern.

16. 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 Code of Conduct. All staff are regularly reminded of this through updates and training, and are also informed about our Whistleblowing Policy.

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

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

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

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

In the event of an allegation relating to the conduct and behaviour of an agency member of staff, the Headteacher 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 Children's Workforce Allegations Team.

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

17. LOWER-LEVEL CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS ('Low-level' concerns)

This section should be read in conjunction with our 'Lower-Level' Concerns Policy. Low level concerns and allegations that do not meet the harms test should be addressed separately. We have created and embedded a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our school's values and expected behaviours are set out in the Staff Code of Conduct which are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff including supply staff and volunteers.

Low Level Concerns and allegations will be reported to the Headteacher. Reports concerning supply staff, contractors will be notified to their employers so any potential patterns inappropriate behaviour can be identified. The Lower-Level Concerns Policy sets out procedures for responding to reports of low- level concerns and allegations. Reports of lower-level concerns and allegations and the rationale for all decisions and actions taken will be recorded in writing, with the details of the concern, the context in which the concern/allegation arose and action taken. The name of the person reporting will be noted however, we will be respectful of wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible. Records of lower-level concerns will be reviewed so that patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the Headteacher will decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.

The school must consider if any wider cultural issues enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies already in place can be revised and/or additional training delivered to minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

18. 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 concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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

19. BEHAVIOUR, RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION AND USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

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

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

20. Mobile Phones

In line with the Mobile phones in schools (DfE 2026), our school is a pupil mobile phone free environment. Our approach to this forms part of our wider safeguarding arrangements and is outlined in the Pupil Code of Conduct.

21. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed, as a minimum, annually by the DSL/DDSL and is developed continually. Any weaknesses are remedied immediately. The next scheduled review of the policy will therefore be in September 2027.

22. LIST OF APPENDICES

A. KCSIE: Part One: Safeguarding information for all staff, DfE, 2026

B. Report of a Concern Form

C. Concern for a child or young person and their family

D. Essex Windscreen of Need & Levels of Intervention

E. Role of the DSL/DDSL

F. Missing Child Protocol

23. SIGNATURES / DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ms Gemma Jackson & Mrs Joan Thomas

Signature: G. Jackson

J. Thomas

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Wilson

Sep 2026

Signature:

R. Wilson

Designated Safeguarding Governor:
Mrs Louise Margiotta

L. Margiotta

Signature:

Chair of Governors:
Mrs Fiona Deery

F. Deery

Signature:

September 2026

Policy Ratified:

September 2027

Date of next review:

Department
for Education

Keeping children safe in education 2026

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

Part one: Information for all school and college staff

For information only, this guidance does not come into force until 1 September 2026

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Summary

Keeping children safe in education is statutory guidance that schools and colleges in England must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

It is essential that **everybody** working in a school or college understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that those staff who work directly with children read **at least Part one** of this guidance.

Governing bodies and proprietors, working with their senior leadership teams and especially their designated safeguarding lead, should now also ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read **Part one** of this guidance.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities as set out in Part one of this guidance.

The full version of KCSIE can be found here: Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

About this guidance

We use the terms "**must**" and "**should**" throughout the guidance. We use the term "must" when the person in question is legally required to do something and "**should**" when the advice set out **should** be followed unless there is good reason not to.

Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff

What school and college staff should know and do

A child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding

1. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. **'Children'** means everyone under the age of 18. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

3. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

The role of school and college staff

4. School and college staff are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.

5. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

6. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family

Help.[1] Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

7. Any staff member who has any concerns about a child's welfare should follow the processes set out in paragraphs 55 - 61. Staff should expect to support children's social care and other agencies following any referral.

8. Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as local authority children's social care.

9. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture within education and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

10. 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.[2]

What school and college staff need to know

11. All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- child protection policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse),
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)[3],
- staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing,
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods, and

[1] Detailed information on Family Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[2] Teachers' standards.

[3] All schools are required to have a behaviour policy (full details are here). If a college chooses to have a behaviour policy, it should be provided to staff as described above.

- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one of this document should be provided to **all** staff at induction.

12. All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – see paragraphs 171-175 of KCSIE for further information) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

13. All staff should be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments:

- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to Family Help support and services provided at:
    - Targeted early help level (under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004), and
    - Statutory services delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need, including how this applies for disabled children)
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)
    - Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders), and
    - Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child)
- and clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:
    - the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children
    - children managed within the youth secure estate
    - disabled children

14. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those

who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and local authority children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

15. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

16. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people.

What school and college staff should look out for

Support before statutory intervention

17. Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. All school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines

- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage, and
- is a privately fostered child.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

18. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

19. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

20. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

21. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks

online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.

22. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

23. **In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.**

Indicators of abuse and neglect

24. **Abuse**: a form of maltreatment of a child. 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. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. 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.

25. **Physical abuse**: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

26. **Emotional abuse**: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying),

causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

27. **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

28. **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 occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Safeguarding issues

29. **All** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm (including but not limited to those listed below). The following behaviours and indicators can be signs that children are at risk:

- drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
- unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation, and
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-

nudes.[4]

Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in the Annex.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

30. **All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. **All** staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

31. **All** staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening. It may be the case that abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse (whether these concerns are thought to have taken place on or off-site) they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As part of this, schools should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example immediately after school).

32. It is essential that **all** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Examples of which are listed below. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

33. **All** staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

34. As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, **all** staff should know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviours and indicators of risk early, staff should know that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

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[4] Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal – whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive. UKCIS provides detailed advice about sharing nudes and semi-nudes.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'),
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse),
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- sexual violence[5] such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence),
- sexual harassment[6] such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party,
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes[7],
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

36. Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or

[5] For further information about sexual violence see Part five of KCSIE.

[6] For further information about sexual harassment see Part five of KCSIE.

[7] UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings

group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an 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. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. 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. This may constitute modern slavery, and further information is available in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance. In accordance with this guidance, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

37. Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines[8], 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.

38. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. Children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professionals (particularly older children) and should be treated as victims. It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked, and they may not recognise that it is happening to them.

39. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

[8] County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Links to the Home Office’s County Lines advice is provided within the serious violence information on pages 172-173 of KCSIE.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

40. CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

41. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

42. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network[9] and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing.

Domestic abuse

43. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, and ability to learn.

[9] The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse: An organised network is characterised by two or more individuals (whether identified or not) who are known to (or associated with) one another and are known to be involved in or to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children. Being involved in the sexual exploitation of children includes introducing them to other individuals for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, taking payment for sexual activities with a child or allowing their property to be used for sexual activities with a child.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

44. Whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**.[10] If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police. See page 173 of KCSIE for further information.

Mental health

45. **All** staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

46. **Only** appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise.

These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour,
- ongoing difficulty sleeping,
- withdrawing from social situations,
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

47. Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, by identifying these and other potential warning signs,

[10] Under section 5B(11) (a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, “teacher” means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

education staff can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. Schools and colleges should ensure that any interventions they offer are evidenced as safe and effective and appropriate for the need and phase of education.

48. If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should follow their child protection policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or arrange for them to be taken to A&E immediately by a parent/carer or other suitable person. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Serious violence

49. Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). The designated safeguarding lead should assess the risk to both the individual pupil and others in the school, considering wider information or concerns, and take appropriate action. Depending on the risk, they should put in place a safety and support plan, and where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict.

50. Schools play a key role in protecting children from violence, safeguarding victims, as well as those who may be at risk of, or are involved in committing violence (who may also be victims themselves). Staff should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence. These risks are higher for children with disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending. Schools should also try to be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school). Further information on indicators, risk factors, and protective actions relating to serious violence is provided in the Annex.

51. Early, evidence-based support for those considered at risk, as well as at critical points when concerns emerge, is vital. This includes access to trusted adults, social and emotional skill support, and, where available, targeted interventions such as mentoring or therapeutic support (practical guidance on evidenced support is available from the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) (the "what works" centre for preventing violence).

52. Designated safeguarding leads can find further guidance on referrals and when to contact the police in Annex B of KCSIE (Manage Referrals).

Additional information and support

53. Departmental advice What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential indicators of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout that advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The NSPCC website also provides useful additional information on abuse and neglect and what to look out for.

54. **The Annex contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse, exploitation, and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read the Annex.**

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

55. Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best interests** of the child.

56. If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them **immediately**. See page 25 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

57. If staff have a concern, they should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

58. Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school or college's own pastoral support processes, including considering where doing so does not place the child at additional risk, whether the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should inform parents or carers to further support the child's wellbeing.
- undertaking a family help assessment,[11] or
- making a referral to statutory services,[12] for example as the child could be in need,

[11] Further information on family help assessments, provision of family help services and accessing services is in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[12] Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out that the safeguarding partners should publish a threshold document that should include the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under section 17 and 47. Local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish

is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

59. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

60. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan). Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to data protection laws.

61. **Data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.** If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Community-based Early Help assessment

62. If children do not require the support of statutory children's services, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will generally lead the liaison with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in carrying out this assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for Family Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be

local protocols for assessment. A local protocol should set out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed once a child is referred into local authority children's social care.

improving or is getting worse. Alternatively, qualified lead practitioners (i.e. not a social worker) who may lead assessments before statutory intervention can continue to lead work with families up to and including section 17.

Statutory children's social care assessments and services

63. **Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police,** (see when to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges (npcc.police.uk)) **is made immediately**. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

64. Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside of the home[13], so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. Additional information is available here: Contextual Safeguarding.

65. The online tool Report child abuse to your local council directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact details.

Children in need

66. A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children, local authorities, with their safeguarding partners and any relevant agencies, should develop, agree and publish local protocols for assessments and support. This should set out who can act as lead practitioner in supporting children and their families under section 17 (which is not limited to social workers).

[13] See Working Together to Safeguard Children for further information about extra-familial harms and environments outside the family home.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

67. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

What will the local authority do?

68. Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required,
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services,
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process,
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process, and
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

69. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

70. If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment, supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as required.

71. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

Record keeping

72. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those

decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school or college. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records **should** include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

73. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Why is all of this important?

74. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Research and local child safeguarding practice reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action.[14] Further information about local child safeguarding practice can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect,
- poor record keeping,
- failing to listen to the views of the child,
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve,
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies,
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

[14] An analysis of serious case reviews can be found at gov.uk/government/publications/serious-case-reviews-analysis-lessons-and-challenges

What school and college staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another staff member

75. Schools and colleges should have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concern or allegation (no matter how small) about staff members (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, and contractors).

76. If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation of harming or posing a risk of harm to children is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, and contractors), then:

- this should be referred to the headteacher or principal, who will consider whether an onward referral to the LADO is required,
- where there is a concern/allegation about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor of an independent school, and
- in the event of a concern/allegation about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the LADO(s). Details of your local LADO should be easily accessible on your local authority's website.

77. If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school or college's low-level concerns policy. Further details can be found in Part four of KCSIE.

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college

78. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college's safeguarding provision and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

79. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school or college's senior leadership team.

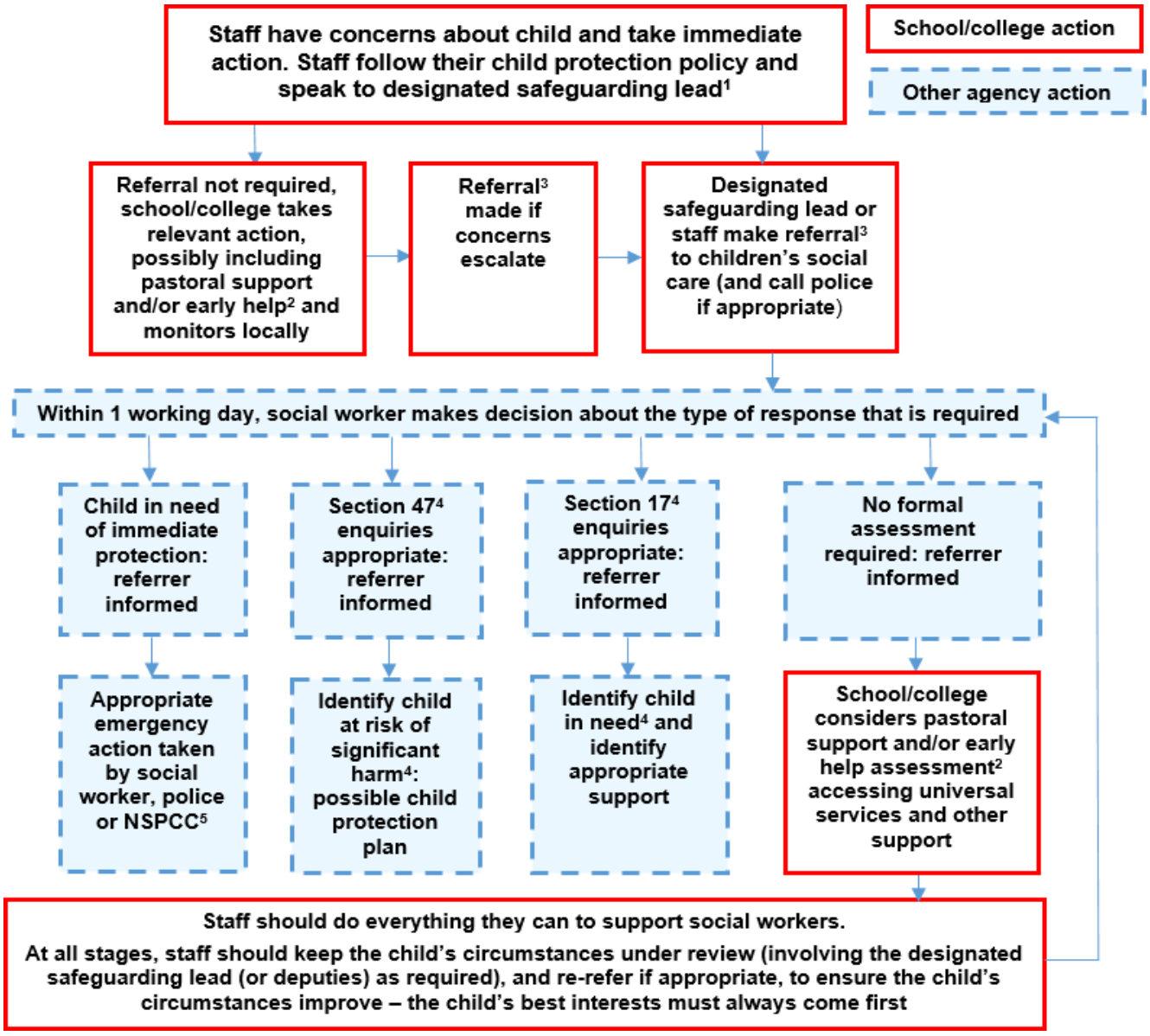
80. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- general advice on whistleblowing can be found at whistleblowing for employees, and

- the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – and the line is available from 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is help@nspcc.org.uk[15]

[15] Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain, Road, London EC2A 3NH.

Figure 1: Flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a child



[1] In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.

[2] Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated Family Help, a family help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the Family Help process.

[3] Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. See Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[4] Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

[5] This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Annex: Further information

The Annex contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read this Annex.

As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their own organisation's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.

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Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. All schools are required to teach about personal safety through the RSHE curriculum. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Whatever form it takes, exploitation and modern slavery is child abuse and relevant child protection procedures must be followed if modern slavery or trafficking is suspected, as per the Modern Slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland (accessible version) - GOV.UK

Some children will also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian. Independent child trafficking guardians provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, having a physical or learning disability, or being neurodivergent, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions which could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation,
- associate with other children involved in exploitation,
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being,
- misuse alcohol and other drugs,
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in the DfE guidance: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners.

County lines

As county lines is a form of criminal exploitation, a First Responder who identifies any potential victim of county lines exploitation should complete the relevant child protection and modern slavery referrals as detailed in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home,
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime),
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs,
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection,
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house’ or ‘cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity,
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters, and
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office Child exploitation disruption toolkit (accessible) - GOV.UK and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children who are absent from education

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, honour or faith-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 193,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in prison each year. They are at risk of poor outcomes as a result of poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers free, confidential support and advice for families in England and Wales who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

School and college staff should be aware that children who have experienced parental imprisonment are more likely to be absent (or excluded) than their peers, to experience mental ill health and drug and alcohol misuse; they are also less likely to be in education, training or employment in later life. Staff should understand the need for tailored, trauma-informed and sensitive support that can help mitigate potential harm and help encourage stability.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crime continues to represent one of the most significant and rapidly evolving threats within the United Kingdom's (UK) crime landscape. Offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (CMA) have risen substantially.

Young people across the UK experiment with illegal online activity, often without understanding the legal or ethical implications. The impact of cybercrime extends well beyond immediate financial losses, with scope to cause disruption to national infrastructure.

Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded,
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide preventative police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent or care giver abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

Domestic abuse is one of the most prevalent forms of abuse, with Women's Aid estimating that 160,000 children are currently living in households where domestic abuse is taking place. This is likely to be an underestimate, however, with much abuse remaining hidden and not coming to the attention of services. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties

are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures as set out in paragraphs 55-61 should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and relevant education settings operating in all police forces across England and Wales. In November 2025, a new statutory duty was placed on the police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant, local authorities, if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This includes all children connected to a household where they have attended a domestic abuse incident; children who are physically present at the incident, children not physically present during the incident, and situations where a child might reside in another household temporarily or permanently. Operation Encompass report over 2,000 notifications are made to settings every day.

Educational settings are often the only consistent support available to some children, especially for those who live in isolated or rural communities. The aim of the duty is to support education settings to provide timely, informed support to children affected by domestic abuse, to ensure the school has up to date information about the child's circumstances and enable immediate support to be put in place according to the child's needs. This places no new responsibilities on education settings.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals and applies solely to domestic abuse incidents. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

Forces and educational settings should have an open communication process to determine where a safeguarding referral should be made in accordance with local thresholds. If an officer makes a referral alongside issuing an Operation Encompass notification, they should tell the child's education setting.

The duty applies to all children in education from reception (typically aged 4/5) up to the age of 17, and who are enrolled in registered primary and secondary schools, including independent schools, private schools, alternative provision settings (e.g., Pupil Referral Units), as well as further education colleges or 16 to 19 academies in England or Wales. Police forces must notify the local authority if the child is electively home educated or missing from education. Forces may also make notifications to other settings, for example early years settings or further education provision for young people with SEND, although these are not covered under the duty.

More information about the scheme can be found in the statutory guidance for police: Duty on police forces in England and Wales to notify education establishments of domestic abuse incidents: Operation Encompass. This guidance intends to recognise

and respond to children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It does not replace existing statutory guidance, including Keeping children safe in education and Working Together to Safeguard Children in England.

Additional resources for education settings, including Online National Key Adult Training: Operation Encompass can be found on the charity's website Home: Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass notifications

Operation Encompass involves the sharing of personal and sensitive information about children and families. It is vital that all participants comply with the data protection laws.

Police forces and educational settings are responsible for deciding how and where information about incidents and notifications are made. They must ensure it remains confidential, is held securely, and adheres to the requirements of the data protection laws.

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for leading on all safeguarding and child protection matters within an educational setting. They are likely to be the Key Adult for Operation Encompass notifications and are responsible for making safeguarding referrals to appropriate agencies, maintaining up-to-date safeguarding policies and training, overseeing record-keeping, and liaising with families where appropriate. DSLs may wish to use a central safeguarding inbox to ensure they have oversight over all Operation Encompass notifications.

The notification should include:

- the name, date of birth and protected characteristics (e.g., disability, race, religion etc.) of any child from that education setting who is related to any adult involved in the incident, whether the adult is the alleged perpetrator or non-abusive relative
- the relationship of the child to the victim and to the perpetrator,
- the police reference number,
- the location, time and date of the incident,
- if the child was present, and if so, where they were (notifications should be shared even if the child was not present at the particular incident),
- the voice of the child, such as what they are saying and how they are behaving, and
- the context and the circumstances of the incident, including whether an arrest was made, whether the incident was attended in person or via Rapid Video Response, and where possible, information on previous domestic abuse incidents.

The notification should not include:

- information or reference to sexual offences disclosed at the domestic abuse incident. This must not be disclosed in the notification. Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, anonymity for victims of sexual offences must be preserved.

The Operation Encompass charity provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from education settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available from 8:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).[16]

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)
- The Home Office publish guidance on Controlling or coercive behaviour which provides clear information on what constitutes controlling or coercive behaviour and how to identify the offence.

[16] Section 20 of the Victim and Prisoners Act 2024 introduced a new provision into Part 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 under Section 49A. [Victims and Prisoners Act 2024]

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children, and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: here.

Temporary accommodation notification duty

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act places a new duty on local housing authorities in England to notify educational institutions, health visiting services and general medical practices, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. This notification should be made when consent has been given from the parent, those with parental responsibility or care of the child, or the child themselves in cases of 16–17-year-olds living independently from their parents.

The notification will enable school and college staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children at the earliest opportunity and support them to improve their outcomes.

Whilst any discussion with the local housing authority should be progressed as appropriate, this notification does not, and should not, replace existing safeguarding and welfare duties nor a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Specific statutory guidance for local authorities on the temporary accommodation duty will be provided in due course.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses exploitation, including sexual exploitation, criminal financial exploitation, human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information and training for professionals on exploitation and modern slavery is available here - Modern slavery training: resource page - GOV.UK

The National Referral Mechanism is the system used within the UK to support potential victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of exploitation and modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in statutory guidance Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK.

Children who are referred into the NRM in England and Wales may also have access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG)1. ICTGs provide advocacy for children and help to promote and support their recovery.

Preventing radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Radicalisation[17] is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism[18]is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic

[17] As defined in the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.

[18] As defined in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000)

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

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern.

It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn into terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) Making a Prevent referral.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard[19] to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism".[20] This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments.

The school or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are first assessed by police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine

[19] Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

[20] "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).

whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. Whilst the referral is being assessed, should any further or new information come to light, this should also be passed to police. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse, incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours and/or details of those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

Additional support

The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are **robust, informed** and with **good intention**.
- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate is a government website designed to support school and college teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation. These resources are regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant and practical. Resources have been developed working closely with education professionals and civil society groups to identify and produce high-quality materials that assist teachers in building pupils' critical thinking skills and resilience to extremist ideologies.

For advice specific to further education, Educate Against Hate hosts a suite of teaching packs and accompanying guidance to meet the specific needs of students and practitioners in further education and training settings. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free,

sector specific resources to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals. The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning has also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net).

Serious violence

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved in committing serious violence. These may include:

- increased absence from school or college,
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in educational performance,
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male,
- having been suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school,
- having experienced child maltreatment,
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery,
- having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence, and
- having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school and can concentrate in

particular places. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence. It is important that schools and colleges try to understand where these places are, with a view to working with partners to promote safety for children. Listening to children and consulting with staff can help establish when and where they feel unsafe. Working with wider partners can also help build understanding of the local context beyond the school or college and help co-ordinate a collective safeguarding response around the school day.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) (the "what works" centre for preventing violence) has produced practical guidance for schools and colleges and an accompanying self-assessment tool to help introduce evidenced practice for preventing children becoming involved in violence.

Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRU) operate in the 20 police force areas across England and Wales that have the highest volumes of serious violence, as measured by hospital admissions for injury with a sharp object. A list of these locations can be found here. As the strategic co-ordinators for local violence prevention, each VRU is mandated to include at least one local education representative within their Core Membership group, which is responsible for setting the direction for VRU activity. Schools and educational partners within these areas are encouraged to reach out to their local VRU, either directly or via their education Core Member, to better ingrain partnership working to tackle serious violence across local areas and ensure a joined-up approach to young people across the risk spectrum.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a new Serious Violence Duty (Statutory Guidance) on a range of specified authorities, such as the police, local government, youth offending teams, health and probation services, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. Educational authorities and prisons/youth custody authorities are under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders when asked, and there is a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area.

The Duty **does not** replace or duplicate existing safeguarding duties.

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.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving honour often involves a wider network of

family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers**[21] that requires a different approach (see below).

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers**, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information.

[21] Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England).

Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.[22] Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college's designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: FGM Fact Sheet.

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

[22] Section 5B(6) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 states teachers need not report a case to the police if they have reason to believe that another teacher has already reported the case.

Additional advice and support

There is a wealth of information available to support schools and colleges. The following list is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

Abuse

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse has introduced new resources to help education professionals identify and respond to concerns of child sexual abuse and abusive behaviours.

Signs and indicators of child sexual abuse | CSA Centre

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE advice

Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance – Home Office advice

Faith based abuse: National Action Plan – DfE advice

Forced marriage resource pack

Disrespect NoBody campaign – GOV.UK – Home Office website

Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy – Home Office policy paper

Together we can stop child sexual abuse – HM Government campaign

Bullying

Preventing bullying including cyberbullying – DfE advice

Children missing from education, home or care

Children missing education – DfE statutory guidance

Children who run away or go missing from home or care – DfE statutory guidance

Missing Children and Adults strategy – Home Office strategy

Children with family members in prison

The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers free, confidential support and advice for families in England and Wales who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

Child exploitation

Modern Slavery: statutory guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and non-statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland (accessible version) - GOV.UK – Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance.

Interim guidance for ICTGs - Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service guidance

Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked – DfE and Home Office guidance

Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery – DfE statutory guidance

Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims – Home Office statutory guidance

Child exploitation disruption toolkit – Home Office guidance

Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation – The Children's Society and Home Office

County Lines Toolkit For Professionals – The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council

Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm – non-statutory guidance for local areas, developed by the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme, funded by the Department for Education and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice

What is county lines and child criminal exploitation? - Missing People advice

SafeCall - Missing People - SafeCall is a national free, confidential and anonymous helpline and support service for young people and family members that are affected by missing, county lines and criminal exploitation. Confidential support and webinars are also available to professionals.

County Lines Support and Rescue | Catch22 - A specialist support and rescue service for young people and their families who are criminally exploited through county lines. (The service currently operates from London, Merseyside, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.)

Confidentiality

Gillick competency Fraser guidelines – Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.

Drugs

From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives – Home Office strategy

Honest information about drugs – Talk to Frank website

Drug and Alcohol education – teacher guidance & evidence review – PSHE Association

Honour or faith-based abuse, including FGM and forced marriage

Female genital mutilation: information and resources – Home Office guidance

Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance – DfE, Department for Health, and Home Office

Forced marriage – Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) resources

Forced marriage – Government multi-agency practice guidelines and multi-agency statutory guidance

FGM resource pack – HM Government guidance

Health and well-being

Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience – Public Health England

Supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions – DfE statutory guidance

Mental health and behaviour in schools – DfE advice

Overview - Fabricated or induced illness – NHS advice

Homelessness

Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance

Information sharing

Government information sharing advice – Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

Information Commissioner's Office: Data sharing information hub – Information to help schools and colleges comply with UK data protection legislation including UK GDPR.

Online safety advice

Childnet – Provides guidance for schools on cyberbullying

Educateagainsthate – Provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation

London Grid for Learning – Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements

NSPCC E-safety for schools – Provides advice, templates, and tools on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements

Safer recruitment consortium – 'Guidance for safe working practice', which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective

Searching screening and confiscation – Departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones

South West Grid for Learning – Provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements

Online Safety Audit Tool – From UK Council for Internet Safety to help mentors of trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers induct mentees and provide ongoing support, development and monitoring

Online safety guidance if you own or manage an online platform – DCMS advice

A business guide for protecting children on your online platform – DCMS advice

UK Safer Internet Centre – Provides tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online

Understanding and responding to AI-generated child sexual abuse material: guidance from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme in collaboration with the Internet Watch Foundation.

Financially motivated sexual extortion (FMSE): guidance for education settings on FMSE from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education programme.

Online safety relating to remote education, virtual lessons and live streaming

Guidance Get help with remote education – Resources and support for teachers and school leaders on educating pupils and students

Departmental guidance on safeguarding and remote education – Including planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely

London Grid for Learning – Guidance, including platform-specific advice

National Cyber Security Centre – Guidance on choosing, configuring and deploying video conferencing

UK Safer Internet Centre – Guidance on safe remote learning

Online safety – support for children

Childline – For free and confidential advice

UK Safer Internet Centre – To report and remove harmful online content

CEOP Safety Centre – to report online child sexual abuse

Online safety - parental support

Childnet – Offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, and to find out where to get more help and support

Commonsensemedia – Provides independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents

Government advice – About protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying

Help your child stay safe online - Kids Online Safety – includes practical information from trusted places to help parents feel more confident on the steps they can take to protect their child online.

Internet Matters – Provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls, and practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world

How Can I Help My Child? – Marie Collins Foundation – Sexual abuse online

London Grid for Learning – Provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online

Stopitnow resource from The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – Can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)

CEOP Education – Provides information, guidance and resources for support for parents and carers, helping them to protect their child(ren) from online sexual abuse

Parentzone – Provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe online

Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents – This is the Children's Commissioner's parental guide on talking to their children about online sexual harassment

2019 UK CMOSs' advice - UK CMO commentary on screen time and social media map of reviews - GOV.UK

Private fostering

Private fostering: local authorities – DfE statutory guidance

Radicalisation

Prevent duty guidance – Home Office guidance

The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - DfE advice

Educate Against Hate website – DfE and Home Office guidance

Prevent for FE and Training – Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Resources – Resources by London Grid for Learning

Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting – DfE advice

Serious violence

Serious violence strategy – Home Office strategy

Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention – Home Office

Youth Endowment Fund – Home Office

Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges – Home Office advice

Tackling and girls strategy – Home Office strategy

Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims – Home Office guidance

Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Specialist organisations

Barnardo's – UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.

Lucy Faithfull Foundation – UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.

Marie Collins Foundation – Charity that, amongst other things, works directly with children, young people, and families to enable their recovery following sexual abuse.

NSPCC – Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse.

Rape Crisis – National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.

UK Safer Internet Centre – Provides https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Rape Crisis (England & Wales) or The Survivors Trust – For information, advice, and details of local specialist sexual violence organisations.

NICE guidance – Contains information on, amongst other things: developing interventions; working with families and carers; and multi-agency working.

HSB toolkit – The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also run shorespace.org.uk which provides a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support to prevent harmful sexual behaviours.

NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour and NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework – Free and independent advice about HSB.

Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals (Schools) – Provides a school self-assessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools.

Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now – Provides a guide for parents, carers and professionals to help everyone do their part in keeping children safe, they also run a free confidential helpline.

Support for victims

Anti-Bullying Alliance – Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support.

Rape Crisis – Provides and signposts to a range of services to support people who have experienced rape, child abuse or any kind of sexual violence.

The Survivors Trust – UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.

Victim Support – Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.

Childline – Provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.

Toolkits

NSPCC – Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.

NSPCC – Resources which help adults respond to children disclosing abuse.

NSPCC also provide free and independent advice about HSB: NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework

Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire – Peer-on-Peer Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding Network – Self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB and levers for addressing HSB in schools.

Childnet - STAR SEND Toolkit – Equips, enables and empowers educators with the knowledge to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Childnet - Just a joke? – Provides lesson plans, activities, a quiz and teaching guide designed to explore problematic online sexual behaviour with 9–12-year-olds.

Childnet - Step Up, Speak Up – A practical campaign toolkit that addresses the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people aged 13-17 years old.

NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework – An evidence-informed framework for children and young people displaying HSB.

Farrer & Co: Addressing child on child abuse: a resource for schools and colleges – This resource provides practical guidance for schools and colleges on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse.

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

London Grid for Learning-collection of advice – Various information and resources dealing with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people – Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.

Support for parents/carers

National Crime Agency's CEOP Education Programme – Provides information for parents and carers to help protect their child from online child sexual abuse, including #AskTheAwkward - help to talk with your children about online relationships – Guidance on how to talk to their children about online relationships

Department
for Education

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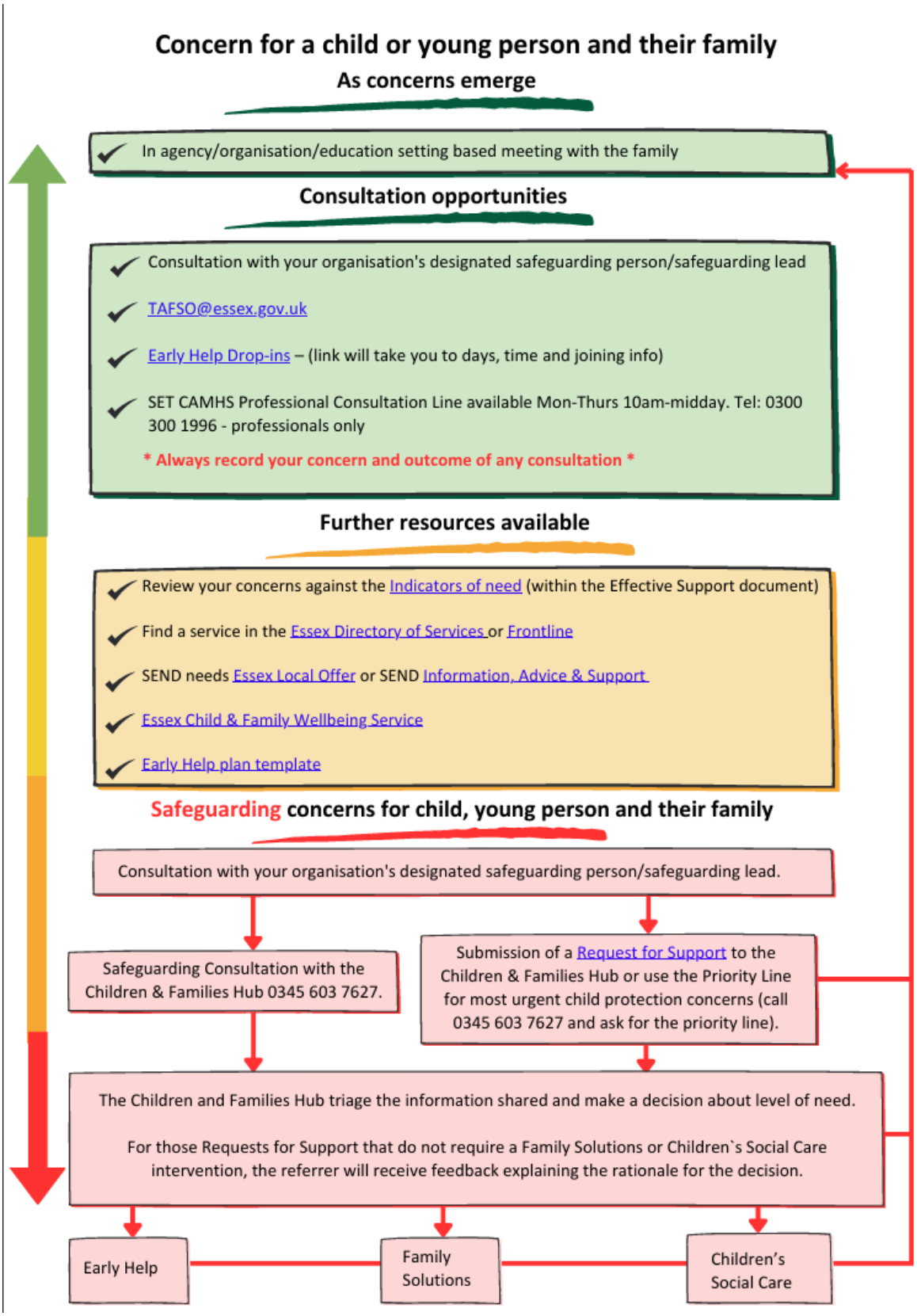
APPENDIX B: Report of a concern form

URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL
CHILD PROTECTION RECORD
REPORT OF A CONCERN

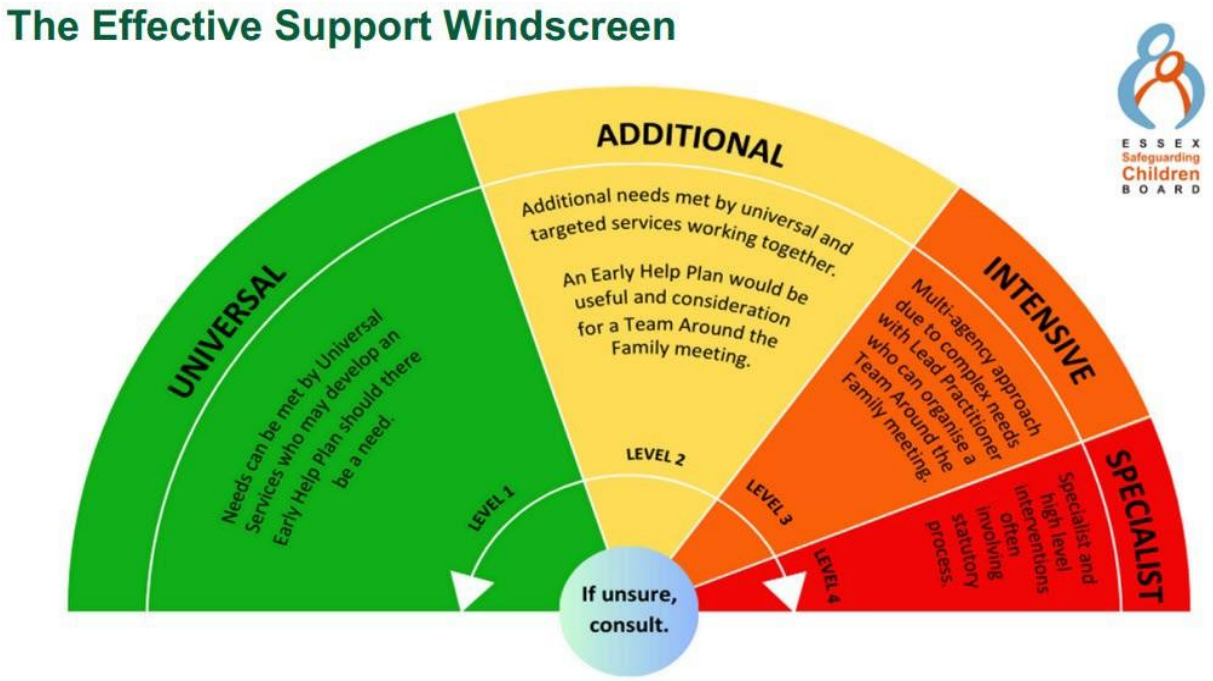
Your Name:		**Your Role:**	
Child Name:			
Date of birth:		**Year Group / class:**	
Details of concern:	*(record any observed injuries in as much detail as possible - use body map if appropriate)*		
Reported to:		**Role of person reported to:**	
Signed:			
Date:			

Action taken:		**Advice sought:** ***(from whom and what was advice given)***	
Concern / referral discussed with parent / carer?		***If not, state reasons why – if yes, note discussion with parent***	
Referral made:		***If not, state reasons why – if yes, record to whom and any action agreed***	
Feedback to referring member of staff:			***By whom***
Response to / action taken with pupil:			***By whom***
Name and contact number of key workers:			
Name and contact details of GP:			
Other notes / information: **Any other action required:**			

APPENDIX C: Concern for a child or young person and their family



APPENDIX D: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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

Annex B: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

It is a matter for individual schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated safeguarding leads. Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Microsoft Teams or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out-of-hour/out of term activities.
To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, schools should implement robust cover arrangements for periods when the DSL is unavailable due to illness, leave, or

other circumstances. Schools and colleges have the flexibility and discretion in how these arrangements operate, provided safeguarding responsibilities remain appropriately covered. It would be good practice that, whenever the DSL is unavailable, there is a clear, reliable, and known arrangement in place so that concerns can be raised. This could, for example, include a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored, and acted upon without delay.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care,
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme,
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff,
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners,
- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019,
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member,
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-

ordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically,

- liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health,
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances, and
- work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.[159] This includes:
    - ensuring that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
    - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.
Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Safeguarding records should be clear, factual, and distinguish between observed concerns, professional opinion, and historic information.
Records should include:

[159] We recognise that in some settings there may be a different strategic lead for promoting the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker, particularly in larger schools or colleges.
Where this is the case, it is important that the DSL works closely with the lead to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these children and young people.

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern,
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice set out in Parts one and two of this guidance.

Appropriate arrangements should be in place to ensure that safeguarding information is transferred, reviewed and actioned promptly at all transition points, including in-year moves.

Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Where child protection files are transferred, the exporting school or college should include a clear, structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context, and any ongoing support needs.
Particular care should be taken to distinguish between current safeguarding concerns and historic information, ensuring that past issues are presented with appropriate context. For example, where a file contains extensive historical information, a concise summary of current risk and relevant context is likely to support more effective safeguarding than the transfer of unstructured records alone.

Receiving schools and colleges should ensure that safeguarding information is reviewed by an appropriately trained member of staff so that key risks and needs are clearly understood. Safeguarding information should be used to support, not disadvantage, the child.
Where the receiving school or college considers that safeguarding information is unclear or incomplete, it should seek clarification where necessary to support effective safeguarding.
They should also ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named person with oversight for SEND in colleges, are aware as required. It will then be for the DSL to consider what other information should be shared with other relevant staff and when this should be shared.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving particularly where the information would support an assessment of risk to others in the school as well as the individual pupil to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours and/or details of those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives. It would be good practice for a conversation to take place at the appropriate and relevant points between the designated safeguarding leads at both settings, where there are issues or concerns to ensure information is being actively considered and acted upon.

Raising awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff,
- ensure the school or college's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this,
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this,
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements, and
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school and college leadership staff.

Training, knowledge and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated

safeguarding leads (and any deputies) with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing family help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements[160],
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so,
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children,
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes,
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers[161],
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners,
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation,
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college,
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online,
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses,

[160] Full details in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
[161]Section 17(10) Children Act 1989: those unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of health and development without local authority services, those whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired without the provision of such services, or disabled children.

and

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Providing support to staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes, and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

Understanding the views of children

It is important that all children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them, and
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of this document, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and

college, and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners,

- understand relevant data protection laws, and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

APPENDIX F: Missing Child Protocol – arrangements for children who have missing episodes

Definition

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance).

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

When a child goes missing

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

checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

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

When the child is found

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

Essex Police

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

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

Missing Chats

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

Useful contacts:

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