

**All Saints' C of E Primary School**  
**Title: Child Protection Policy**



Version Number: 3

Full Governing Body Ratification  
Total Number of Pages 46

Date: September 2025  
Review Date: September 2026

File Name: Child Protection Policy  
File Location: Policies Folder – Google Drive

<b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:</b>	PHIL BROWN
<b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS:</b>	CORRINNE WHITE
<b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:</b>	CHRISTINA GEORGE

### **Equality and Diversity Statement**

All Saints' C of E (VC) Primary School, Maldon is committed to treating all members of the community with fairness and respect regardless of their ethnic background, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or their socio-economic background. This policy has been written to assist the school community and ensure that as far as is reasonable no child or adult shall be unfairly treated, discriminated against or disadvantaged as a result.

Particular attention has been drawn to the needs of those who, because of a \*protected characteristic (see above), have statistically been shown to be at greater risk of abuse.

## Our Mission - 'Every Child Shines'

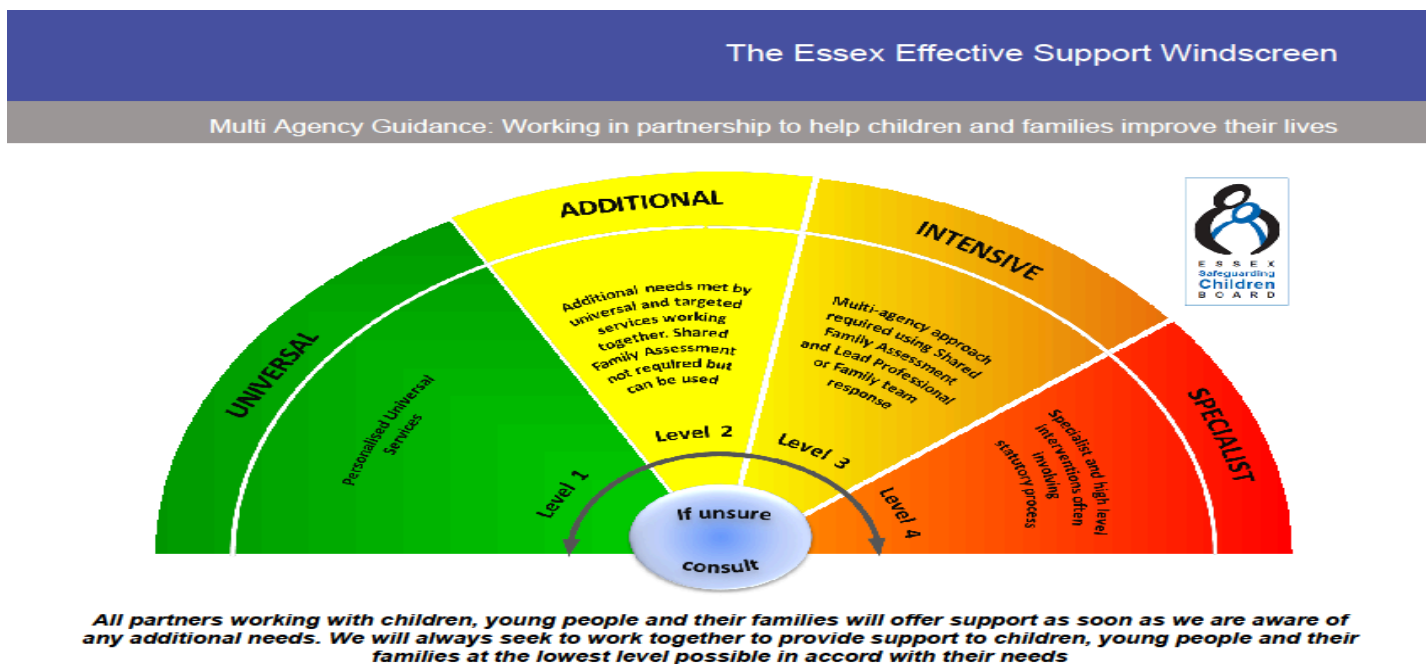
### The School Vision Statement

*'Our welcoming Christian School is a special place. Children are nurtured to become aspirational and responsible individuals, seizing all opportunities to use their God-given talents and abilities to make a positive contribution to our school, local community and the wider world'*

### School Values

All Saints' Primary is a school where every child really is allowed to shine. We pride ourselves on the enthusiasm, skill and commitment of our dedicated team. The school has a long relationship of care and achievement based on an historic association with the Parish Church of All Saints'.

### Contacts for Safeguarding in Essex:



**Monday – Thursday: 8.45am – 5.00pm / Friday: 8.45am – 4.30pm**

To seek guidance and advice contact The Children and Families Hub **Telephone: 03456037627** – ECC Customer Services will answer the initial call

Ask for Children and Families Hub and state if it is:

For a consultation (level 1, 2, 3) – for a consultation with a social worker for advice or if unsure

A priority (level 4) – for those at immediate risk

(See Appendix for Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts)

PRIORITY REFERRALS SHOULD ALWAYS BE REFERRED BY TELEPHONE (if child needs 'Immediate protection') If there is an immediate risk of harm to the child then contact the Police on 999 and the Children and Families Hub asking for a Priority Line.

If advised to make a referral you will be directed to the Effective Support Portal at [Report a concern about a child: Report a concern about a child - Essex County Council](#) and click on Request for Support Form. For support outside the hours of Monday – Thursday: 8.45am – 5.00pm / Friday: 8.45am – 4.30pm: **Out of Hours Telephone:** 0845 606 1212

### **Allegations regarding a worker / volunteer in the Children's Workforce:**

If you have concerns or receive a complaint or allegation that a worker/volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children. (*Working Together 2018*)

You must immediately telephone the Essex Safeguarding Children Board on **03330 139797**. The Local Authority Designated Officer will advise you on action to take next.

If a concern is raised outside of office hours, and you think a referral to Social Care is required you should contact Essex Social care on **0845 6061212** and inform the Local Authority Designated Officer at the first available opportunity.

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.

#### **Safeguarding Adviser to Schools:**

Jo Barclay – 033301 31078

[jo.barclay@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jo.barclay@essex.gov.uk)

**Anti-bullying Co-ordinator:**

**PHIL BROWN**

Julie Keating – 033301 31160

[julie.keating@essex.gov.uk](mailto:julie.keating@essex.gov.uk)

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ALL SAINTS' SCHOOL

## 1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.

*(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2025)*

This Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. It should be read in conjunction with the Safer Recruitment Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Physical Intervention Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visit Policy, E-safety Policy, the safeguarding response to children missing from education, the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE) and ICT code of conduct. It should also be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (*DfE, 2025*)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

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

## 2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working together to safeguard children \(DFE 2023\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

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

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Essex are the responsibilities of the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#) (ESCB, 2019).

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information Sharing \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [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)
- [Teaching online safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Generative AI: product safety expectations \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour and appendices \(ECC 2025\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority and other agencies who have specific responsibilities

under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

### **The Governing Body**

The governing body ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

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

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

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

The governing body ensures that children are taught about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe, including online, ensuring that the appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place. Our children will be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with new Government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary aged pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary aged pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school. They are also responsible for online safety, including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)**

The designated safeguarding lead in school takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They lead on online safety including filtering and monitoring standards. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care Children and Families Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and other agencies as required.

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

### **The Headteacher**

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Headteacher works in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

### **All school staff**

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and liaising with the designated safeguarding lead to report any concerns. All staff members are aware of and follow school safeguarding processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) – they do not assume that others have 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, either at home or out in the community. We understand there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety and we also understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues rarely occur in isolation and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

#### **4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024) defines abuse as the maltreatment of a child.

*“Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children”*

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Our school is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

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

#### **Child on child abuse (including sexualised behaviours)**

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

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

Our school recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. We understand there are many factors which may lead a child to display

abusive behaviours towards other children, and that these matters are sensitive and often complex. We recognise our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of some children, particularly those who have experienced harm and trauma. We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, it is in the context of providing appropriate support to all children in our school where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will, at all times, take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour.

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

Please also see Appendix A, Dealing with allegations made against another child, for further information and procedures.

### **Serious violence**

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

### **Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

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

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;

- that they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying-without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

### **Children missing from education**

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. 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.

Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school 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, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children safe in school whenever possible. 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 ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

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

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

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

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time, or be a one-off occurrence. In Essex, the

definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

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

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our 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. This [one page process map](#) sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

### **Domestic abuse**

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

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

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

### **Harmful sexual behaviour**

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

Our school has a 'zero-tolerance' approach to harmful sexual behaviour of any kind, and any inappropriate behaviour is challenged and addressed. We work in accordance with all statutory guidance in relation to such behaviours and with other agencies as appropriate.

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

## **Honour based violence**

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

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

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

### **Forced marriage**

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

### **Prevention of radicalisation**

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

It requires schools to:

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

- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Our school operates in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to the Police, Social Care and / or the Channel Panel.

### **Risk in the community (RIC)**

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

### **Mental Health**

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.

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

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

## Online safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

**content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;

**contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;

**conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying

**commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Computing Curriculum Policy.

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.

## 5. Procedures

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

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding leads).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) and how to share concerns with them.

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, a deputy designated safeguarding lead). Staff must add an incident of concern onto our CPOMS system outlining all details they are aware of regarding the concern at their earliest opportunity. They must enter the safeguarding lead/deputy lead name in the Alert staff members section so that they will be notified of the concern immediately. A laptop is available in the staff room for all staff to use. The designated safeguarding lead or one of the deputies will then record their actions underneath the concern and this will form a record securely stored on CPOMS. If for any reason staff are unable to access CPOMS they must inform the safeguarding leads as soon as possible.

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

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) are not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the staff room and Heads office to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to 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.

## **6. Training**

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). They receive a general safeguarding update annually and more subject/area specific safeguarding training and updates half termly to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding/child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

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

## **7. Information sharing and confidentiality**

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our school is signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol which includes information sharing for safeguarding purposes. This protocol enables us to share and receive information with the Local Authority in a legal, safe, and secure way, to support our work in keeping children safe.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and are regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

A member of staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including parents/carers or pupils) about a safeguarding concern, nor promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated

safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

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

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

## **8. Child protection records**

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

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

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

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new 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).

## **9. Interagency working**

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

We work with other relevant agencies, such as Social Care, the Virtual School, Police and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our

school (or who was previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure our school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation, linking with the Essex Virtual School, which has strategic oversight of this group of children.

Where our school is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure we are represented, provide appropriate information and contribute to the plan at these meetings. We will report on the child's progress in school, and any concerns about them will be shared at the meeting, unless to do so would place them at risk of harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead would speak with the child's key-worker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern.

## **10. Allegations about members of the workforce**

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2025) 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 raised.

Where an allegation against a member of staff is received, and it is felt that any of the above criteria apply, the SET procedures (ESCB, 2025) require this to be reported to the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Essex Workforce Allegations Team at [LADO@essex.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@essex.gov.uk). This should be done by the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or the Chair of Governors within one working day (or sooner via 03330 139797 if **immediate safeguarding is required**). We will not carry out any investigation before a Children's Workforce Allegations Team referral has been made.

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

Any concern relating to the Headteacher should be reported directly to the 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 any appropriate statutory agency.

## **11. Promoting positive mental health and resilience in school**

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

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

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

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

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

- to comfort a child or young person in distress (*appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment*);

- to direct a child or young person;
- for curricular reasons (*for example in PE, Music, Drama etc*);
- in an emergency, to avert danger to the child, young person or others;

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

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

The term ‘reasonable force’ covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. ‘Reasonable’ means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context

### **13. Pupils that are reported missing by parents**

On rare occasions pupils may seek to run away from adults/parents and hide or may deviate from their plan with parents if they have permission to walk home from school. In these instances a clear procedure is in place with staff to respond as quickly as possible which is outlined below.

In the event of a pupil being reported as missing by a parent we would take the following steps:

1. Parent/s inform the office who would in turn alert the senior leadership team.
2. Senior Leadership Team to alert staff on site to conduct a thorough search of the site and to gather evidence from key members of staff e.g. pupil’s teacher and support staff to assist in locating them.
3. Search to continue and extend to local community, office staff to act on information gathered eg leaving premises with another pupil, parent or extended member of family.
4. Continue to liaise with the parent/s of the missing pupil.
5. Call the police. Whilst there is no set time frame after which to make this call it should be made once a preliminary search has been made and it should be swift once the initial search has been concluded.

### **14. Whistleblowing**

All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the

[NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Please see Appendix- D for further information on Whistle blowing.

## 14. School Policy

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 therefore aims to:

- Establish and maintain an environment 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.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships, which include determination, self-esteem and confidence. Our Shine Curriculum and school vision and values drive the provision of opportunities for these skills to be developed
- To promote British Values through the curriculum and other school activities to protect children from being drawn into extremist views, including building resilience and providing a safe place to challenge and debate views.
- Include in the curriculum e-safety teaching to alert children to the potential dangers of using the internet and online games
- Provide Young Carers with familiar adults and opportunities to meet for support

Where pupils are at risk or have suffered abuse our school will endeavour to support them through:

- The curriculum
- 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 policy which endeavours to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families.
- A commitment to develop an open, honest and supportive relationship with parents, with the child's best interest as paramount.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- A pastoral team of adults who meet regularly with children and work with them through various programmes of support.

# APPENDIX A - Dealing with allegations made against another child

This procedure explains what to do if child protection allegations are made against another child at All Saints' C of E (VC) Primary School Maldon.

## Aims and purpose of procedure

The aims of this procedure are:

- to ensure that children at All Saints' C of E (VC) Primary School Maldon are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by another child or young person
- to ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations of this nature so that the risk posed to other children by the child/young person in question is managed effectively
- to ensure that All Saints' C of E (VC) Primary School Maldon continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards children who may be subject to such investigations and are in need of support
- to ensure that there is an appropriate response in situations where allegations are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

The purpose of the procedure is to provide a clear direction to staff that are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations and care plans which may result from them.

This procedure applies to:

- any member of staff or volunteer to whom an allegation of abuse has been made which suggests that another child or young person is responsible
- anyone in a managerial position, including the named person for child protection, line managers and supervisors, who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations and care plans that result from them.

## Different types of abuse

Types of abuse that one child might inflict upon another are most likely to be either physical abuse or sexual abuse.

Physical abuse is violence causing injury or occurring regularly during childhood. It happens when:

- a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tried to drown or suffocate a child
- someone gives a child poison, alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material
- involving children in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

Emotional abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child love and affection
- regularly making the child feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child
- being so over-protective towards the child that he/she is unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a child eg by involving him/her in illegal behaviour
- conveying to the child the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or only valuable insofar as they meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

Neglect involves persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This could include lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

### **Ways that allegations might be made against another child at All Saints' C of E (VC) Primary School Maldon**

- A child or parent/carer might make a direct allegation against another child or young person.
- A child or parent/carer might express discomfort with the behaviour of another child or young person that falls short of a specific allegation.
- Another child, member of staff or volunteer may directly observe behaviour from one child towards another that gives cause for concern.
- The school may be informed by a parent or by the police or another statutory authority that a child is the subject of an investigation.

- A child may volunteer information to the school that he/she has harmed another child or is at risk of doing so, or has committed an offence against or related to a child.

## **Child protection or bullying?**

When faced with a situation of one child behaving inappropriately towards another, a decision needs to be made about whether the problem behaviour constitutes bullying or a child protection concern. This is a decision that needs to be reached by the named person for child protection and, if necessary, the local authority children's social care department. If the conclusion is that the behaviour is an example of bullying, and if both children attend the school, it needs to be dealt with under the anti-bullying policy and procedure.

If it is behaviour that could be described as child abuse and has led to the victim possibly suffering significant harm, then it must be dealt with under child protection procedures. This should include all incidents of sexual assault and all but the most minor incidents of physical assault.

This checklist can be used to help inform the decision:

## **Bullying**

- The difference of power between the bully and the person being bullied is relatively small.
- The bullying behaviour may be from a number of children acting in a group rather than from one child acting alone.
- It may also, but not necessarily, be directed towards a group of other children rather than an individual child.
- The behaviour involves teasing or making fun of someone, excluding a child from games and conversations, pressurising other children not to be friends with someone, spreading hurtful rumours or circulating inappropriate photographs/images/drawings, cyberbullying, shouting at or verbally abusing someone, stealing someone's possessions, making threats, or harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability.
- The behaviour has not previously been a concern and the bully or bullies may have been responding to group pressure.
- The behaviour is perceived as bullying by the victim.

Please note: physical or sexual assault, or forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous is also included in the list of bullying behaviours in this toolbox, but are the most likely to constitute a child protection concern if the victim suffers significant harm as a result of the behaviour.

## **Child protection concerns**

- The difference of power between the child who is abusing and the person being abused is significant e.g. there is an age difference of more than two years, there is a significant difference in terms of size or level of ability, the abuser holds a position of power (such as being a helper, volunteer or member of staff) or the victim is significantly more vulnerable than the other child or young person.
- The behaviour involves sexual assault or physical assault (other than the most minor physical assault).
- The child who is the victim of the behaviour may have suffered significant harm.
- The behaviour may not necessarily be perceived by the victim as abusive, particularly if it is sexual in nature.
- The behaviour is not a one-off incident and is part of a pattern of concerning behaviour on the part of the child or young person who is abusing.
- The behaviour, if sexual, is not part of normal experimentation that takes place between children and young people.

## **Sexual abuse or normal experimentation?**

All children and young people develop an interest in their own sexuality from a young age, and seek to learn about sex from their peers. It is important not to label normal, healthy behaviour as deviant or abusive. It is equally important not to allow sexually abusive behaviour perpetrated by one child or young person towards another to go unchecked, as this is harmful both for the victim and the perpetrator.

There are ways of assessing whether sexual behaviour between children and young people is abusive or not. Indicators of abusive behaviour include:

- there is a significant difference in age, dominance or understanding between the children
- the behaviour was accompanied by the use of threats or bribes
- the behaviour was carried out in secret.

For the purposes of this procedure however, it is enough to say that if there is any question that the behaviour could be abusive, the matter should be discussed with the local authority safeguarding team or with the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000).

## **What to do if you have child protection concerns**

- Is the child who has been allegedly abused, or the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, in immediate danger or does either of them need emergency medical attention?
- If either child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police if you are unable to remove the danger yourself.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.

- If a child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- A decision will need to be made about when and who should inform the families of both the child who has been abused and the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, as well as the local authority children's social care department.
- If the child who is the alleged victim is not known to the school it is not our role to inform the child's family. Even if the child who is the alleged victim is known, the police and/or the health services, should be part of the decision making process if they have been contacted.

The paramount consideration should always be the welfare of the children involved. Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- the children's wishes and feelings
- the parents' right to know (unless this would place the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parents
- the current assessment of the risk to the child who has been abused and the source of that risk
- the current assessment of any risk to the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse and the source of that risk
- any risk management plans that currently exist for either child.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, the procedure set out below should be followed:

- The member of staff who has been informed of the allegation or who has the concern, should make notes of what he/she has been told or of his/her direct concerns using the reporting form, and should discuss these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If both children/young people are known to the school and if their families do not already know about the allegation or concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should discuss it with them unless:
- the view is that someone (for example the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse) may be put in danger by the family being informed
- informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the families should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.

If only the child who is alleged to have harmed another child is known to the school then, subject to the considerations set out in above, discussions with only this child's family should take place.

The child who is the subject of the allegation should also be informed of what has been said about him/her. However, if the view is that children's social care or the police should be involved, the child should only be informed after discussion and agreement with these agencies. These agencies may have views about what information should be disclosed to the child/young person at this stage.

If there is still uncertainty about whether the allegation or concern constitutes a child protection issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should discuss with children's social care department or with the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of either child/family.

If, having discussed the situation fully and taken advice if necessary, the Designated Safeguarding Lead concludes that the alleged behaviour does not constitute a child protection issue, then consideration should be given to whether the *anti-bullying policy and procedure* should be used (if both children are known to the organisation) and whether either or both children should be referred for other services.

If the view is that the behaviour does indeed amount to a child protection issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should refer both children to the local authority children's social care department via the Children and Families Hub, 03456037627, where a consultation with a member of the social care team will determine the next steps and level of support needed. A request for support can then be made at [www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk](http://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk) if appropriate.

Pending the outcome of the referral to the children's social care department and the possible investigation or assessment that may follow from this, any risk that may be posed to other children by the child who has allegedly harmed another child will need to be carefully managed. This should be done on an inter-agency basis in accordance with procedures developed by the local safeguarding children board for children who display harmful behaviour towards others.

The named person should enquire of the children's social care department whether these procedures are being used and, if so, should ask to be involved in or at least kept informed of inter-agency decisions made in accordance with these procedures.

If the allegation is found to be without substance or fabricated, the school will consider referring the child who was said to have been harmed to the children's social care department for them to assess whether he/she is in need of services (for example, the child may have been abused by someone else).

If it is felt that there has been malicious intent behind the allegation, the school will discuss with the police whether there are grounds to pursue any action against the person responsible.

## **What should I say to a child who says that he/she or another child is being abused by another child/young person?**

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If possible, explain to the child's parent/carer what has happened. Do this first without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.

Give the child the ChildLine phone number (0800 1111).

Make sure that the parent/carer also has support.

## **What should I say to a child/young person who says that he/she has abused another child?**

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her and the child who has been abused safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If there is no risk to the child from the child's parent/carer, then explain to the parent/carer what has happened. Do this firstly without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child expects to happen as a result of what he/she has said. Offer reassurance where appropriate but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Reassure the child that, with help, the problem can be sorted out and that what has happened does not make him/her an abuser for life.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number.
- Remember that the child who has behaved in this way is a child in need of support.
- Make sure that the parent/carer has support too.
- Record the concerns
- Use the school's reporting form to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

## **APPENDIX B – Procedure for dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults in school**

### 1. Introduction

This Procedure details how safeguarding concerns and allegations against any adults engaged to work in the school will be dealt with. This includes circumstances where the allegation did not take place at the school or on school premises. “Work” includes on a voluntary basis, including as a governor.

These procedures are in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance document ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’.

The following principles apply:

- all concerns and allegations will be taken seriously;
- all concerns and allegations will be dealt with appropriately and in liaison with relevant parties, even where they relate to a person who is not an employee;
- all concerns and allegations will be dealt with quickly, and in a fair and consistent manner that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

### 2. Scope

This Procedure applies when there is a safeguarding concern or allegation in relation to employees (including the Headteacher, supply and agency staff, volunteers, contractors and governors).

The school expects full co-operation and participation by third-party employers/agencies in the operation of this Procedure. The school will ensure that all third-party employers/agencies are notified of this procedure before allowing any individuals employed by them to start work at the school.

The procedures do not apply where they relate to any such person who is no longer working at the school. Allegations against such persons, and historical allegations will be referred to the Police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The school will co-operate fully with relevant agencies in any investigations into these matters.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

It is everyone’s responsibility to safeguard children and everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, taking prompt action and fully co-operating with this Procedure.

**If anyone has any safeguarding concerns, they must report these immediately, to the or Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”) or a Deputy DSL or where concerns relate to the Executive headteacher, Head of school or a governor, to the Chair of Governors, or where concerns relate to the chair of governor, to the Vice Chair or where unavailable the safeguarding governor.**

## **Whistleblowing**

Where at any point an individual feels unable to raise an issue with the appropriate person set out above, for example due to the sensitivity of the issue, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may refer to the Whistleblowing Policy. This policy sets out the framework for how issues can be raised confidentially internally, and/or if necessary, outside the management structure of the school to a prescribed body. For safeguarding and child protection allegations, individuals can refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection (LADO) ([the Essex LADO can be contacted on 03330 139797 / LADO@essex.gov.uk](#)) or the NSPCC who have a dedicated helpline 0800 028 0285. The line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

### **4. Procedures**

In some cases, a concern will have been reported to, or discovered by, Social Care, the Police or the Local Authority Designated Officer (“LADO”), who will in turn inform the school (and where appropriate the third-party employer) and will initially lead and direct the investigation. In such cases the school, and where appropriate the third-party employer, will follow the advice and directions of these agencies as set out in Section 6.

Where a concern or allegation is initially reported to the school, the matter will be taken seriously and considered with an open mind. In rare cases, where it appears a person may be an immediate risk to children, or there is suggestion of a possible criminal offence, the matter must be reported to the Police by the school. This should usually be done via the headteacher or where unavailable another senior leader or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”) or Deputy DSL and advice should also be taken from the LADO. In such cases the school will wait for advice from the Police/LADO before taking any further action (see Section 6.).

### **Assessment**

Concerns raised will vary from the serious, to relatively low-level issues. The headteacher (or Chair of Governors), along with the Designated Safeguard Lead, will make an initial assessment to determine how the matter should be dealt with, ensuring any action is appropriate and proportionate. In many cases this may involve providing additional direction, support or training.

However, in cases where misconduct is suspected the following steps will be followed.

### **Initial investigation**

The headteacher or Chair of Governors where the allegation relates to the headteacher, will themselves, or arrange for an appropriate person to, be the case manager. The case manager will obtain advice and support as necessary; for example from their human resources provider.

In certain circumstances, such as the lack of appropriate resources within the school or, given the nature or complexity of the allegation, the school may engage an independent investigator to be the case manager.

### **Third-party/Agency workers**

Where a concern or allegation relates to a person employed by a third party/agency, the case manager will inform, and liaise with the employer/agency. The school will usually take the lead on the investigation but will invite the employer/agency's human resource representative or equivalent person to relevant meetings and keep them informed.

The case manager will carry out a brief initial investigation to gather enough information to establish whether the allegation has foundation and whether the information indicates that a person has met the "harm test", which is that they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- This "harm test" is explained on the Disclosure and Barring service website [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- The initial investigation will be carried out immediately and will entail:
  - making a detailed written, signed and dated record of the information reported;
  - asking the person reporting the concern to immediately provide a written statement which should be signed and dated;
  - fact checking to establish that the incident could have happened e.g. was the accused person and child in the place mentioned and making a written and dated record.
- Parents will be informed immediately if the child is injured or needs medical treatment.
- The case manager will not:
  - investigate in great depth or ask leading questions;
  - interview the accused, children or any witnesses;
  - make assumptions or offer alternative explanations;
  - promise confidentiality, although may give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

If the case manager considers the harm test to have been met, Section 6. of these procedures will then apply.

In many cases, the harm test will not be met, and internal procedures will be followed as set out in Section 7. of these procedures.

## 5. Suspension and alternatives

On the basis of the facts available at each stage of these procedures, it may be considered appropriate to remove the accused person from certain roles or contexts or from the school entirely where:

- there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school are at risk of harm;
- the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal;
- allowing the employee to remain at work could hinder the investigatory process; or
- there is a restriction in place such as bail conditions or an interim prohibition order.

The LADO may advise on this matter, but the decision will be made by the school.

### **Employees**

The case manager will undertake a detailed risk assessment and explore all options to avoid suspension such as redeployment or reallocation of duties will be considered. If suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification will be recorded in the risk assessment in addition to the alternatives to suspension that were considered and why they were considered not to be appropriate in the circumstances.

The employee will receive written confirmation of their suspension, including written reasons for the suspension, within one working day. They will also be notified of the support available (see section 9. below).

### **Volunteers**

The case manager will make a judgement, based on the nature of the concern or allegation and the evidence available, about whether it is appropriate to stop the volunteer attending school while the investigation is carried out.

### **Third Party/Agency Workers**

The case manager will liaise with the third-party employer/agency to determine whether it is appropriate to redeploy or suspend the supply teacher/contractor, during the investigation. The school will not decide to cease to use the worker entirely until the investigation is complete and an outcome reached.

### **Governors**

Where appropriate, a governor may be asked to absent themselves from some or all aspects of their functions, or in the most serious cases, and where regulations allow, may be suspended, during an investigation.

All arrangements will be discussed with the person concerned, confirmed in writing and kept under regular review.

## **Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service**

There is a legal requirement for schools and colleges to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults, and/or
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults, and/or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

### 6. Procedures where the harm test is met

The case manager will report the allegation to the LADO within one working day. Failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The LADO will liaise with other agencies such as the Police or Children's Social Care as appropriate, to determine next steps and the school will follow the directions of these agencies.

This may include:

- what, if any, information can be shared with parents and the accused person and at what point;
- provision of further information about child/ren or adults; and
- attendance at a strategy or management planning meeting to share relevant information and plan next steps.

The LADO will advise the school when the agency's involvement is concluded and the matter is handed back to be dealt with through internal procedures, as set out in Section 6.

## **Criminal cases**

In most cases, internal procedures cannot be applied until the conclusion of police processes. The police should inform the employer and designated officer(s) immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after the person has been charged. In those circumstances, the designated officer(s) should discuss with the case manager whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or children's social care services should inform that decision. Where the police are involved, wherever possible the employer should ask the police to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process.

### 7. Internal Procedures

Internal procedures will be followed where the harm test is not met and where LADO, Social Care and/or Police involvement is concluded and/or it is agreed that the school can follow its internal procedures.

If, at any stage, new information emerges that requires a referral as set out in Section 6, the internal procedures should be held in abeyance and only resumed if agreed with the LADO, children's social care and the Police. Consideration or a review of suspension/alternate arrangements should be also undertaken.

### **Employees**

Where the concern or allegations relates to an employee, the Disciplinary Procedure will be applied. The outcome will be determined and communicated to the employee, and recorded in the child protection records, as set out in Section 8.

### **Volunteers**

Where a concern or allegation relates to a volunteer, the case manager will arrange for an investigation to be carried out. This will involve gathering relevant information and evidence, including speaking to the volunteer.

At the end of the investigation, the outcome will be determined and communicated to the volunteer, and recorded in the child protection records, as set out in Section 8.

Having reached a determination, the case manager will decide whether it is appropriate to allow the individual to continue to volunteer, and if so whether there are any conditions or considerations, such as additional training or supervision.

### **Third party workers, including agency supply teachers and other workers**

In the case of workers who are not employees of the school, their employer is responsible for applying their internal procedures. However, where necessary the school will lead in carrying out investigations, as agencies will not have access to children and other staff to collect facts. In any case, the school will fully co-operate with and provide support as required, to the third-party employer and other agencies. Subject to the outcome of the investigation, the school may decide to cease to engage the worker.

### **Governors**

Where a concern or allegation relates to a governor, the Complaints against Governors Procedure will be applied. The outcome will be determined and communicated to the governor, and recorded in the child protection records, as set out in Section 8.

## **8. Conclusion of safeguarding cases**

Investigations into allegations will be completed and the outcome recorded, regardless of whether the person involved resigns or otherwise ceases their engagement at the school prior to the conclusion of the investigation or criminal or internal procedures. The individual will be invited to

participate in internal procedures at all stages, but they will proceed even if the person declines to co-operate.

Settlement agreements will **not be used** to resolve employee relations matters relating to safeguarding.

The following definitions will be used when determining and recording the outcome of investigations:

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

### **Records and References**

Allegations which are found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records. In all other cases, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a note of any actions taken and decisions reached will be recorded and retained on the personnel file of the accused and a copy provided to the individual.

The school has a duty to report relevant safeguarding matters in employment/volunteer references in respect of relevant employment/engagement and will do so. Allegations proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be included in any references.

The school has an obligation to preserve records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. All other records will be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. Full details can be found in the school's record retention schedule.

### **Referrals**

A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and where appropriate the Teacher Regulation Agency, will be made on the conclusion of a case where the individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left.

## **Notifying parents**

In line with the statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” parents should be kept informed about the progress of the case, only in relation to their child - no information can be shared regarding the staff member.

## **Return to work**

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended or placed on alternate duties, can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this. Consideration will be given, in consultation with the person, about what help and support should be given. This may include a phased return or a short-term mentor for support and consideration of how the person’s contact with the child or children to whom the allegation related can best be managed if they are still a pupil or student.

## **Reflections and further action**

If an allegation is determined to be false or malicious, the school will liaise with relevant agencies to determine what, if any, further interventions or action may be necessary in respect of the accuser. In other cases, the school will reflect on its practice and procedures to determine whether there are any improvements to be made.

### 9. Support for those involved

The school will act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process.

- Allegations will be dealt with expeditiously, fairly and thoroughly;
- Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, and updates on progress, unless there is an objection by the children’s social care services or the police;
- Employees should contact their trade union representative and have the right of representation by a trade union representative or work colleague at any formal disciplinary meeting.
- Other individuals should seek appropriate support e.g. citizens advice, their professional body;
- Individuals will be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is appropriate and available. In case of third-party workers, this will be the responsibility of their employer; and
- All individuals subject to alternate work arrangement/suspension will be given a named contact to provide relevant updates regarding events in the workplace and to act as a conduit for information/communication as appropriate. In the case of third-party workers, this will be the responsibility of their employer.
- Parents will be told the outcome subject to any restrictions within the Data Protection Act and where relevant, the Human Rights Act.

## 10. Confidentiality

It is essential that strict confidentiality is maintained at all times, by all parties. It is however a statutory requirement for schools and where applicable their staff, to share relevant information in relation to safeguarding matters and as such the school will share information with the LADO, police, children's social care, other agencies such as the DBS and the Teaching Regulation Agency, and individuals such as parents/carers, as required and in accordance with its obligations and any regulations, including the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a school who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply to everybody until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions are disapplied if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so.

## **Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol Arrangements for children who go missing during the school day**

### **Definition of Missing**

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

#### 1. Introduction

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

Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational settings; when this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with the educational setting’s Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

- [Essex Schools Infolink](#) – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
- [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) – for the SET Procedures and other resources

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

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

Where children missing frequently are open to Children’s Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the educational setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

## 2. When a child goes missing

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

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

After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

## 3. When the child is found

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

## 4. Essex Police

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

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

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

### Useful contacts:

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

## APPENDIX D – Whistleblowing Procedures

### Introduction

It is important to the school that any suspected fraud, misconduct, malpractice or wrongdoing by workers or employees of the school is reported and properly dealt with. The school is committed to creating an open and supportive environment where individuals feel able to “speak up” about any genuine concerns regarding the alleged wrongful conduct of the employer, or about the conduct of a fellow employee, or any third party.

This policy sets out the framework for how issues can be raised confidentially internally, and/or if necessary, outside the management structure of the school to a prescribed body or other (see 2.1 below). All disclosures will be handled consistently and fairly and appropriate action will be taken by the school to resolve the issue in line with this policy.

This policy applies to all employees and Governors/Trustees of the school. Volunteers and other individuals engaged to work at or provide services to the school, including agency workers and contractors, are encouraged to use it where appropriate.

**1.1.** The law\* provides protection for employees or workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by an employee or worker who has a reasonable belief that there has been or is likely to be a breach of any legal obligation;

- a miscarriage of justice;
- a criminal offence;
- a danger to the Health and Safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; or
- deliberate concealment of information about any of the above

Some examples of qualifying disclosures in the school context may include:

- Fraudulent acts (e.g. manipulation of accounting records/finances, inappropriate use of funds, decision making for personal gain, abuse of position to influence decisions);
- Breaches of acceptable professional and ethical standards;
- Breaches of the school’s Health and Safety policy entailing danger to staff or pupils; and/or
- Breaches of any of the school’s policies or the Code of Conduct.

It is not necessary for the employee or worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient.

For the purposes of this policy the term “whistle-blower” refers to the individual making the disclosure.

**1.2.** The whistle-blower must reasonably believe they are making the disclosure in the public interest (i.e. it affects others such as pupils in the school or members of the public). This means that personal grievances and complaints (e.g. a concern about their own contractual terms) are not usually covered by this policy and should be dealt with under the school's Grievance Procedure.

## **2. Raising concerns/making a disclosure**

### **2.1. Initial concern**

The Governing Board encourages the "whistle-blower" to raise the matter internally in the first instance. Concerns should normally be raised initially with the whistle-blower's line manager. Where the concerns relate to the whistle-blower's line manager, the complaint should be brought to the attention of a more senior manager, responsible officer, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors/Trustees.

If the whistle-blower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise it internally they may refer the matter to an external prescribed body. A prescribed body is an organisation, normally with some regulatory function (for example the Health and Safety Executive), which is prescribed by the Secretary of State for the purposes of the Act who an individual may make a protected disclosure to. Any such disclosure to a prescribed body will qualify for protection under the Act. A list of prescribed bodies is available at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/360648/bis-14-1077-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person-the-prescribed-persons-list-v4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360648/bis-14-1077-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person-the-prescribed-persons-list-v4.pdf)

In the event that the whistle-blower feels a disclosure should be referred to an external prescribed body some of the relevant bodies are also set out below:

<b>Nature of disclosure:</b>	<b>External reporting/Prescribed body:</b>
Fraud or financial malpractice (see 3.2 below)	<p><b>(Academies:)</b> Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency</a></p> <p><b>(Maintained schools only:)</b> Counter Fraud Manager CounterFraud.Team@essex.gov.uk</p>
Child Protection/Safeguarding issues	<p>Local Authority Designated Officer Essex Duty Line: <b>03330 139 797</b></p> <p>NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk</p>
Data protection issues	<p>Information Commissioner <a href="https://ico.org.uk/">https://ico.org.uk/</a></p>

Health and Safety issues	Health and Safety Executive <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/">http://www.hse.gov.uk/</a>
--------------------------	--

If a concern is raised verbally it should be followed up in writing wherever possible.

The whistle-blower has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the school's responsibility to ensure that an appropriate investigation takes place.

Where the complaint is serious, for example involving fraud, theft or other potential gross misconduct by an employee, the whistle-blower should act quickly to report it but should not mention it to the subject of the complainant or other colleagues as this could affect the investigatory process.

The timescales for handling disclosures will differ depending on the nature of the disclosure made but all disclosures (whether formal or informal) will be acknowledged within [2] working days.

## **2.2 Investigation**

The line manager/manager/Governor will arrange an investigation into the matter either by investigating the matter him/herself or immediately passing the issue to an appropriate person (except where they are the subject of the disclosure where an alternative suitable person will be appointed). The investigation may involve the whistle-blower and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out promptly and confidentially.

If a whistle-blower wishes to remain anonymous this should be raised with the line manager/manager/Governor to whom the initial disclosure is made. In some cases this may be possible but in more serious cases where disciplinary action may have to be taken against others this may be more difficult. The school is committed to protecting the well-being of the whistle-blower whilst this policy is followed.

The whistle-blower's statement (where available) will be taken into account, and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The person responsible for the investigation may ask the whistle-blower to attend a meeting to gather all the information needed to ensure a clear understanding of the situation.

Where a meeting is held, the whistle-blower may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague if they wish and where possible the dates/times will be agreed to facilitate this.

## **2.3 Outcome of the investigation**

The person who carried out the investigation will take any necessary action, which may include reporting the matter to the Headteacher/appropriate manager/Chair of Governor/Trustees or an appropriate prescribed body (if this has not already taken place).

At the conclusion of any investigation, the whistle-blower will be told the outcome of the investigation (in as much detail as is deemed appropriate by the Headteacher/manager in the circumstances) and what action is to be taken or is proposed. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

Where a concern is raised anonymously the school will not ordinarily be able to provide feedback to the whistle-blower and any action taken as a result of an anonymous disclosure may be limited. The school will take all appropriate steps to investigate such a disclosure in line with the level of information provided. If an anonymous whistle-blower wishes to seek feedback from the school an appropriate anonymised email address should be provided.

## **2.4 Further action**

Where having raised an initial concern and the whistle-blower has a genuine belief that the school has failed to take appropriate action or investigate the issue properly and they wish to pursue the matter further, they may report their concern to the *[Headteacher/Chair of Governors/Trustees]* *[or in exceptional circumstances, if the concerns relate to a maintained school to the Local Authority]* or to an appropriate prescribed body (if this has not already been reported).

The *[Headteacher/Chair of Governors/Trustees]* may arrange for further investigation to be carried out, make any necessary further enquiries and/or make their own report. On the conclusion of any further investigation, they will take appropriate action which may include reporting the matter to a prescribed body if this has not taken place at an earlier stage in the process.

## **3. Other issues**

### **3.1 Concerns raised by a member of the public**

Where complaints are received from members of the public, the school's formal complaints procedure will be followed, unless the complaint relates to the specific conduct or performance of an individual employee/worker in which case the Disciplinary Procedure may need to be instigated.

### **3.2 Criminal issues/fraud**

In the event of the allegation being of a very serious nature, for example relating to a fraud or other potential gross misconduct offence, there may be a need to involve the school's auditors and/or the police or other appropriate authorities. This should normally be agreed initially by *[the Headteacher/Chair of Governors]* who should, in turn, and where appropriate, keep the *[Local Authority/Education and School Funding Agency]* informed in view of any possible implications concerning public monies.

### **Maintained schools:**

*The school must notify the Counter Fraud Manager within Essex County Council (see 2.1 above) of any instances of fraud, theft or financial irregularity. Any unusual or systematic fraud, regardless of value, must also be reported.*

Advice may be sought from the school's legal advisers before involving the police in any such internal complaint or allegation.

## **4. Protecting 'whistle-blowers'**

**4.1** Any whistle-blowers who make protected disclosures in line with this procedure have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because they have made a disclosure. This means continued employment and opportunities for promotion or training will not be affected because the whistle-blower has raised a legitimate concern.

**4.2** Whistle-blowers should report any harassment or victimisation to an appropriate manager as soon as practicable. The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent/address such harassment or victimisation. Victimisation of an whistle-blower for making a protected disclosure will be considered a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

**4.3** Whistle-blowers may find the process of reporting an issue/wrongdoing difficult and uncomfortable. The school will take all reasonable steps to support the whistle-blower which may include access to an external counselling service. The whistle-blower may also be referred to the charity Public Concern at Work <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> for information and advice.

## **5. Malicious allegations/disclosures**

**5.1** If, following appropriate investigation, it is considered that an employee has made a malicious allegation without real substance and/or which could not be reasonably considered to be in the public interest, this will be taken as a serious matter and may potentially lead to disciplinary action in line with the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

**5.2** Where other individuals engaged by the school make a malicious allegation, the school will investigate the allegation thoroughly and take appropriate action, which may include terminating the contract/arrangements with the individual.

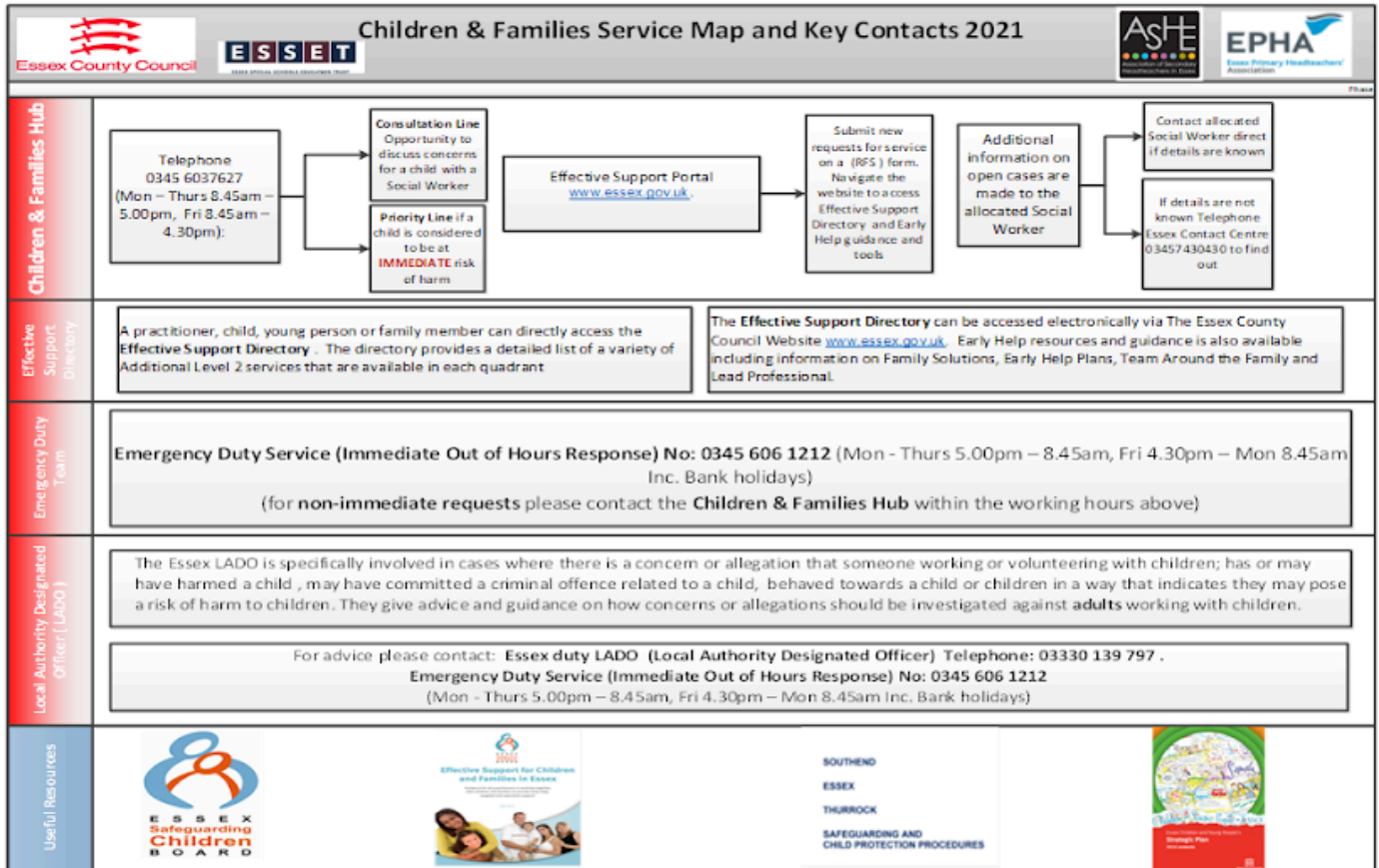
**5.3** If disciplinary action is required, the line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will report the matter to the *[Headteacher]* to start the disciplinary procedure.

**5.4** If a third party has made a malicious allegation the board may take legal advice about steps open to it where appropriate.

## 6. Data Protection

6.1 When an individual makes a disclosure, the school will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the disclosure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

## Appendix D



# Concern for a child or young person and their family

As concerns emerge

✓ In agency/organisation/education setting based meeting with the family

## Consultation opportunities

- ✓ Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead
  - ✓ [TAFSO@essex.gov.uk](mailto:TAFSO@essex.gov.uk)
  - ✓ [Early Help Drop-ins](#) – (link will take you to days, time and joining info)
  - ✓ SET CAMHS Professional Consultation Line available Mon-Thurs 10am-midday. Tel: 0300 300 1996 - professionals only
- \* Always record your concern and outcome of any consultation \*

## Further resources available

- ✓ Review your concerns against the [Indicators of need](#) (within the Effective Support document)
- ✓ Find a service in the [Essex Directory of Services](#) or [Frontline](#)
- ✓ SEND needs [Essex Local Offer](#) or SEND [Information, Advice & Support](#)
- ✓ [Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service](#)
- ✓ [Early Help plan template](#)

## Safeguarding concerns for child, young person and their family

Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding Consultation with the Children & Families Hub 0345 603 7627.

Submission of a [Request for Support](#) to the Children & Families Hub or use the Priority Line for most urgent child protection concerns (call 0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line).

The Children and Families Hub triage the information shared and make a decision about level of need.

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

Early Help

Family Solutions

Children's Social Care