




Child Protection Policy

2023

			
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This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.
The policy was updated in September 2023 after initially being reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in September 2022.

Policy to be reviewed by	Mr Kendal	<i>Dated: Autumn 2024</i>
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1. Introduction

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

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2023)

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

- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
- ☐ the Behaviour Policy
- ☐ the Staff Behaviour Policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct)
- ☐ the safeguarding response to Children Missing from Education.
- ☐ the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

- ☐ Protecting children from maltreatment
- ☐ Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ☐ Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- ☐ Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Our Trust has a whole-Trust approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents/carers, Trustees, Governors and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

2. Statutory Framework

There is Government guidance set out in [Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

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

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

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2023\)](#)
- [Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#)

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

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, 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 Trust are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects Statutory and Local Guidance and that it is reviewed at least annually.

The Governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This Governor takes strategic responsibility at Governing Body level for safeguarding arrangements in our Trust. 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 Trust 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 adults in our Trust who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, as appropriate, and that it is regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

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

The Governing Body and Trust Leadership Team are responsible for:

- ensuring we have in place safer recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.
- ensuring we meet statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and have recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the Trust's 'Safer Recruitment' Policy for further information)
- ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.
- online safety (including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this)

The Executive Headteacher/Head of Schools

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy/Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection. Their role includes managing Child Protection Referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards) and raising awareness of all Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that any referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) and/or the Police are made in a timely way and in accordance with current SET Procedures. They work with the Local Authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Leads is/are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Leads will act in their absence.

All School Staff

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

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

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. 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 describes abuse as 'a form of maltreatment of a child'. It sets out that:

"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children".

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

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

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

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

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

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 CSE from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

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

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

Child on Child Abuse (including sexualised behaviours)

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

Further information can be referenced in Appendix J (Harmful Sexual Behaviour) as well as the Trust's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our Trust recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and we follow the procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our Trust 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.

Contextual Safeguarding and Risk in the Community

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our schools within Trust. 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.

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.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

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

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

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

Further information can be referenced in Appendix J (Harmful Sexual Behaviour) as well as the Trust's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

Mental Health

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

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

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

Online Safety

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

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

All staff in our Trust are aware of the risks to children online. We understand any child can be vulnerable online, and that their vulnerability can vary according to age, developmental stage and personal circumstances. We aim to equip all our pupils with the knowledge they need to use the Internet and technology safely, and we want to work with parents to support them to keep their children safe online.

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

Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Online Safety Policy.

Prevention of Radicalisation

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

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

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

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. If a child on roll at our Trust is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from the Trust may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an Assessment and Support Plan.

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

Serious Violence

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

So-called 'Honour-Based Violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'Honour'-Based Abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. We understand that this form of abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

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

As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of FGM where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school operates in accordance with the Statutory Requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local Safeguarding Procedures.

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

5. Procedures

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

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

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- ❑ Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2022)

- ☐ [Essex Effective Support](#)
- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
- ☐ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- ☐ 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- ☐ PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

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

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

Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff members have access to urgent safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy/Deputies) and how to share concerns with them. We also provide information on safeguarding to any visitor to our school, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

6. Children Potentially at Risk of Greater Harm

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

Our Trust understands that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- ☐ Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration.
- ☐ That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others

- ☐ The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs.
- ☐ Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

7. Training

In line with Statutory Requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy/Deputies) undertake Level 3 Child Protection Training at least every two years. The Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, all staff members, Trustees and Governors receive appropriate Child Protection Training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our school receive Safeguarding and Child Protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any Safeguarding/Child Protection training undertaken are kept for all staff, Trustees and Governors.

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

8. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our Trust is signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol - [WEISF - https://schools.essex.gov.uk/data/information-governance/Pages/Whole-Essex-Information-Sharing-Framework-\(WEISF\).aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/data/information-governance/Pages/Whole-Essex-Information-Sharing-Framework-(WEISF).aspx) 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.

9. Child Protection Records

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

CPoms: Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate online record (using CPoms) 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 verbal conversations should be promptly recorded online (using CPoms). This is then sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly. The member of staff writing the concern **must** message (via TEAMS) the DSL or Deputy DSL to inform them that there is a concern. Should access to CPoms be impossible (limited/no Internet connection) staff are expected to make a paper record immediately and pass this to the DSL. As soon as practicable possible the record should then be transferred to CPoms.

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 Trust 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 Trust schools. 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).

10. Interagency Working

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

We work with other relevant agencies, including where a child on roll (or previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure our school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called.

Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s)/carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation.

Where the school is part of the Core Group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure we are represented, provide appropriate information and contribute to the plan at these meetings. We will report on the child's progress in school, and any concerns about them will

be shared at the meeting, unless to do so would place them at risk of harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead would speak with the child's Keyworker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern.

11. Allegations about Members of the Workforce

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and are regularly reminded of this. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct. Our Trust works in accordance with Statutory Guidance and the SET Procedures (ESCB, 2022) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Executive Headteacher/Heads of School (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Executive Headteacher/Heads of School (or Deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

Where the concern involves the Heads of School, it should be reported to the Executive Headteacher. Where the concern involves the Executive Headteacher, it should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors.

The SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, Executive Headteacher/Heads of School, senior named person or the Chair of Governors / Chair of Trustees must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately so that we can seek advice on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils, parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

Staffing matters are confidential, and the Trust operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

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.

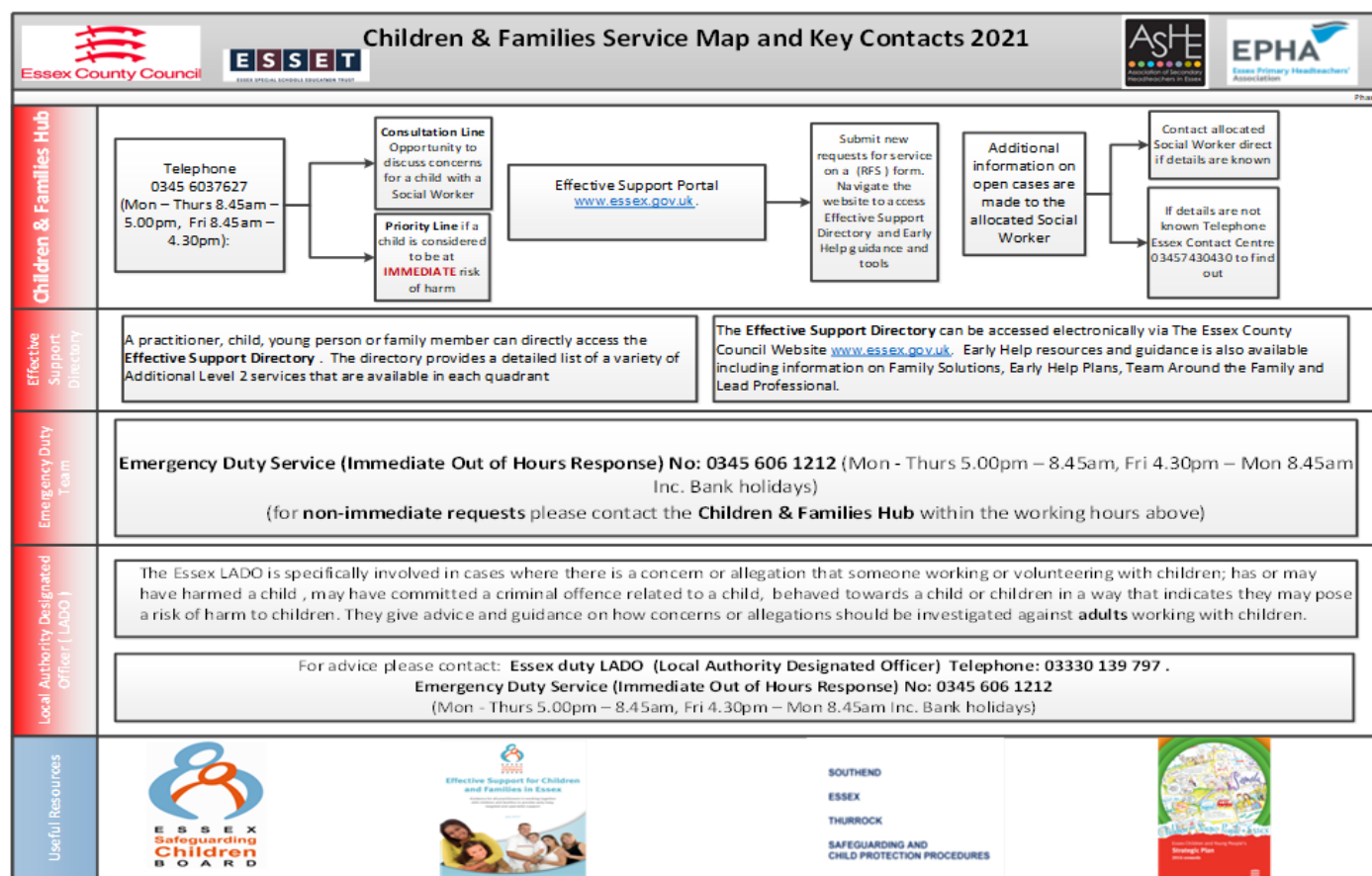
Our Trust works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (see *Section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

13. Whistleblowing

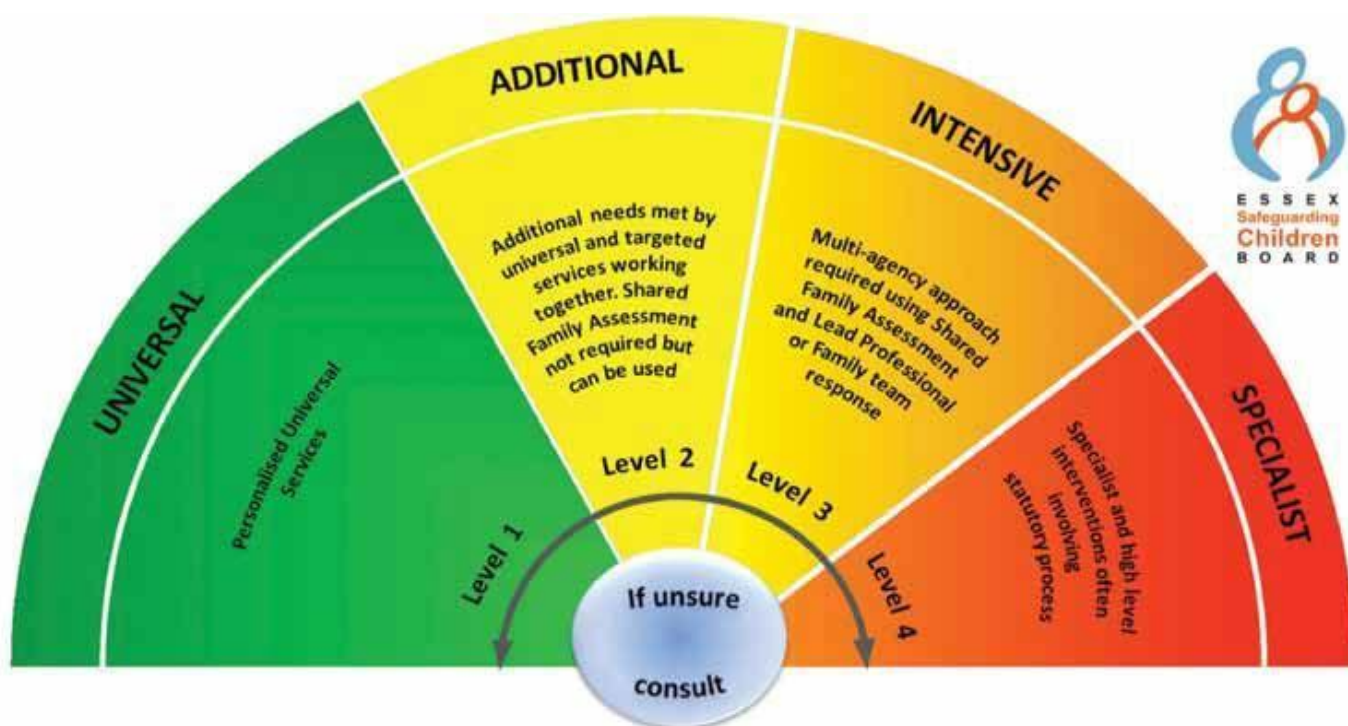
All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have ‘Whistleblowing’ procedures in place and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/whistleblowing/) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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

Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and Levels of Intervention



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

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

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

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

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

Arrangements for children who go missing during the school day.

Definition of Missing

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. When a Child goes Missing

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

Police by dialling 101, **or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm.** It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

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

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

3. When the Child is Found

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

4. Essex Police

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

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

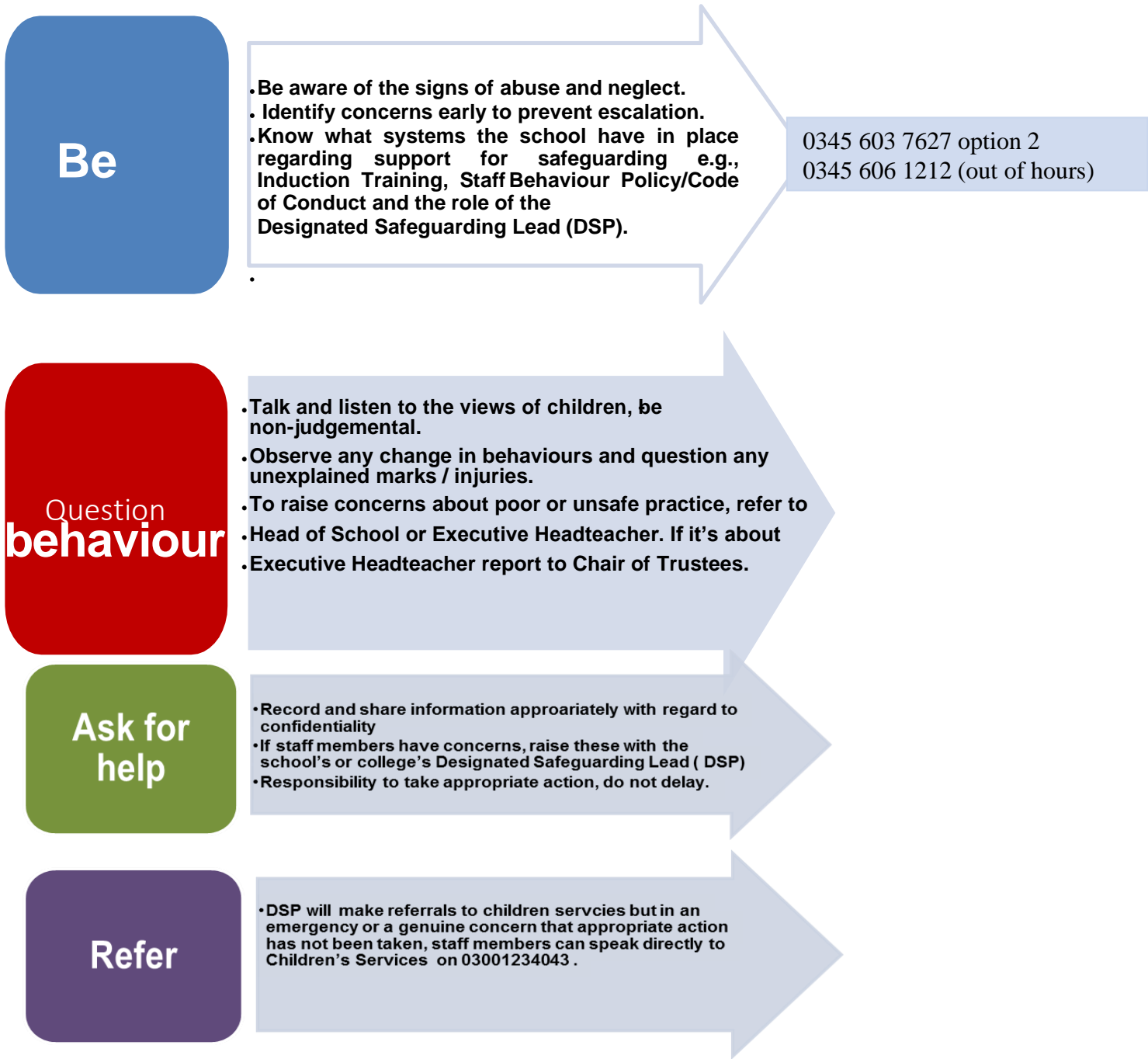
Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.

Useful Contacts:

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk

Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

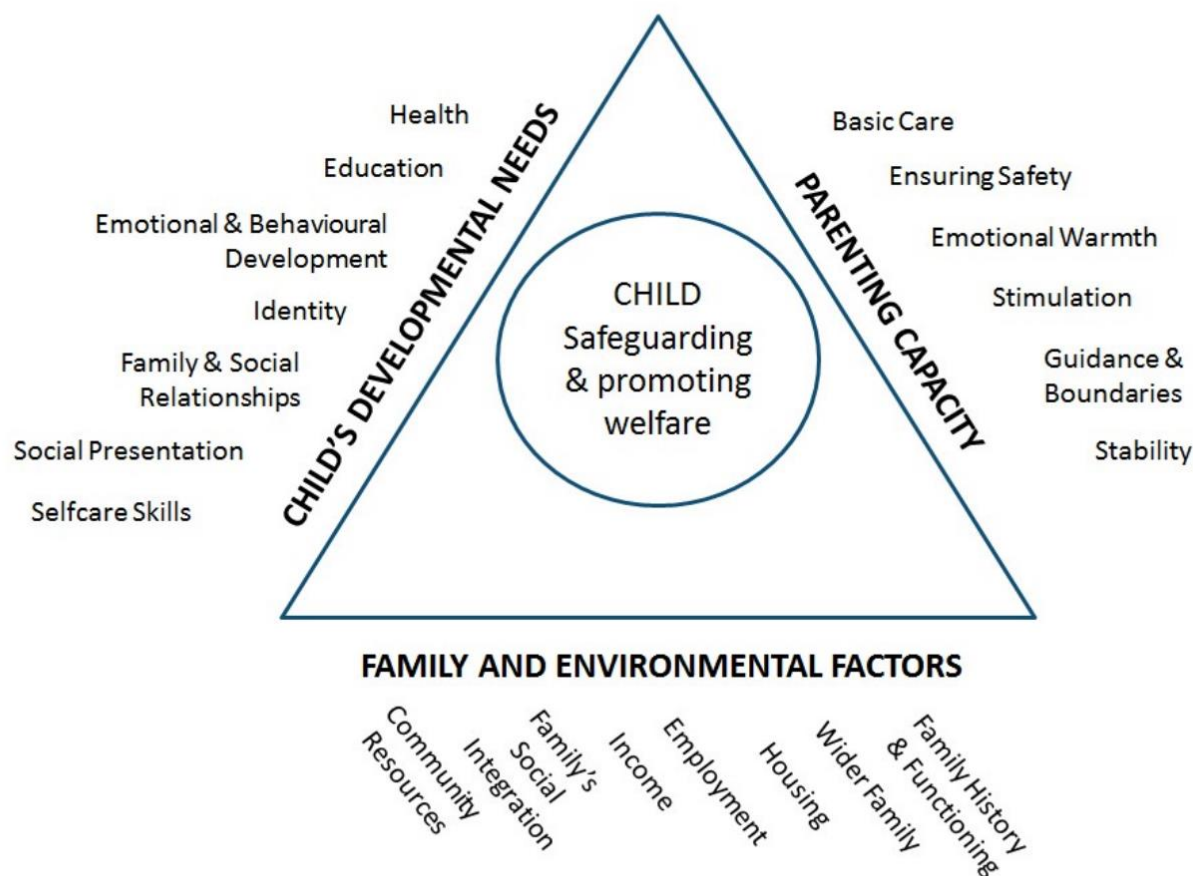
Appendix D: What to Do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused



Appendix E: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect 1/5

The Framework for Understanding Children’s Needs:

Assessment Framework



- [Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#)

Appendix E: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect 2/5

Physical Abuse	
<i>Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.</i>	
Child	
Bruises – shape, grouping, site, repeat or multiple	Withdrawal from physical contact
Bite-marks – site and size Burns and Scalds – shape, definition, size, depth, scars	Aggression towards others, emotional and behaviour problems
Improbable, conflicting explanations for injuries or unexplained injuries	Frequently absent from school
Untreated injuries	Admission of punishment which appears excessive
Injuries on parts of body where accidental injury is unlikely	Fractures
Repeated or multiple injuries	Fabricated or induced illness -
Parent	Family/Environment
Parent with injuries	History of mental health, alcohol, or drug misuse or domestic violence.
Evasive or aggressive towards child or others	Past history in the family of childhood abuse, self-harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Explanation inconsistent with injury	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Fear of medical help/parents not seeking medical help	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.
Over chastisement of child	

Appendix E: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect 3/5

Emotional Abuse	
<i>Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, not giving the child opportunities to express their views, 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate - hearing the ill-treatment of another and serious bullying (including cyber bullying).</i>	
Child	
Self-harm	Over-reaction to mistakes / Inappropriate emotional responses
Chronic running away	Abnormal or indiscriminate attachment
Drug/solvent abuse	Low self-esteem
Compulsive stealing	Extremes of passivity or aggression
Makes a disclosure	Social isolation – withdrawn, a 'loner', frozen watchfulness particularly pre school
Developmental delay	Depression
Neurotic behaviour (e.g., rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)	Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
Parent	Family/environment
Observed to be aggressive towards child or others	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Intensely involved with their children, never allowing anyone else to undertake their child's care.	History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.

Previous domestic violence	History of unexplained death, illness, or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
History of abuse or mental health problems	Past history in the care of childhood abuse, self-harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Mental health, drug, or alcohol difficulties	Wider parenting difficulties
Cold and unresponsive to the child's emotional needs	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.
Overly critical of the child	Lack of support from family or social network.

Appendix E: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect 4/5

Neglect	
<i>Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.</i>	
Child	
Failure to thrive - underweight, small stature	Low self-esteem
Dirty and unkempt condition	Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation
Inadequately clothed	Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
Dry sparse hair	Abnormal voracious appetite at school or nursery
Untreated medical problems	Self-harming behaviour
Red/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet, seen in the winter due to cold	Constant tiredness
Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury	Disturbed peer relationships
Parent	Family/environment
Failure to meet the child's basic essential needs including health needs	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Leaving a child alone	History of mental health, alcohol, or drug misuse or domestic violence.

Failure to provide adequate caretakers	History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
Keeping an unhygienic dangerous or hazardous home environment	Past history in the family of childhood abuse, self-harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Unkempt presentation	Lack of opportunities for child to play and learn
Unable to meet child's emotional needs	Dangerous or hazardous home environment including failure to use home safety equipment; risk from animals
Mental health, alcohol, or drug difficulties	

Appendix E: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect 5/5

Sexual Abuse	
<i>Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at sexual images or being groomed online / child exploitation.</i>	
Child	
Self-harm - eating disorders, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts.	Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
Running away from home	Inappropriate sexualised conduct
Reluctant to undress for PE	Withdrawal, isolation, or excessive worrying
Pregnancy	Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn	Poor attention / concentration (world of their own)
Pain, bleeding, bruising, or itching in genital and /or anal area.	Sudden changes in schoolwork habits, become truant.
Sexually exploited or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners	
Parent	Family/environment
History of sexual abuse	Marginalised or isolated by the community.
Excessively interested in the child.	History of mental health, alcohol, or drug misuse or domestic violence.

Parent displays inappropriate behaviour towards the child or other children	History of unexplained death, illness, or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family
Conviction for sexual offences	Past history in the care of childhood abuse, self-harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault
Comments made by the parent/carer about the child.	Grooming behaviour
Lack of sexual boundaries	Physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.

Appendix F: Essex CSE Arrangements

Essex Child Sexual Exploitation Arrangements

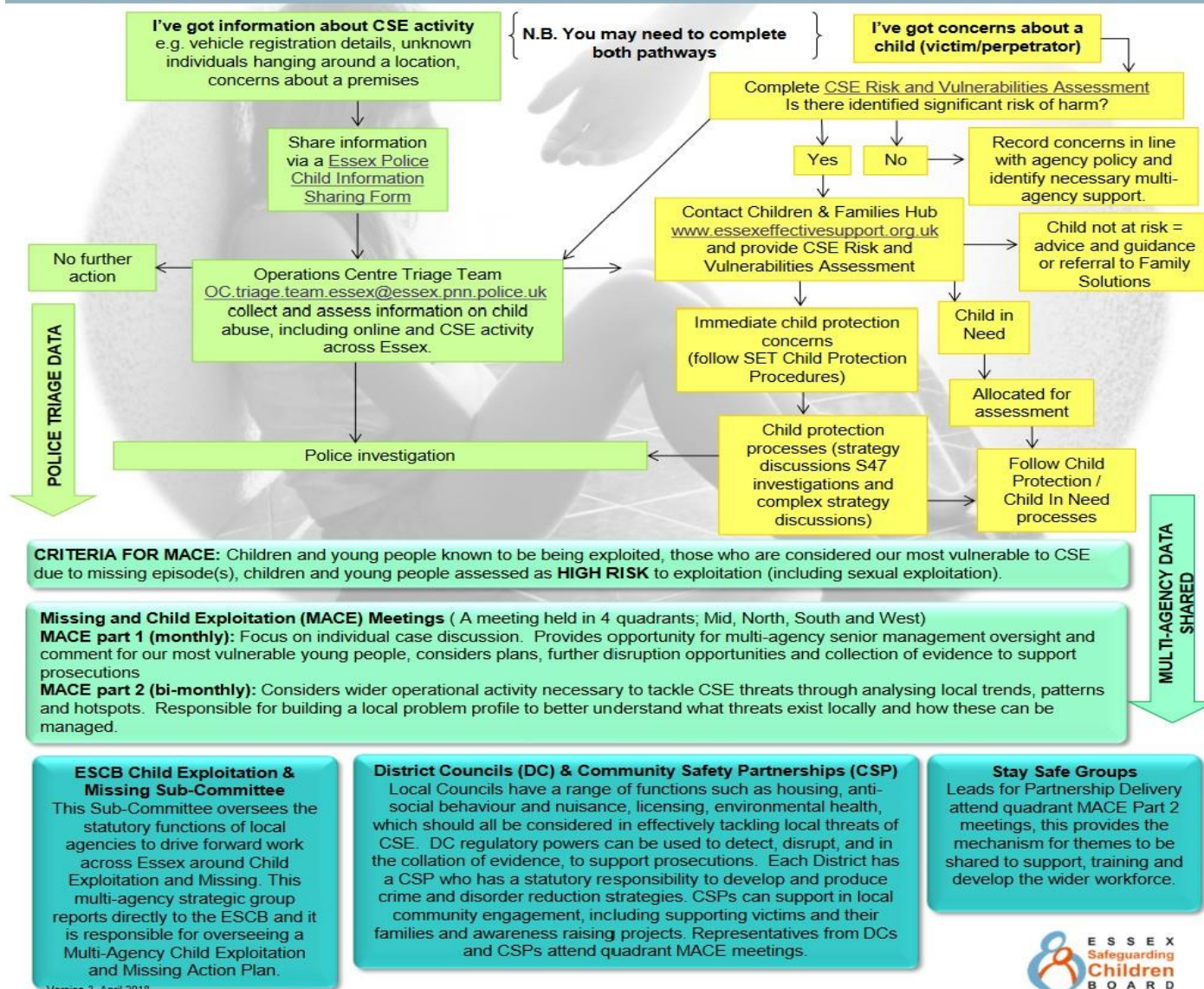
DEFINITION

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Home Office Definition for 2017)

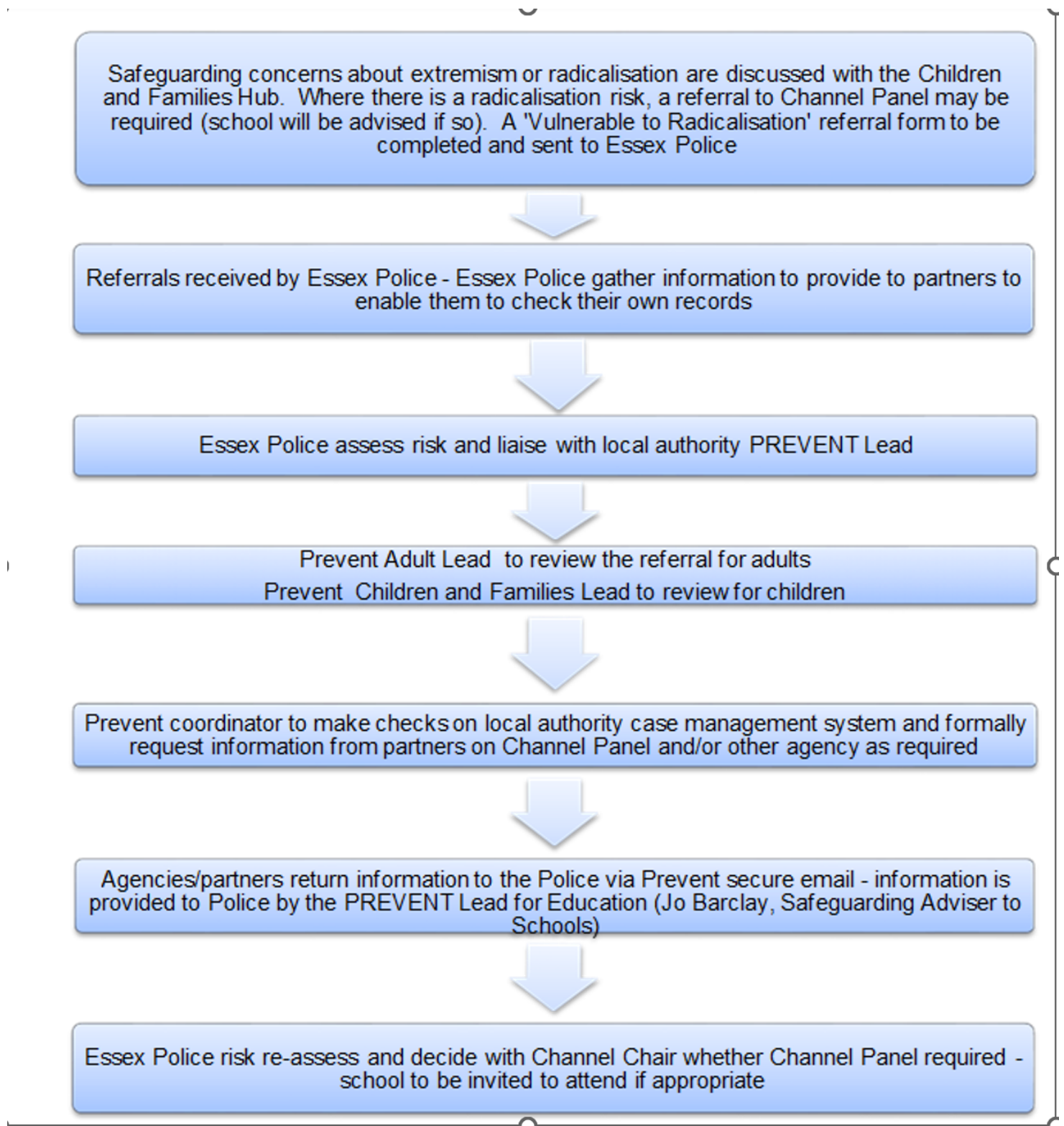
INDICATORS OF CSE (For more information see SET CSE Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment)

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

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



Appendix G: PREVENT Referral Flowchart



Appendix H: Declaration for all Staff- An on-line form will be used to collate this information.

Confirmation of Safeguarding Information 2023–24

Name of School/Setting:	
Name of Staff Member:	
Role of Staff Member:	
Key Documents Signed For:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023) – including Annex B➤ Child Protection Policy➤ Behaviour Policy➤ Staff Code of Conduct Policy➤ Response to children who go missing from education➤ Role of the Designated Lead – Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023) Annex C
Other Documents to be Aware of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ SET Procedures (ESCB 2022) http://www.escb.co.uk/Portals/67/SET-Procedures-April-2017-updated.pdf➤ Working Together (HMG, 2018)➤ Prevent Duty Guidance (Home Office, 2015)➤ FGM reporting duty

I confirm that I have read and understood the key documents above, and that I will work in accordance with the guidance and statutory requirements.

Signed by:	
Date:	

Appendix I: Harmful Sexual Behaviour/Abuse

1. Introduction

It is normal for some children and young people (CYP) to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop. However, sexualised behaviour between peers that has become harmful or abusive is unacceptable and must be addressed.

Our Trust recognises that CYP are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers sexually. We consider any allegation of peer-on-peer sexual abuse seriously and do not tolerate or pass off harmful sexual behaviour as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. These allegations are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures, including seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

This policy is in line with the safeguarding requirements in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2023\)](#) which we must work to; Part 5 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance sets out how schools should manage reports of child-on- child sexual violence and harassment.

2. Definition of Sexual Abuse

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

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2023\)](#)

3. Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching.
- sexual violence and sexual harassment.

- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- initiation / hazing type violence and rituals
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent.
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.

Our Trust also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

CYP can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when CYP are travelling home.

4. How we Seek to Minimise the Risk of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The principle aim of our approach is to foster the conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. We work to a culture in which the voice of our CYP is central, where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, and that they will not be judged.

Children and Young People

We use relationships, sex, and health education (RE or RSE and Health Education curriculum) to help our pupils understand, in an age-appropriate way, what harmful sexual behaviour is, including by peers. We teach them the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We also teach them about the importance of making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a CYP is abused, it is never their fault.

We help our pupils to develop the skills to understand:

- what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour.
- that such behaviour is not acceptable.
- the possible reasons for such behaviour, and vulnerability of perpetrators.
- that they must tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel

uncomfortable – and must tell a trusted adult if they witness such behaviour towards others.

We understand our pupils may not always feel able to talk to adults about child-on-child abuse/harmful sexual abuse. To help them, we will encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions, respond to their concerns, and respect and listen to them. We want our pupils to feel confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.

Parents and Carers

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

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour.
- the effects of harmful sexual behaviour on CYP.
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place.
- what to do if it is suspected that peer on peer sexual abuse has occurred.

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

Staff

Our staff undertake annual safeguarding training where the different types of abuse and neglect are discussed; this includes information about harmful sexual behaviour and our expectations for staff vigilance about this and other potential types of abuse. Staff also receive updates on safeguarding issues throughout the school year, including about the nature and prevalence of harmful sexual behaviour, where appropriate.

Importantly, the training also ensures that our staff know what to do if they receive a report that harmful sexual behaviour may have occurred, including how to support the CYP.

5. Our response to an Incident/Allegation

The well-being of our pupils is always central to our response to an allegation or incident of harmful sexual behaviour. Any CYP reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; no CYP will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or made to feel ashamed.

Our staff will never promise confidentiality to the CYP as the concern will need to be shared further. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident and the details may also need to be shared with Children's Social Care, the Police and other specialist agencies. We have in place effective working relationships with our

safeguarding partners, which are essential to ensuring that concerns are appropriately managed.

We will explain the next steps to the CYP so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed. Where the CYP already has Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child in Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

Whilst we establish the facts of the case and start the process of liaising with other agencies as appropriate, we will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises, and where applicable, on transport to and from the school.

Where an incident includes an online element, we will always work in accordance with appropriate guidance, taking advice from other partners as necessary. Our staff will not view an indecent image of a CYP unless absolutely necessary, nor forward it for any reason.

Recording

It is essential that information relating to allegations about harmful sexual behaviour are recorded within our Trust, as with any other Child Protection Concern – and in line with our Child Protection Policy. The record may form part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care or by another agency.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time, and location. The facts will be recorded as the CYP presents them.

The record will then be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

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

All related concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

Investigation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for leading investigations, and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate, for example Children's Social Care and the Police. They will also be the main point of contact for parents and carers. The Designated Lead will ensure there are accurate records of each stage of the investigation and that any supporting information is included in the Child Protection Files.

Risk Assessment

We will complete a Risk Assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour, considering

all CYP involved in an incident. We will also consider all other pupils at our school, within the Trust, and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them.

Risk Assessments will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Where appropriate, the affected CYP and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and review of the Risk Assessment.

6. Guiding Principles

The safety of our pupils is paramount. We will use a proportionate approach, basing our actions on the principle that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns will be considered carefully and, on a case-by-case basis, underpinned by robust risk assessments. Our actions will not be judgemental about the guilt of the alleged perpetrator and will always be taken in the interests of all CYP concerned.

Our approach will help us to ensure that all pupils are protected and supported appropriately. The following principles will guide us:

- the wishes of the CYP in terms of how they want to proceed – the victim will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed.
- the ages and developmental stages of all CYP involved.
- consideration of any power imbalance between the CYP – for example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident / does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty.
- consideration of whether the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.
- consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other CYP, or staff.
- consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

Supporting the CYP who has Allegedly Experienced Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

We will assess what short-term and long-term support a CYP may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident, and to recover from what they have experienced. CYP's existing support network will be central to this work; we will work with other partners as appropriate and in accordance with the CYP's wishes and, wherever appropriate, in discussion with parents/carers.

We will consider what is necessary to support the CYP straightaway, for example by making adaptations to their timetable and in-school support and taking steps to protect them from

attention or peer pressure they may experience due to making a report. This work will be guided by a robust risk assessment process, and we will ensure that the CYP and their parents/carers have an opportunity to contribute. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all involved.

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

Supporting the CYP who has Allegedly Displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

We have a duty of care to all pupils, and we will protect and support CYP who have displayed abusive or harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering the needs of CYP, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family. This work will be guided by a robust risk assessment process, and we will ensure that the CYP and their parents/carers have an opportunity to contribute. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all involved.

Some CYP may not realise they have behaved abusively. We will avoid using language that may make them feel judged or criminalised and ensure that any intervention will be at the least intrusive level required to effectively address the behaviour.

We will consider appropriate sanctions using our behaviour policy, and work with CYP and their support network to consider measures that may help to address the CYP's behaviour.

7. Investigation Outcomes

Our investigation of an allegation or incident as set out in this policy will enable us to determine the outcome, working with our safeguarding partners as appropriate. We will always seek to ensure that the outcome of an investigation is appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to the report. Various options are open to us, as set out below:

Manage Internally

In some cases, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the CYP concerned are not in need of Early Help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other Trust policies in addressing matters, for example our Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policies.

We will also consider what support the CYP involved may need going forward - for example, pastoral support, counselling services, and ensuring that there is a trusted adult for those affected to speak with if they wish to. We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole setting approach or with the wider school community.

Early Help

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

Requests for support to Children's Social Care

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

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

In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. If a statutory assessment is not considered appropriate by Children's Social Care, we will consider what other support may be required. We will make further requests for

support to Children's Social Care if we consider that a CYP remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Reporting to the Police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, we will report it to the Police. We will generally inform parents or carers about reports of sexual abuse, unless to do so may put a CYP at additional risk. We will seek advice from other partners in individual cases.

In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, we will ensure that we support the CYP in any decision we take. This is likely to be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

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

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

8. Review

All Child Protection Concerns are reviewed regularly, to ensure that everything has been fully addressed, that actions are completed, and to consider whether the CYP involved need any further support. We will continue to work with parents and carers and other agencies as appropriate, and risk assessments will be reviewed and updated as required.