OPEN BOX
Education Centre
St. John's Road, Epping, Essex, CM16 5DN
01992 577 300 Info@openboxeducation.org.uk

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding and the promoting of welfare of children is defined as

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's 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

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, Open Box Education Centre recognises that all organisations and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

1. PURPOSE

1.1 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)

1.2 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, 2025)
- Open Box Education Centre Relationships and Behaviour Policy;
- Open Box Education Centre Staff Code of Conduct Policy;
- Open Box Education Centre safeguarding response to children missing from education(Appendix E)
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

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

- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Open Box Education Centre takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the child is paramount" (Children Act 1989).

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

2.2 There are three main elements to our Child Protection policy:

- **Prevention** through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching and pastoral support offered to students.
- **Protection** by following agreed procedures and ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- **Support** to students who may have been abused.

2.3 This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, and visitors to our school.

2.4 This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

3. SCHOOL ETHOS

Our school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- Create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our students is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken
- Establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure that students know that there are adults within the school they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
- Ensure students receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships
- Include in the curriculum material which will help students develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others
- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations

- Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1 There is government guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

4.2 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 students of the school.

4.3 Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. In addition to national statutory guidance, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures . Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance *(this is not an exhaustive list):*

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 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)

5. 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 last page 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.

5.1 The Governing Body

The governing body has overall responsibility for safeguarding in our school. It ensures that the policies, procedures and training at Open Box Education Centre are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the last page of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and a 'whole-school approach' to this. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on the last page).

The governing body ensures the school engages with statutory safeguarding partners and 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 school (including governors / trustees) who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe. Governors will be provided with anonymised information only regarding child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached.

The governing body ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We teach our children how to keep themselves safe and we work in accordance with statutory guidance to help children recognise and respond to risk and to prevent them from coming to harm. We comply with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body has specific duties around online safety, including strategic oversight of appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to keep our children safe online.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that adults in our school are suitable. This is done by:

- ensuring the school follows 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 Open Box Education Centre's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information).
- Ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

5.2 The Principal

The Principal works in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, the Principal ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

5.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training, raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures and leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards). They must 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) and/or the Police are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority, ESCB and other agencies as required, and ensure that information is shared appropriately. The Designated Safeguarding Lead reports regularly to the governing body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, any training undertaken by staff and other relevant issues.

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 will act in their absence.

5.4 Promoting Safeguarding

The school publishes its Child Protection Policy on the school website and it should be read alongside 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2025). The school actively promotes online safety on its website and signposts stakeholders to information that will help keep children safe online.

5.5 All school staff

Everyone at Open Box Education Centre has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it.

Our school staff are aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation 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 in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). Staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education or unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education and consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk.

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, exploitation 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.

6. TYPES OF ABUSE / SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) defines abuse as the 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 four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- **Physical** - Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This type of abuse includes where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- **Emotional** - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development
- **Sexual** - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (through actual physical or online contact), not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **Neglect** - 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.

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:

6.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE (and CCE) are both 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.

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".

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

6.2 Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of child abuse which is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (county lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas and seaside towns). 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 against others. Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

6.3 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, 'sexting', 'up-skirting' or initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur – we do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated. Our culture is very much one of kindness, compassion, hope, connection and belonging, where every student is encouraged to behave respectfully towards others and to form trusting relationships with staff so that they feel empowered and enabled to speak out if they feel unsafe.

Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm or trauma. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. 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. Our school recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in school, or outside of it.

Any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

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 Starter Activities to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, about healthy, positive relationships, how to report concerns and 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. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. 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 refer to our 'Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy' and our 'Anti-bullying Policy' for further details.

6.4 Children who are absent or missing from education (CME)

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, neglect or exploitation and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education, either deliberately or through unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. We believe that early intervention to address absence from school is vital, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible, and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

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). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, so we are able to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school must inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Please refer to our Attendance Policy, our response to CME (Appendix E) and the Missing Child Protocol (Appendix F) for children who go missing during the school day.

6.5 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 in the community, outside a child's home or outside our school. All staff are aware of 'contextual safeguarding' and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family. This is to ensure that our children and families receive the right help at the right time and to help keep our children safe.

6.6 Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Domestic abuse 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 will 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.

6.7 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 students about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe (on and offline). Please refer to our 'Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy', our 'Relationships and Behaviour Policy' and our 'RSE Policy'.

6.8 Promoting Positive Mental Health and Resilience

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that our school plays a key part in this. Our school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all students 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, 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 to support the well-being of our students. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

6.9 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.

The four main areas of online risk could be categorised as:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example; pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example 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 that any student can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We aim to equip our students 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. We want to work with parents to support them to keep their children safe online.

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

Our school seeks to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways. Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Online Safety Policy.

6.10 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 becoming terrorists or supporting 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 students 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 works in accordance with the PREVENT Duty and with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Our school approaches this issue in the same way as any other child protection matter. Any concerns that one of our students is at risk in this respect, will be referred to Children's Social Care in line with the SET procedures. 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.

6.11 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.

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

6.12 So-called 'honour-based violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 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 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 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.

6.13 Children at greater risk of harm and those 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. 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 disproportionally impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 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).

7.2 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, 2025)
- Essex Effective Support
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- 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)

7.3 Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). In the absence of either of the above, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. The matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school 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.

7.4 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. 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, the school 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 the 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.

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

7.6 When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are provided with a summary of our safeguarding information and a QR code which takes them to our school's Child Protection Policy and our other safeguarding policies, and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) and how to share concerns with them.

8. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

8.1 All staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and regular awareness training, at least annually.

8.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) undergo updated Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Principal, all staff members and governors undergo child protection training

which is updated regularly, in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. All Child Protection training for staff and governors is recorded.

8.3 The school ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate, as well as attending termly Essex safeguarding briefings.

8.4 All staff are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

9. INFORMATION SHARING AND PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 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.

9.2 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 be allowed to 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 regularly reviewed; and our school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

9.3 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or students), or 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.

9.4 Staff are informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a 'need to know basis' only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way is held and treated confidentially. 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.

10. CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS,

10.1 Well-kept records are essential to good 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 passed over to other agencies.

10.2 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 and any rationale for decisions made. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly. All members of staff have the right, if they deem it necessary, to make a call directly to the Children and Families Hub if they have a concern about a child. This number is displayed clearly in a number of places around the school.

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

10.4 In line with statutory guidance, where a student transfers from our school to another educational provision (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to our school if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives. Where a student joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

11. INTERAGENCY WORKING

11.1 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 on roll (or previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. 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 at the conference.

11.2 If a child is made subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation, linking with the Essex Virtual School, which has strategic oversight of this group of children. If the school is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at

the core group meeting, and 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 the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern, and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

12. SUPPORTING BEHAVIOUR AND THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

12.1 Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school is committed to ensuring that our students receive the right help at the right time. Our Relationships and 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.

12.2 Our school will endeavour to support all students through:

- The curriculum to encourage our students to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued
- The implementation of the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- A consistent approach from all staff which will endeavour to ensure our students know that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families
- A commitment to develop open and honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child's best interest as paramount
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in all matters of child protection
- Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse and that staff working in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems must be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse
- Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are vulnerable and may be in need of support or protection

12.3 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 support the safety of children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight.

'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where reasonable force is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context and in accordance with our Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

13. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING A MEMBER OF STAFF

13.1 All staff members and other adults working with students are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct Policy. The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB Section 7) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) 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

13.2 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 will be referred to the Principal. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Principal will liaise with the agency, while following due process. Staffing matters are confidential and the school must operate within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

13.3 Where the concern involves the Principal, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governors.

13.4 SET procedures (ESCB) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Principal, senior named person or the Chair of Governors must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** **LADO@essex.gov.uk** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO should be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to students and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

14. WHISTLEBLOWING (AND LOW LEVEL CONCERNS)

14.1 Whistleblowing is “making a disclosure in the public interest” and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example students in the school or members of the public.

14.2 All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise ALL concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including low level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold for reporting to the LADO, and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place, including procedures for reporting low level concerns, and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy (including Low Level Concerns Policy).

14.3 We want everyone to feel able to raise concerns internally. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline NSPCC on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

14.4 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.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Alison Dolan

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Samantha Hutton

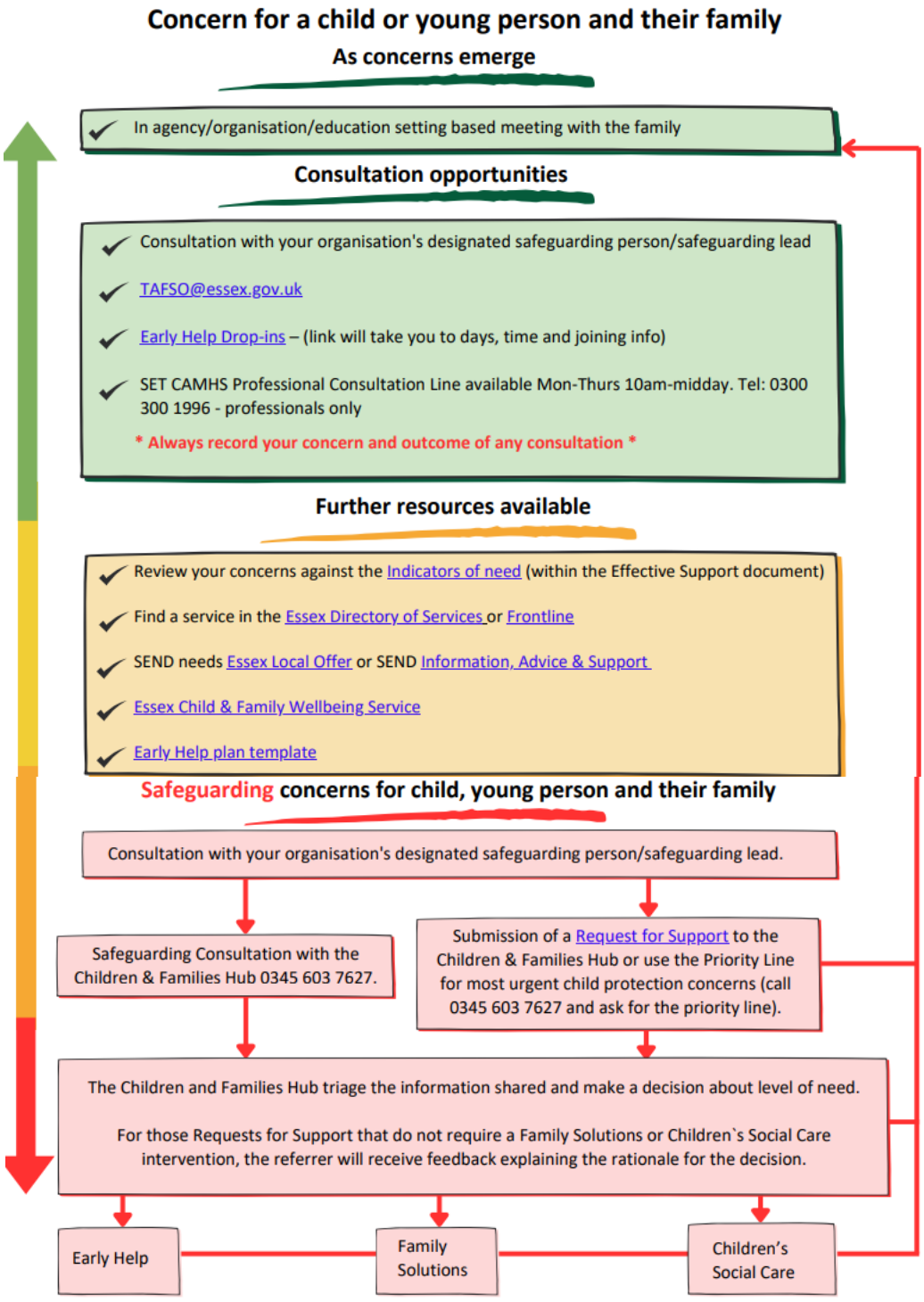
Designated Governor for Safeguarding: Julie Lorkins

Approved by: ..... (Principal) ..... (date)

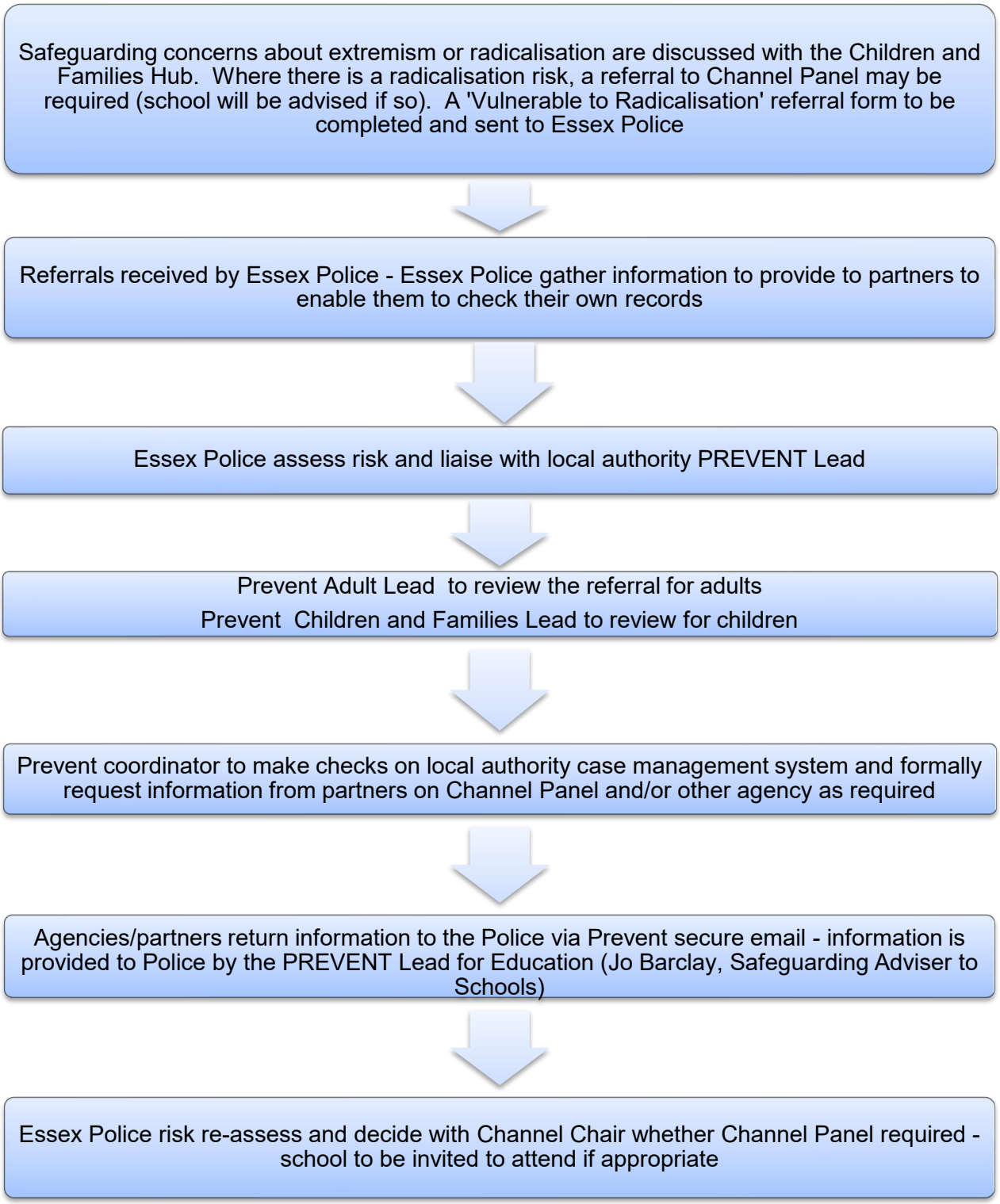
Authorised by:..... (Chair of Governors) ..... (date)

This policy is reviewed termly
Last update Oct 2025
Last review Feb 2026 – no updates

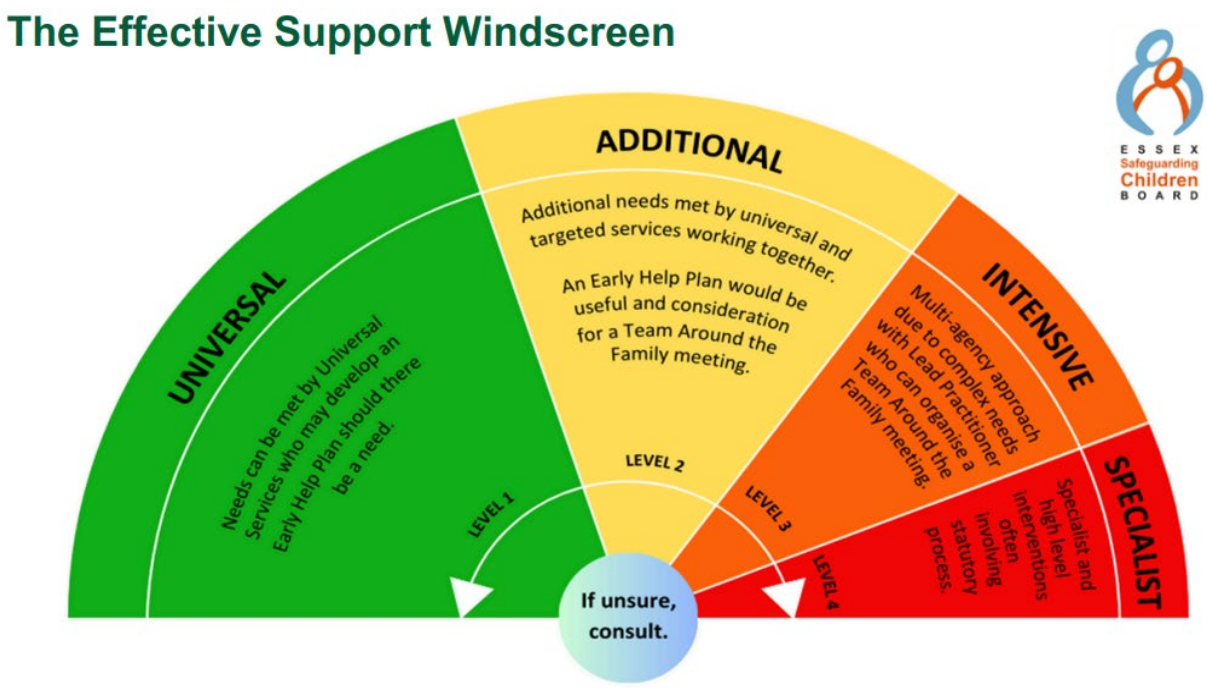
Appendix A: Children and Families Hub flow chart



Appendix B: Prevent Pathway



Appendix C: 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 D

Child Protection During Any Period of Emergency Home Learning

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, they play a vital role in safeguarding children during any emergency arrangements. This appendix to the Child Protection Policy has been produced to cover arrangements in place for any periods of emergency Home Learning that might occur during this academic year.

These procedures are for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school during periods of Home Learning and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- the current Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- the school Relationships and Behaviour Policy;
- the school Staff Code of Conduct;
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education (CME)
- the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Annex B 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 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. Requirement to move to Emergency Home Learning

In the case of an event that requires the school to move to Emergency Home Learning, the needs of all our students will be assessed and plans will be put in place to support them. These plans will include an education offer and arrangements to support students with their safety and wellbeing. Where appropriate, the plans will include actions and interventions from other agencies, as we continue to work with partners to provide an appropriate level of support. These plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current need and are updated accordingly to ensure appropriate support is in place.

Should the school be required to move to a period of Emergency Home Learning, a process of robust risk assessment for all students will be in place and will be regularly reviewed and updated as required, and arrangements for monitoring and supporting students will be implemented, as outlined below.

Following any period of Emergency Home Learning, once the school has moved back to full on-site learning, our usual Child Protection Policy applies.

3. Safeguarding procedures during any Emergency Home Learning or school closure period

Clearly, the school is required to work very differently during any period of Emergency Home Learning or school closure. However, the principles within our existing Child Protection Policy still apply, as does the duty on all staff to safeguard children.

We will assess the needs of all our students and put in place plans to support them and their families during any periods of Emergency Home Learning. These plans will include as full an educational offer as possible and arrangements to support students with their safety and wellbeing. These plans may include actions and interventions from other agencies, as we continue to work with partners to provide an appropriate level of support.

During any period of Emergency Home Learning or school closure, Open Box Education Centre will provide safeguarding arrangements as follows:

- Welfare checks will be made regularly by phone, email or text (and possibly home visits to parents/carers and students at least weekly
- Students who would normally receive counselling and/or mentoring will continue to be offered weekly contact via phone, 'Microsoft Teams' or equivalent online service
- Parents/carers and students are provided with a range of contact numbers and websites providing emotional support and advice
- The main school phone number will be open during school hours throughout any period of Emergency Home Learning or school closure and the Principal will respond to all parent/carer and student calls, texts and emails during school hours
- All staff will be responsible for recording and reporting any safeguarding concerns resulting from any student contact and sharing with the DSL immediately
- Risk assessments are in place for all students considered 'vulnerable' and for any face-to-face contact that may be deemed necessary
- The Principal and SEND, Health and Care Manager will continue to attend remote meetings with partner agencies and other professionals supporting students to ensure support and safeguarding is continued
- The school will work with the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure appropriate support for any children in care.

It is recognised that many children with EHC plans can continue to learn and be supported effectively during Emergency Home Learning through remote lessons. If it is felt that this is not effective for an individual student with an EHC Plan during any Emergency Home Learning or closure period, we will work with the local authority and parents / carers to produce a personalised plan that aims to meet need.

As always, all staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff 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 procedures outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

6. Staff conduct

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and the principles in our Staff Code of Conduct still apply during any Emergency Home Learning or school closure period. The usual processes for reporting concerns about a member of staff apply.

7. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our students is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of physical attendance at school, some of our children may be more vulnerable. We

understand that families will be placed under additional pressures during any periods of Emergency Home Learning and staff will be sensitive to this.

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

8. Online safety (for students during Emergency Home Learning)

We recognise during a period of Emergency Home Learning or school closure it is likely students will be spending longer periods of time online, which may increase their vulnerability. Particularly useful websites are:

- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
- Childnet
- Internet Matters
- Net Aware
- NSPCC
- Parent Info
- Safer Internet

Staff are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way. It is important that parents make the school aware of any concerns they may have about the online activity of their child, or any particular vulnerability they may have in this respect.

Appendix E

Children Absent from School and Missing from Education (CME)

Introduction

'Children missing education' (CME) are 'children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.' Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. The school will follow the statutory guidance 'Children Missing from Education': https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

School requirements

- Schools must enter pupils on the school's Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the Admissions Register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- schools are legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register **within five days of the pupil being enrolled**. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, **as soon as one of the statutory grounds for deletion has been satisfied and not later than the date on which the pupil is removed from roll.**

Open Box Education Centre Response to CME

- When a student enters the school, the attendance administrator will notify the local authority of the admission via the online portal within five days of enrolment. When a student leaves the school the attendance administrator will notify the local authority of the deletion from the admissions register via the online portal on the day of deletion.
- When a student is absent, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register. As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts if information has not been received regarding the reason for the absence. This will happen every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing us of absence and reasons why. Every parent/carer is expected to share at least one additional emergency contact number to their own when their child first starts the school.
- Parents/Carers are expected to phone the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school. If no contact can be made with the parent by the end of the second day of absence, and all messages go unanswered, a home visit may be undertaken by the school or a police welfare check may be requested. The school will liaise with Essex Children's Safeguarding services for advice and support and a referral may be made to Essex Social Care if there are safeguarding concerns.
- Schools are required to inform the LA (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, 2006) of the details of pupils who have been absent from school for 10 continuous school days and contact cannot be made with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence and the absence has not been reported.

Safeguarding

The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained absences. Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child, the school will always follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which includes reporting to the local authority.

Appendix F

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