



Woodend Farm school

Kindness comes in many forms

Child Protection Policy

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RECORD OF POLICY AMENDMENT / HISTORY

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1.0	Gemma Quantrill	30/08/2022	26/01/2023	New Policy
1.1	Nicola Overland	04/09/2023	08/11/2023	Updated changes
1.2	Nicola Overland	01/09/2024		Updated changes
1.3	Gemma Quantrill	28/04/2025		Amendments to Safeguarding team
1.4	Sarah Coney	01/07/2025		Amendments to the safeguarding team
1.5	Gemma Quantrill	22/08/2025		KCSIE updates – annual update
1.6	Gemma Quantrill	28/08/2025		Amendments to safeguarding team and policy
1.7	Umut Baskal	11/09/2025	17/09/2025	Additional Secondary Phase
1.8	Gemma Quantrill	13/10/2025	17/09/2025	Amendment to safeguarding team
1.9	Kirsty Page	01/05/2026		Amendment to safeguarding team
2	Gemma Quantrill	22/08/2026		KCSIE updates – annual update

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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, 2026*)

This policy reflects the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective from 1 September 2026, and is underpinned by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and other relevant statutory safeguarding guidance.

This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and members of the wider school community. It forms a key part of the school's safeguarding framework and should be read alongside the following policies, procedures and guidance:

- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- ☐ Promoting Positive Behaviour policy.
- ☐ Staff Code of Conduct.
- ☐ The safeguarding response to children missing from education
- ☐ The role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE 2026)

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

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

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

2. Statutory Framework

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

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

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

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- 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 \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information Sharing \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) 2025
- Online Safety Act 2023
- [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 \(ECC 2025\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

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

3.1 The Board of Governors

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



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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 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 front cover).

The governing body ensures the school engages with statutory safeguarding partners and contributes to multi-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It 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) 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 teach our children how to keep themselves safe and we work in accordance with statutory guidance to help children recognise and respond to risk and to prevent them from coming to harm. We comply with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body has specific duties around online safety and ensures we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to keep our children safe online.

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

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

3.2 Executive Headteacher

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

3.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school. The DSL provides strategic leadership for safeguarding and is responsible for managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, raising awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures, and promoting a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school.

The DSL leads on online safety, including oversight of the school's filtering and monitoring systems, and is responsible for ensuring that emerging safeguarding risks are identified and responded to appropriately. This includes technology-facilitated abuse, online exploitation, AI-generated harmful or abusive content, image-based abuse, and developments in online safeguarding risks and trends. The DSL will ensure that concerns relating to filtering and monitoring systems are identified, recorded, monitored and acted upon appropriately.

The DSL ensures that all staff, including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors, are aware of safeguarding procedures and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The DSL acts as a source of advice, support and expertise for staff on all safeguarding matters and ensures that referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made promptly and in accordance with current SET procedures. The DSL works closely with the Local Authority, safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies and ensures that information is shared appropriately and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and provide support in carrying out safeguarding responsibilities. In the absence of the DSL, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake the activities necessary to ensure the ongoing safeguarding and protection of children.

3.4 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-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk. In addition, we recognise that any child may benefit from additional help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it.

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

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. 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.



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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

4.1 Types of Abuse and Specific Safeguarding Issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 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 broad categories of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** A form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This includes situations where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involving forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, including online abuse.
- **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.

Safeguarding concerns may arise through the use of technology. Abuse can occur wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. This includes online grooming, coercion and control, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, cyberbullying, image-based abuse, the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, financial exploitation, harassment and other forms of technology-facilitated harm. The school recognises that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), can be used to facilitate abuse through the creation of manipulated images, deepfakes, online coercion, exploitation and harassment. Such concerns will be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

In addition, Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 contains important information about specific forms of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding issues. Some of these, and the school's approach to them, are outlined below.

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

Both Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are forms of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal or sexual activity.

CCE can include children becoming involved in county lines activity, transporting drugs or money, shoplifting, theft, vehicle crime, violence, gang-related activity, online exploitation, or criminal activity facilitated through social media and digital platforms.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse that can affect any child or young person regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture, ability or background. It may occur over time or through a single incident and may involve technology.

The school recognises the links between exploitation, missing episodes, serious violence, gangs, online abuse and organised criminal activity. Staff remain vigilant to the signs of exploitation and will take immediate action where concerns arise. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will lead on concerns relating to exploitation and work with external agencies as appropriate.

4.2 Child-on-Child Abuse (Including Sexualised Behaviour)

The school recognises that children can abuse other children and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, including online.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos
- Image-based abuse
- Technology-facilitated abuse
- AI-generated harmful content or manipulated images
- Coercive behaviour and exploitation

The school adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to child-on-child abuse. We do not tolerate, dismiss or normalise abuse as banter, horseplay, part of growing up or simply having fun.

Any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern. Appropriate support will be provided to all children involved and referrals made to external agencies where required.

The school recognises that some incidents may involve the creation, possession, sharing or threat to share nude or semi-nude images, including images that have been digitally manipulated or generated using artificial intelligence. Such incidents will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with DfE guidance and safeguarding procedures.

We actively teach children about healthy relationships, respect, boundaries, consent and how to report concerns. We strive to create a culture where children feel safe to disclose abuse and are confident that they will be listened to, believed and supported.

4.3 Children Missing from Education

All children are entitled to a full-time education. The school recognises that children missing education are at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, criminal involvement, radicalisation and poor outcomes.

The school will work proactively with parents, carers and partner agencies to understand and address barriers to attendance and ensure children receive appropriate support.

Parents and carers are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers for each child. Where a child is absent and contact cannot be established, appropriate enquiries and safeguarding checks will be undertaken.



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The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who is removed from roll or who meets the statutory threshold for referral under Children Missing Education procedures.

The school follows the Essex Missing Child Protocol (Appendix C) and considers repeated missing episodes as potential indicators of wider safeguarding concerns, including exploitation.

4.4 Risk in the Community (RIC) and Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the home and beyond the school gates.

Contextual safeguarding recognises that children may experience abuse and exploitation within their peer groups, communities, public spaces or online environments.

All staff understand the Essex Risk in the Community (RIC) approach and will consider contextual factors when assessing risk, planning interventions and sharing information with partner agencies. This helps ensure children receive the right help at the right time and that risks beyond the family home are appropriately identified and addressed.

4.5 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can involve a range of behaviours including physical, emotional, psychological, controlling, coercive, sexual, financial and economic abuse.

The school recognises that children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right, through seeing, hearing, experiencing or living with its effects.

The school participates in Operation Encompass and will use information shared by the police and other agencies to support children affected by domestic abuse appropriately.

Any information relating to domestic abuse will be managed in line with safeguarding and information-sharing procedures and recorded on the child's safeguarding file.

4.6 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The school understands that children's sexual behaviours exist on a continuum ranging from age-appropriate behaviour through to problematic, harmful and abusive behaviour.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between children of any age or gender and may occur both online and offline.

Examples may include:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Unwanted touching
- Sexual comments
- Sexualised bullying
- Sharing sexual images
- Online sexual abuse
- Image-based abuse
- Coercion and exploitation
- AI-generated sexual images involving children

All reports of harmful sexual behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to promptly, proportionately and in accordance with Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

The school adopts a victim-centred and trauma-responsive approach whilst providing appropriate intervention and support for children displaying harmful sexual behaviour.

4.7 Mental Health

Positive mental health is everyone's responsibility, and the school plays a vital role in promoting emotional wellbeing and resilience.

The school recognises that mental health concerns may, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Whilst mental health concerns alone do not automatically constitute a safeguarding issue, they will always be considered alongside wider safeguarding information and risk factors.

Where concerns are identified, appropriate support will be offered and referrals made to relevant services where necessary.

4.8 Online Safety

The school recognises that children are growing up in an increasingly interconnected digital world and that safeguarding applies equally to online and offline environments.

Online risks may be categorised as:

- **Content:** exposure to harmful, illegal or inappropriate material.
- **Contact:** harmful interaction with others online.
- **Conduct:** behaviour which increases the risk of harm.
- **Commerce:** risks associated with financial exploitation and scams.

The school recognises emerging online risks including:

- Online grooming
- Sexual and criminal exploitation
- Cyberbullying
- Extremist content
- Misinformation and disinformation
- Financial exploitation and online scams
- Technology-facilitated abuse
- Image-based abuse
- AI-generated harmful content
- Deepfakes and manipulated imagery

The school has effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to protect children from harmful content and online risks. These systems are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

The Governing Body receives assurances regarding the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements and supports the school's approach to online safeguarding.

Children are taught how to stay safe online through the curriculum and wider safeguarding programme, whilst staff receive regular online safety updates and training.

4.9 Technology-Facilitated Harm and Emerging Online Risks

The school recognises that advances in technology continue to create new opportunities for learning, communication and social interaction. However, emerging technologies may also create additional safeguarding risks for children and young people.



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Technology-facilitated abuse occurs when technology is used to exploit, abuse, harass, control, coerce, threaten or harm a child. Such abuse may occur online, offline or through a combination of both and will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

The school recognises that children may be vulnerable to:

- AI-generated abuse, including the creation, possession or distribution of AI-generated nude or semi-nude images, manipulated images, deepfakes and synthetic media.
- Cyber-enabled exploitation, where technology, social media, gaming platforms, messaging services or other digital communication methods are used to facilitate child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, grooming, coercion or trafficking.
- Image-based sexual abuse, including the sharing or threat of sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, the manipulation of images and the use of sexual imagery to harass, exploit, humiliate, blackmail or control another person.
- Misinformation and disinformation, where children may encounter false, misleading or deliberately deceptive content online which may impact on their wellbeing, safety, beliefs, relationships or decision-making.
- Financial exploitation and online scams, including fraud, phishing, online gambling, financial coercion, cryptocurrency scams, in-app purchasing manipulation and attempts to exploit children for financial gain.

Staff understand that technology is increasingly used to facilitate abuse and exploitation and will remain alert to indicators that a child may be experiencing harm through digital platforms. Any concerns relating to technology-facilitated abuse or exploitation will be responded to in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, referrals will be made to external agencies.

The school will provide age-appropriate education to support pupils in understanding online risks, identifying harmful behaviour and developing the knowledge and skills required to keep themselves safe both online and offline.

4.10 Prevention of Radicalisation

The school fulfils its duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty. Staff are alert to indicators that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremist influences and understand how to report concerns appropriately.

Where concerns arise, the school will work with safeguarding partners, the police and Channel Panel processes as appropriate.

4.11 Serious Violence

Staff are aware of the indicators and risk factors associated with serious violence, gangs, county lines activity, criminal exploitation and organised crime.

These may include increased absence, unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour, possession of unexplained gifts or money, deteriorating wellbeing, gang association and online recruitment into criminal activity.

Concerns relating to serious violence will be managed through the school's safeguarding procedures and appropriate referrals made where necessary.

4.12 So-Called Honour-Based Abuse (Including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and Breast Ironing)

So-called honour-based abuse encompasses incidents committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community and may include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and breast ironing.

Staff understand their responsibilities regarding identification, reporting and responding to concerns relating to honour-based abuse.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM involving girls under the age of 18 directly to the police.

The school will respond immediately to concerns regarding honour-based abuse and work with safeguarding partners and law enforcement agencies where appropriate.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the free and full consent of one or both parties and is a form of abuse. Staff are aware of the additional safeguarding risks associated with forced marriage and understand their responsibility to report concerns.

5. Children Potentially at Risk of Greater Harm

We recognise that some children may be at greater risk of harm and may require additional help, protection and support. Safeguarding concerns can affect any child; however, certain groups of children may face additional vulnerabilities and barriers that increase their risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or poor outcomes.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Children with a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan
- Children in Care (Looked After Children)
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children with a social worker
- Children who are absent from education or who experience persistent attendance difficulties
- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)
- Young carers
- Children experiencing mental health difficulties
- Children who are vulnerable to child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious violence or radicalisation
- Children living in families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health
- Children who identify as LGBTQ+ where they may be subject to discrimination, bullying or prejudice
- Children who are privately fostered, homeless or living in temporary accommodation

The school is committed to identifying and responding to the additional needs of vulnerable children at the earliest opportunity. We work collaboratively with Social Care, Health, the Virtual School, safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies to ensure a coordinated and child-centred approach, enabling children and families to receive the right help at the right time.

5.1 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, bullying, exploitation and peer-on-peer abuse.



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Staff understand that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with SEND. These may include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood, anxiety, distress or injury, relate to the child's disability or additional needs without further exploration.
- Increased vulnerability to peer group isolation, discrimination or bullying.
- A higher likelihood of being disproportionately impacted by abuse, exploitation or harmful behaviour.
- Communication difficulties that may make it harder for a child to recognise, understand or report abuse.
- Difficulties in expressing their wishes, feelings or experiences.
- Reliance on adults for personal care, intimate care or support.
- Reduced understanding of healthy relationships, consent, personal boundaries and online safety.

The school recognises the importance of providing children with SEND with additional opportunities to develop communication skills, confidence and understanding of safeguarding, healthy relationships and personal safety. Safeguarding information, reporting systems and support will be adapted where necessary to ensure they are accessible and understood by all pupils.

Staff will remain professionally curious and will seek to understand the individual needs, communication preferences and lived experiences of children with SEND when assessing risk or responding to safeguarding concerns.

6. Procedures

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

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

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCP, 2022)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [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 Children's 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.

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at Level 3 and receive regular safeguarding updates in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), local safeguarding partner requirements and emerging safeguarding risks. This training is refreshed at least every two years and equips safeguarding leads with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles effectively.

The DSL and DDSLs also undertake additional training in multi-agency working, child protection processes, online safety, filtering and monitoring, contextual safeguarding, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, technology-facilitated abuse, and other safeguarding matters relevant to their role. They are supported to maintain an up-to-date understanding of local and national safeguarding priorities, emerging risks and changes in legislation and statutory guidance.

The Executive Headteacher, all staff members, governors, volunteers and regular visitors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training as part of their induction and throughout their employment or engagement with the school. Training is provided in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), local safeguarding partner guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures.

All staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including at least annual safeguarding training, to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to safeguard children effectively. This training includes, but is not limited to, child protection procedures, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, online safety, filtering and monitoring, technology-facilitated abuse, exploitation, mental health, attendance, children missing education, contextual safeguarding, the Prevent Duty and emerging safeguarding risks, including those associated with artificial intelligence.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding training is effective and that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Records of safeguarding and child protection training, updates and professional development activities are maintained for all staff and governors.



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8. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and we understand that decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our school is signed up to the Wider Eastern Information Stakeholder Forum (WEISF), which enables us to share and receive information in a legal, safe and secure way, to support our work in keeping children safe.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, 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.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse will record it as soon as possible onto CPOMS, this will send an alert to the designated safeguarding lead and deputy and must be reported before the end of the school day. Records must note 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 will include the action taken. Staff should speak directly to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

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

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new setting. These

will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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

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, such as Social Care, the Virtual School, Police and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our school (or who was previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure our school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

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

11. Allegations About Members of the Children's Workforce

We ensure that all staff members, including agency staff, volunteers, contractors and governors, are made aware of the standards of professional behaviour and conduct expected of them whilst working with children. These expectations form part of staff induction and are detailed within the School's Staff Code of Conduct. All staff receive regular safeguarding updates and training and are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing Policy and procedures for reporting concerns about adults working with children

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) and the SET Child Protection Procedures set out the processes for managing safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns relating to adults working with children in either a paid or voluntary capacity. The school recognises the importance of creating and maintaining a culture of openness, transparency and vigilance in order to safeguard children and promote professional accountability.

11.1 Concerns or Allegations that Meet the Harm Threshold



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Procedures must be followed where it is alleged that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that may have occurred outside of work.

Any concerns or allegations about an adult working in the school should be reported immediately to the Executive Headteacher. Where the concern relates to the Executive Headteacher, it must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors chair@woodendfarm.school. The recipient of the concern will consider the information available and determine the appropriate course of action in accordance with statutory guidance and local procedures.

Where it is believed that the harm threshold may have been met, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the matter referred to the Essex Children's Workforce Allegations Team without delay LADO@essex.gov. The school will not undertake any formal investigation before consulting with the LADO unless specifically advised to do so.

In the event of an allegation involving an agency worker, contractor, volunteer or supply member of staff, the school will work closely with the relevant employer or agency whilst ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are discharged appropriately and without delay.

11.2 Low-Level Concerns

The school promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and/or
- Does not meet the harm threshold set out above.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly familiar with a child;
- Having favourites;
- Using inappropriate language;
- Engaging in inappropriate electronic communication;
- Behaviour that could be viewed as unprofessional or that may undermine safeguarding standards.

Low-level concerns should be reported to the Executive Headteacher as soon as possible. Where the concern relates to the Executive Headteacher, it should be reported to the Chair of Governors. All low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately to ensure that patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

The school encourages staff to self-refer where they believe they may have acted in a manner that falls below expected professional standards. Self-reporting will be viewed as a positive demonstration of professional responsibility and commitment to safeguarding.

11.3 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns relating to members of staff will be managed sensitively and confidentially, sharing information only with those who have a legitimate need to know or where there is a legal duty to do so. The school will comply with relevant data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, whilst ensuring that safeguarding remains paramount.

The school will maintain appropriate records of safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns relating to adults working within the school and will do so in accordance with statutory guidance and local procedures.

12. Behaviour, Use of Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force

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

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

- to comfort a child or young person in distress (*appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment*).
- to direct a child or young person.
- for curricular reasons (*for example in PE, Music, Drama etc*). in an emergency, to avert danger to the child or young person or others.

The guidance produced by the Department for Education [Use of Reasonable Force \(DfE, 2013\)](#) states that: “Schools **should not** have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a child or young person or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a child or young person causing harm.”

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

Restricting Parental Access to Site

The school reserves the right to restrict or prohibit a parent/carer’s access to the school site where their behaviour poses, or is reasonably believed to pose, a safeguarding risk to pupils, staff or members of the wider school community. This includes behaviour that is threatening, abusive, intimidating or otherwise compromises the safety, wellbeing or learning environment of the school. Any decision to restrict access will be proportionate, evidence-based, recorded, and communicated to the parent/carer in writing.



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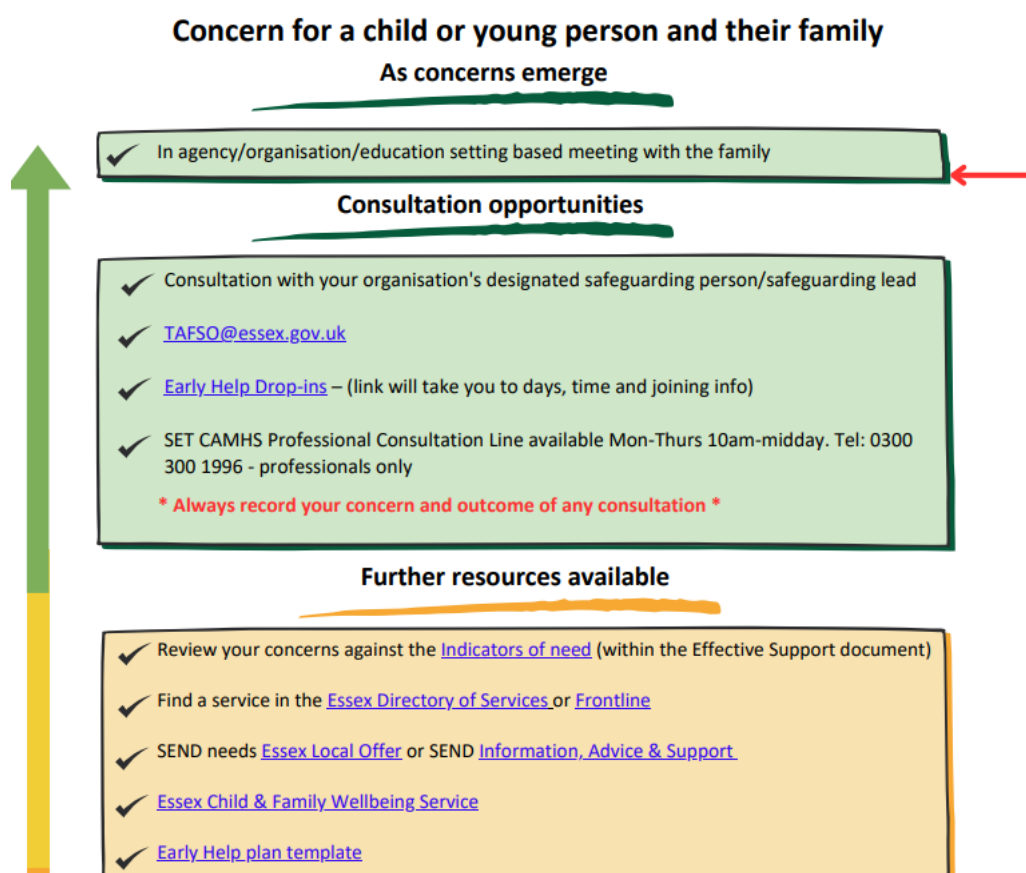
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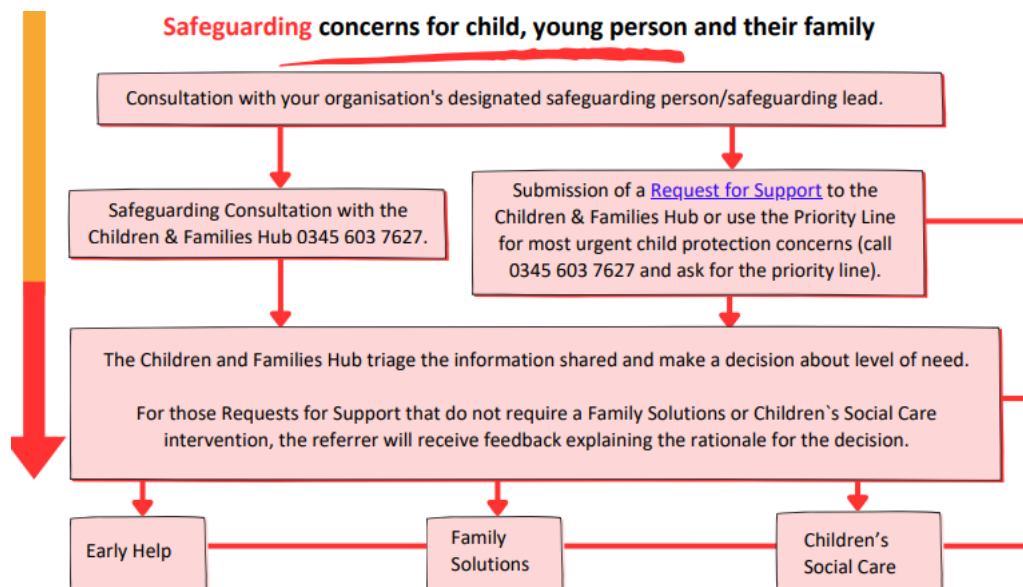
13. Whistleblowing

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/help/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.

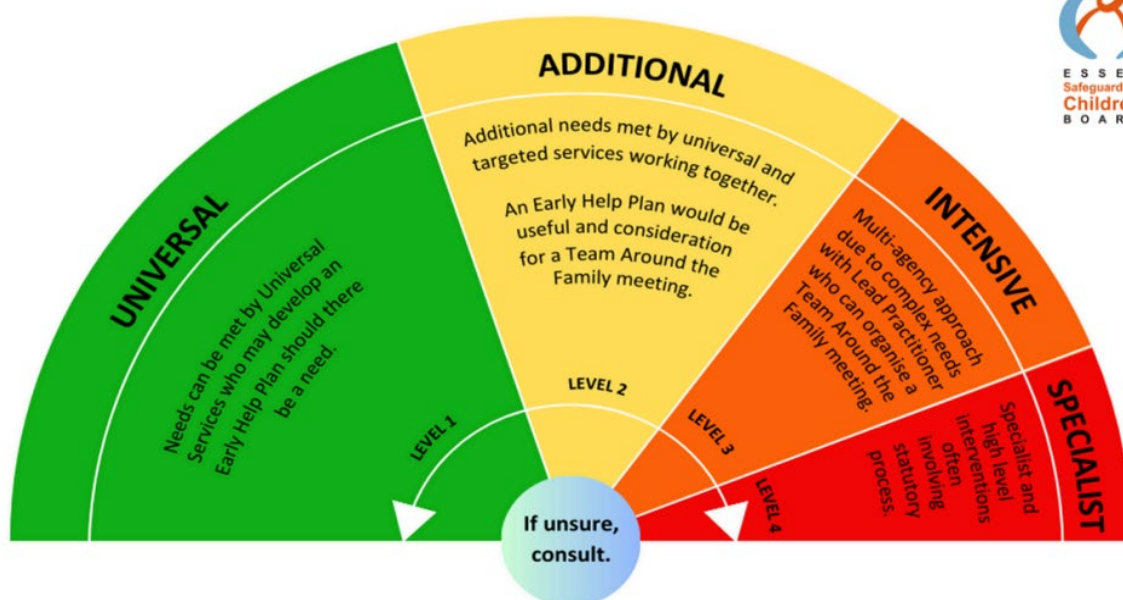
Appendix A: **Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts**





Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention

The Effective Support Windscreen



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.



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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

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