



## **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Ethos</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Statutory Framework</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Child Protection Procedures</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Professional confidentiality</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Records and information sharing</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Multi agency working</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Allegations about members of staff/volunteers working in the setting</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Whistleblowing</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Online Safety</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Use of mobile phones</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Cameras, photography and images</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Children and Families Hub Partner Access Map</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>Types of abuse and harm Suitable people, ratios, Staff taking medication, Looked after children Missing child, COVID update</b>

### **1. Introduction**

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'*

*Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'*

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (Department for Education, 2025)

## 2. Purpose

This policy is for Christchurch Pre School Management team, all staff, parents / carers, volunteers and the wider setting community. It provides a framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children who attend our setting.

## 3. Ethos

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, where all children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. There are various ways in which we fulfil our safeguarding responsibility, for example through our environment, curriculum, and clear policies and procedures.

We will take all necessary steps to keep our children safe and well, and ensure they are protected from harm. If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. This means Essex Social Care and, in emergencies, the police. **Everyone has the right to feel safe all the time and nothing is too awful or scary that we can't share it with someone.**

## 4. Statutory Framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working together to safeguard children: statutory framework](#) (Dec 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. The statutory partners in Essex are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county and the partnership arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB).

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, under which providers are required to take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of young children.

In addition, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET procedures. This is local guidance, written by safeguarding boards in Southend, Essex and Thurrock, which sets out child protection and safeguarding arrangements in Essex.

Everyone working in early years services should know how to recognise and respond to signs of possible abuse or harm (see Appendix C).

This policy takes into account and should be read in conjunction with other statutory and local guidance: (this is not an exhaustive list).

- [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (DfE, 2025)
- [Working together to safeguard children: statutory framework](#) (DfE, Dec 2023)
- [set-safeguarding-and-child-protection-procedures-2025.pdf](#) (ESCB, Sept 2025)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)

- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK](#) (Home Office, 2023)
- [Effective support 2024 final](#) (ESCB, Oct 2024)
- [Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - safe practice for schools and educational settings](#) (ESCB, 2021)
- [Children Act](#) (HMG, 1989)
- [Children Act](#) (HMG, 2004)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2025: part one information for all school and college staff](#) (DfE, 2025)

The policy also complements our Behaviour Policy, which includes information on positive handling, and our Staff Code of Conduct.

Our setting works to the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage. As suggested within the Statutory Framework, we follow the principles in [Keeping children safe in education 2025: part one information for all school and college staff](#) (DfE, 2025), the statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges.

Our setting also works in accordance with statutory and local guidance where there are concerns about radicalisation and extremism and child protection procedures will be followed.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Committee has oversight of our safeguarding arrangements and ensures that they operate effectively, that there are appropriate policies in place, and that staff receive the right training to keep children safe.

Our setting has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (Claire Macklin) to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. To ensure there is cover when the DSL is absent, we also have a Deputy DSL (Sarah Cutts) who is supported by our other DSL's, Laura Neave and Michelle Morgan.

Our DSL is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, including Essex Social Care and other agencies as required. The DSL provides support, advice and guidance to staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issues as required. Our DSL and Deputy DSL attend a child protection training course to enable them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect.

Our Senior Leadership team is Claire Macklin (Manager and DSL), Sarah Cutts (Deputy Manager and Deputy DSL), Michelle Morgan (Room Leader and DSL) and Laura Neave (Room Leader and DSL). Michelle Morgan & Laura Neave also take the roles of Staff Rep & Parent Rep for their respective rooms.

Claire, Sarah, Michelle and Laura all have completed Safer Recruitment training.

They also ensure that everyone in our setting (including temporary staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors) are aware of our child protection procedures and that they are followed at all times.

Everyone in our setting has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the Essex [Early Help](#) procedures and our role in it. We are committed to getting a system of support in place & reduce the chance of things escalating - staff are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they

are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. Everyone working in the setting has an Enhanced DBS check.

All staff members are aware of and follow our procedures (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a request for support to Essex 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 DSL or Deputy DSL – they do not assume that others have taken action.

## 6. Child Protection Procedures

Our setting works with local statutory services 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, for example Child In Need or Child Protection plans.

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 setting who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred, **must** report it immediately to the DSL (or, in their absence, the Deputy DSL or Room Lead DSL's). **A safeguarding log will be completed and passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL, and this will be reported to the child's parents as swiftly as possible by one or two of the DSL's or one DSL and the child's keyworker, preferably the same day. Should the child be collected by a grandparent / guardian / friend, the information would be shared via phone to the parent, or the next morning, whichever is most appropriate.**

Where there is risk of immediate harm, the setting will telephone the Essex Social Care Children & Families Hub and / or the police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the Essex County Council website. We may also seek advice from Essex Social Care or another appropriate agency about a child protection concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it.

Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to make a request for support to Essex Social Care, with parents / carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that it could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration of the case with the DSL. The Deputy DSL should be consulted if the DSL is not **immediately** available.

With four DSL's, there is always someone on hand to report a concern to. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the setting to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may request support from Essex Social Care where it is suspected that a child has been harmed, or where there is a risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or visitors join our setting they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the DSL and Deputy DSL and Room Leader DSL's and how to share concerns with them.

## 7. Training

The DSL, Deputy DSL and Room Leader DSL's undertake Level 3 Child Protection training at least every two years. The Manager and all staff members receive appropriate child protection

training which is updated regularly and in line with advice from the ESCB. Level 3 Training is delivered online. Level 2 training is delivered to staff by the DSL, who has completed the Train the Trainer training. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of all formal child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff. Staff are questioned on their training during supervisions & regularly throughout the year.

## **8. Professional Confidentiality**

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 children and parents / carers) or promise to keep a secret.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL or Deputy DSL 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.

Staff are not permitted to contact a parent personally via any means, e.g. text message, what's app, Facebook messenger or email, without the permission of the Manager. They are not permitted to share any information with the parent without the permission of the Manager & would do so only via Nursery email or face to face.

## **9. Records and Information Sharing**

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

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.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is presented to the DSL or Deputy DSL who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly, **seeking advice from other professionals if needed.**

Any records relating to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to any other child file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially until the child transfers to another educational setting.

Where a child transfers from our setting to another educational setting, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the DSL (or in the case of a school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead) at the new educational setting & every attempt will be made to ensure this is hand delivered by the DSL to ensure it doesn't go astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new setting, and then destroy any copies held in our setting. Where appropriate, the DSL will also contact 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 child joins our setting, we will request child protection records from the previous educational setting (if applicable, and if none are received).

## 10. Multi Agency Working

The DSL will ensure our setting is represented at any Child Protection Conference called for children registered with us or previously known to us. Where possible and appropriate, we may be required to submit a report and where possible and appropriate this will be shared in advance with parents / carers. The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the setting has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If the setting is part of a multi-agency group for the safeguarding arrangements for a child, the DSL will ensure that we are represented at meetings and that we provide appropriate information and contribute to any plan. Any concerns about the plan and/or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at these meetings, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm.

We are committed to building relationships to get effective work from all agencies with parents & families. We put out relationships with parents at the centre of importance – we ensure we build trust & co-operative relationships to support them.

## 11. Allegations About Members of the Workforce

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in our Staff Code of Conduct. Any concerns about the conduct of an adult working with children in our setting should be referred to the Manager (or Deputy in their absence). Where the concern is about the Manager it should be reported to a company Director (Peter Hawtin or Beth Gask). The setting works in accordance with statutory guidance and the [set-safeguarding-and-child-protection-procedures-2025.pdf](#) (ESCB, 2025) in relation to allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The procedures require that where an allegation against a member of staff (or any adult working with children) is received, the Manager (or Director) will inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **03330 139 797** or [lado@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lado@essex.gov.uk) within one working day. However, where possible immediately as they will advise on how to proceed, whether the matter requires police involvement and the referral process going forward.

This will include advice on speaking to children and parents / carers and Human Resources. The setting does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. Staffing matters are confidential, and the setting operates within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

In accordance with the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (DfE, 2025), we will also inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We will also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. We will make these notifications as soon as reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the allegations being made. We are aware that not complying with these requirements without reasonable excuse is committing an offence.

## 12. Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force

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 may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children, but these are exceptional circumstances,

and do not form part of our routine approach to managing behaviour. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our setting works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context. Our Behaviour policy reflects the approach taken to understanding behaviour, physical contact and intervention.

### 13. Whistleblowing

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

Parents / carers or others in the wider setting community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

### 14. Online Safety – see also separate Online Safety Policy – December 2025.

Technology forms part of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We help our children to begin to learn how to use technology safely, and to be safe online as we recognise computer skills are key to accessing learning.

We engage with our parents / carers about online safety to support them in keeping their children safe at home when using technology. **We send out parents information emails to keep them aware of the dangers in their children using various apps / games online and signpost them to appropriate channels should they have concerns.**

### 15. Use of Mobile Phones

We acknowledge that mobile phones are often the only means of contact available and can be helpful in supporting safeguarding arrangements in settings, including when on outings.

We will ensure that staff personal mobiles:

- are stored in a box in **room cupboards** and will be switched off or on silent whilst staff are on duty (unless in exceptional circumstances at the manager's discretion). **They can have access to their phones when on their lunch break, when in a room away from children or off the premises.**
- are not used to take pictures of the children attending the setting;
- will not be used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting;
- are not used to contact parents / carers or children except in the event of an emergency; and
- are not used by visitors.

## **16. Cameras, Photography and Images**

Most people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for acceptable reasons. However, due to cases of abuse to children through taking or using images, we must ensure that we have safeguarding in place.

To keep our children safe, we will:

- obtain parents' / carers' consent for photographs to be taken, used, or published (for example, on our website or displays); (registration form)
- ensure only the setting's designated cameras/tablets are used when photographing our children;
- ensure that children are appropriately dressed;
- ensure that children's names are not displayed by any photographs in a public space
- ensure that personal cameras are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting without prior explicit written consent from the setting;
- ensure that all images are stored securely and in accordance with statutory guidance; and
- ensure where professional photographers are used that the appropriate checks such as those with the Disclosure and Barring Service, references and parental consent are obtained prior to photographs being taken.





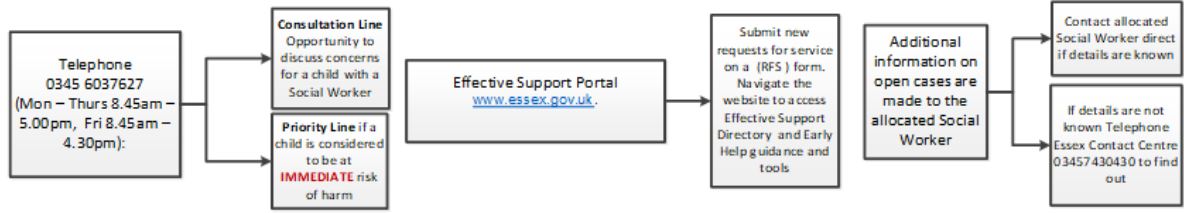




## **17. Attendance – See also Attendance Policy (May 2025).**

Regular attendance is important to a child's development, progress and wellbeing, and is encouraged at all times. Poor attendance can be a concern for a number of reasons;

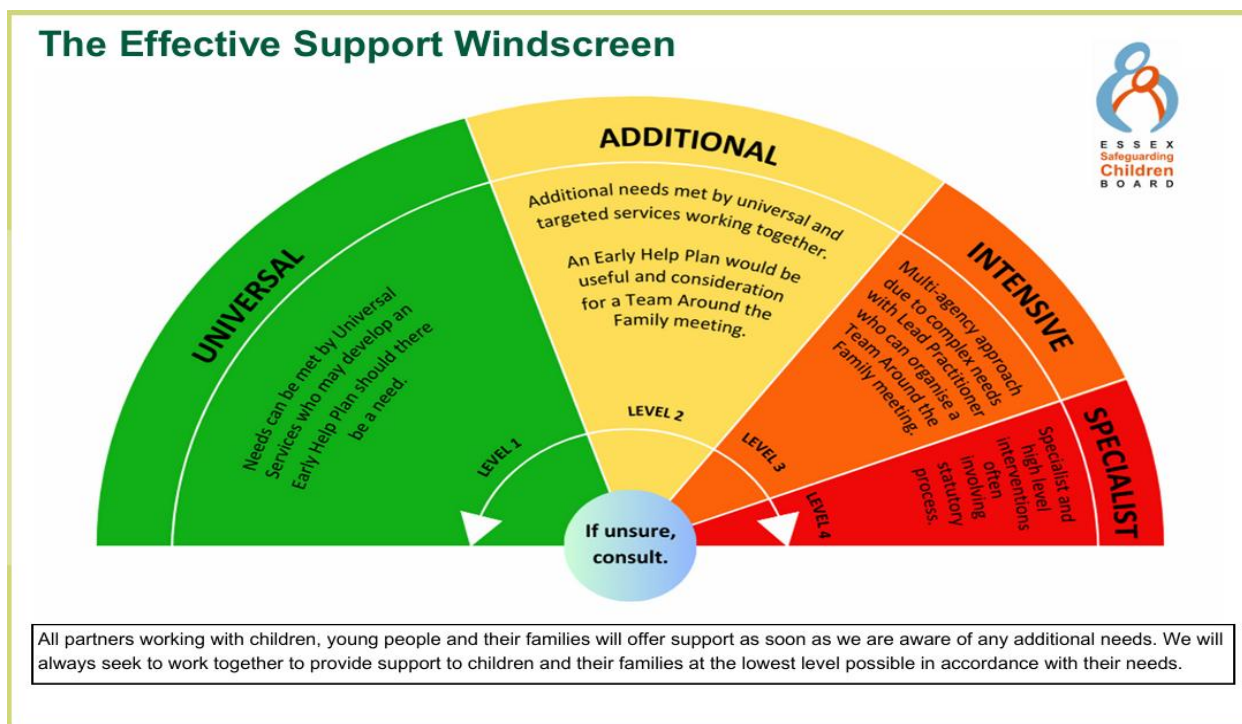
- It as a potential indicator of abuse or neglect
- It can significantly impact on a child's progress and/or wellbeing
- A child may be exposed to additional risks when not in the setting.

As part of safeguarding and attendance procedures, a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance is maintained and this data is used to identify patterns of absence as they emerge, to ensure concerns are addressed at an early stage. Parents are asked to notify the manager, either via email, Facebook message or phone call before 9 am each day their child will not be present. This allows us to keep track of attendance. We share expectations with parents about attendance & for reporting absence regularly on newsletters & on our website. They are also alerted to the fact that we will take action if their child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period. The Manager contacts the family by 9:30 (or 1 pm in an afternoon session) if a child has not arrived. Late arrivals are noted in the register, along with early leavers (signed by parent) & those who are late to be collected (again, signed by parent). Keeping a record of this allows us to notice patterns that may alert us to family issues / safeguarding concerns.

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

  <b>Children &amp; Families Service Map and Key Contacts 2021</b>  	
<b>Children &amp; Families Hub</b>	 <p>Telephone 0345 6037627 (Mon – Thurs 8.45am – 5.00pm, Fri 8.45am – 4.30pm):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation Line: Opportunity to discuss concerns for a child with a Social Worker</li> <li>Priority Line: if a child is considered to be at <b>IMMEDIATE</b> risk of harm</li> </ul> <p>Effective Support Portal <a href="http://www.essex.gov.uk">www.essex.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Submit new requests for service on a (RFS) form. Navigate the website to access Effective Support Directory and Early Help guidance and tools</p> <p>Additional information on open cases are made to the allocated Social Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact allocated Social Worker direct if details are known</li> <li>If details are not known Telephone Essex Contact Centre 03457430430 to find out</li> </ul>
<b>Effective Support Directory</b>	<p>A practitioner, child, young person or family member can directly access the <b>Effective Support Directory</b>. The directory provides a detailed list of a variety of Additional Level 2 services that are available in each quadrant</p> <p>The <b>Effective Support Directory</b> can be accessed electronically via The Essex County Council Website <a href="http://www.essex.gov.uk">www.essex.gov.uk</a>. Early Help resources and guidance is also available including information on Family Solutions, Early Help Plans, Team Around the Family and Lead Professional.</p>
<b>Emergency Duty Team</b>	<p><b>Emergency Duty Service (Immediate Out of Hours Response) No: 0345 606 1212</b> (Mon - Thurs 5.00pm – 8.45am, Fri 4.30pm – Mon 8.45am Inc. Bank holidays)</p> <p>(for non-immediate requests please contact the <b>Children &amp; Families Hub</b> within the working hours above)</p>
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b>	<p>The Essex LADO is specifically involved in cases where there is a concern or allegation that someone working or volunteering with children; has or may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence related to a child, behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children. They give advice and guidance on how concerns or allegations should be investigated against <b>adults</b> working with children.</p> <p>For advice please contact: <b>Essex duty LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Telephone: 03330 139 797</b></p> <p><b>Emergency Duty Service (Immediate Out of Hours Response) No: 0345 606 1212</b> (Mon - Thurs 5.00pm – 8.45am, Fri 4.30pm – Mon 8.45am Inc. Bank holidays)</p>
<b>Useful Resources</b>	   

# Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

Children with **Additional** needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools and other educational settings, 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 Essex 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 – types of abuse and harm

Information about abuse and harm including examples of specific safeguarding issues is set out below. Further information about types of abuse and harm is given in:

- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners](#) (HMG, 2015); and
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#) (DfE, 2025).

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. A child may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children – the four categories of abuse are:

- **Physical** - *may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent / carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.*
- **Emotional** - *the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.*
- **Sexual** - *forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.*
- **Neglect** - *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.*

## Signs of possible abuse

- **Physical** - children with frequent injuries, unexplained or unusual fractures / broken bones, unexplained bruises, or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks.
- **Emotional** - children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong; parents or carers who withdraw attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'; parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; parents or carers who humiliate their child (eg: name-calling / making negative comparisons).
- **Sexual** - children who display knowledge / interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age; children who use sexual language / have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have; children who ask others to behave sexually / play sexual games; children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections / underage pregnancy.
- **Neglect** - children living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe; children who are hungry or dirty; children without adequate clothing (eg: not having a winter coat, shoes); children living in dangerous conditions (eg: around drugs, alcohol or violence); children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm; children who fail to receive basic health care; parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

## Harmful Sexual Behaviour

It is normal for some children to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop. However, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive (derived from Hackett, 2014). It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour.

If a child's sexual behaviour is not healthy or age-appropriate, it's important to respond quickly before the behaviour becomes harmful to that child or other children, and to ensure they receive the right help at the right time to address the concerning behaviour. Staff are professionally curious about children's awareness around their bodies and the bodies of other children and that this is a part of their normal development but that we may need to manage more concerning behaviours. Concerns are shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately and an appropriate course of action is decided. We may need to contact the Child & Families Hub and discuss our concerns. This may result in a referral being made. This plan is in place to ensure all children are safeguarded in our care.

Harmful sexual behaviour in children can often be an expression of other problems or vulnerabilities. Children with harmful sexual behaviour will need a coordinated multi-agency response to assist them and their family. Many children may have specific needs that need to be identified and support offered whilst ensuring other children remain protected. A risk management plan should be agreed with all agencies supporting the child, which is developed and regularly reviewed separately from any child victims.

The Lucy Faithful Foundation have information to help you understand whether a child's sexual behaviour is expected for their age, or if it could harm them or other people. [Lucy Faithful Foundation](#)

Two of our Deputy DSL's (Sarah Cutts and Laura Neave) attended Harmful Sexual Behaviour training in February 2026.

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

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. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration.
- that they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others.
- the potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs.
- communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Children with SEND may require additional help and support to ensure they are appropriately safeguarded.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can also happen between adults who are related to one another and can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

Being exposed to domestic abuse in childhood is child abuse and can have a significant and lasting impact. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, but they can also experience it indirectly. Either can have a serious effect on a child's behaviour, brain development and overall wellbeing, and also compromise the child's basic need for safety and security.

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

## **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual safeguarding recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family and that children may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how these risks can be understood to keep children safe. It's an approach that's often been used to apply to adolescents, though the lessons can equally be applied to younger children.

## **Emotional wellbeing**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for them to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Wellbeing problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

### **Sleeping Child**

We will never accept a sleeping child onto the premises from the parent. We do not know the circumstance in which they have fallen asleep & the parent will be asked to wake them so we can assess their state. We will also never send a sleeping child home for the same reason & will wake them for their parent to protect ourselves.

### **Radicalisation, Extremism and the Prevent Duty**

Individuals are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism in the same way they are vulnerable to other safeguarding issues.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015) placed a duty on childcare providers and schools - under section 26 of the Act, childcare providers and schools are required, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

This duty is known as the **Prevent Duty**.

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from an educational setting may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

See separate Prevent Duty Policy, devised January 2023.

### **So-called 'Honour Based Abuse'**

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 flattening.

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

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

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

Information about FGM is available on the National FGM Centre website.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be

physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and multi agency guidelines, which are available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website. The Forced Marriage Unit can also provide advice and information: call 020 7008 0151 or email [fmf@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fmf@fcdo.gov.uk).

### **Breast Flattening**

Breast flattening is the process during which young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.

Information about breast flattening is also available on the [National FGM Centre](https://www.nationalfgmcentre.org/) website

### **Suitable People**

All staff existing and new, and other people working at Christchurch Nursery are checked for suitability, with Enhanced Criminal records disclosure before they begin. This is covered in detail in our employment policies.

We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.

Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that positions are exempt from the rehabilitation of offenders act 1974.

We have a record book for visitors to the setting, to sign, date and time. NO visitors, volunteers or students are left unsupervised at any time.

### **Staff to Child Ratio**

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children. The minimum statutory requirement is for:

- \*Children under 2 – one adult to three children.
- \*Children aged 2 - 3 - one adult to four children
- \*Children aged 3 and over - one adult to eight children

Our staff ratios and qualifications exceed requirements. Our Manager has a Primary Education (BA Hons) Degree, including Qualified Teacher Status (Level 6). Our Deputy Manager has a CACHE Level 3 Diploma. We have two members of staff with CACHE Level 2 Diplomas & ten staff with CACHE Level 3 and above. We have two members of staff that are unqualified.

### **Staff Taking Medication and Other Substances**

No member of staff is permitted to work under the influence of alcohol or other substance or medication that may affect their ability to care for children. Any staff medication is stored securely, out of reach of children at all times.

### **Looked After Children**

Children and young people become "looked after" if they have either been taken into care by the local authority or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, but a small number may be in a children's home, living with a relative, or even back with their natural parents.

Whatever the reason is for them being "looked after", they will have had a significant disruption in their young lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.

1. A looked after child must have been with a foster carer for a minimum of 2 months and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer. In addition, the Nursery placement must last longer than 3 months. For over 3 years old, the child must have been with a foster carer for at least 1 month and formed a secure attachment. The placement must last a minimum of 6 weeks.
2. We offer “stay and play” time to children still settling with their foster carer or who is only being looked after temporarily.
3. The key person for Looked after Children is one of the Designated Safeguarding Officers.
4. We liaise with professionals (child’s social care person and others) to ensure that the child has a care plan considering their emotional needs, culture and identity, sociability, interests and abilities, any behaviour management issues, any special needs to be supported. We also need to consider the social care department as the child’s “corporate parent” and the agency determine what takes place with the child especially with regard to the birth parent and foster carers role in relation to the setting. We need to consider what information is shared with the foster carer, what contact the child has with birth parent, supervised access etc.
5. We attend regular care plan review meetings engaging with fellow professionals in the best interests and support of the child.

### **Missing Child**

Our safe and suitable premises policy describes all the measures we take to ensure our children’s safety. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, we follow the following procedure:

- Alert the Manager and Deputy Manager, who will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden and will call police and then the child’s parent. Try to keep everyone as calm as can be possible.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security where a child could wander out.
- Manager talks to staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this on an incident report form (date/time/where went missing/which staff were present/what has happened).
- Police will deal with situation. Manager will carry out an investigation with the Committee where applicable.
- Manager to contact the following to advise them of the situation:
  - \*Social Care Initial Response Team
  - \*Essex County Council Safeguarding Lead
  - \*OFSTED 03001234234
  - \*Insurance Company

It may also be appropriate to contact EYA (Early Years Alliance) Law for legal support and advice and / or PLA press department for support and advice should a local paper wish to publish a story about the incident and how staff should respond to any questions that may be asked.

### **Managing the Incident**

Ensure any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable. Two members of staff, Manager, plus a Committee Representative to talk with parents privately. Other children will be worried too. Staff to focus on their needs but not to discuss with them or discuss with others in front of the children. Be honest with any children’s questions and reassure them. DO Not discuss with anyone without advice particularly press/social media.

This policy was adapted for Christchurch Pre-School Nursery from a template provided by Matt Lewis, Education Safeguarding Advisor, Essex County Council.

It was reviewed by Christchurch Pre-School Nursery Committee at a meeting in December 2025.

Signed

Manager

Committee Member

Date -