

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR REACH ESSEX

APPROVED BY Directors 29/01/20

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED 29/01/21

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR REACH ESSEX Ltd

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, 2019)

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the school Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

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

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

2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together \(HMG, 2018\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board \(ESCB\)](#).

In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

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

In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures \(ESCB, 2019\)](#) . Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#)

[Working Together \(HMG, 2018\)](#)

Education Act (2002)

[Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](#) (ESCB, 2017)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)

Children and Social Work Act (2017)

[Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)

[Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (DfE, 2018)

Children Act (1989)

Children Act (2004)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (DfE, 2018)

[Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide](#) (ESCB, 2018)

[Keeping pupils and staff safe – management of behaviour in schools, including use of physical contact and restrictive / non-restrictive physical intervention to address difficult and harmful behaviour](#) (ESCB, 2018)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) (Home Office, 2015)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance](#) (Home Office, 2018)

[Teaching on-line safety in schools](#) (DfE, 2019)

[Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice](#) (ECC, 2018)

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.

Directors

The Directors 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 is reviewed at least annually.

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

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

The Directors are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

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

If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

All REACH staff

Everyone in REACH has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it. They are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff members are aware of and follow school processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) – they do not assume that others have taken action.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019) defines abuse as the maltreatment of a child.

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

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

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

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

Peer on peer abuse

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. REACH understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

Serious violence

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

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

REACH understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. 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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. In Essex, the definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

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

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate. This [one page process map](#) sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

Child criminal exploitation

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

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

So-called 'honour-based violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

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

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

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

Prevention of radicalisation

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

It requires schools to:

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

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

REACH works in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate.

5. Procedures

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

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

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- 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 the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place 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 re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

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) and how to share concerns with them.

6. Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

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

7. 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 parents / carers or pupils), or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the designated lead (or deputy) 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.

8. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school 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. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online REACH privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

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

Any records related 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.

9. Interagency working

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If a child is subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

10. 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 the Staff Behaviour policy / Code of Conduct. REACH works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2019) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information on this.

REACH has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Directors. This role is distinct from the designated safeguarding lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the school operates within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2019) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Directors, must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. REACH does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

11. Promoting positive mental health and resilience in school

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

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

12. 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 are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

13. Whistleblowing

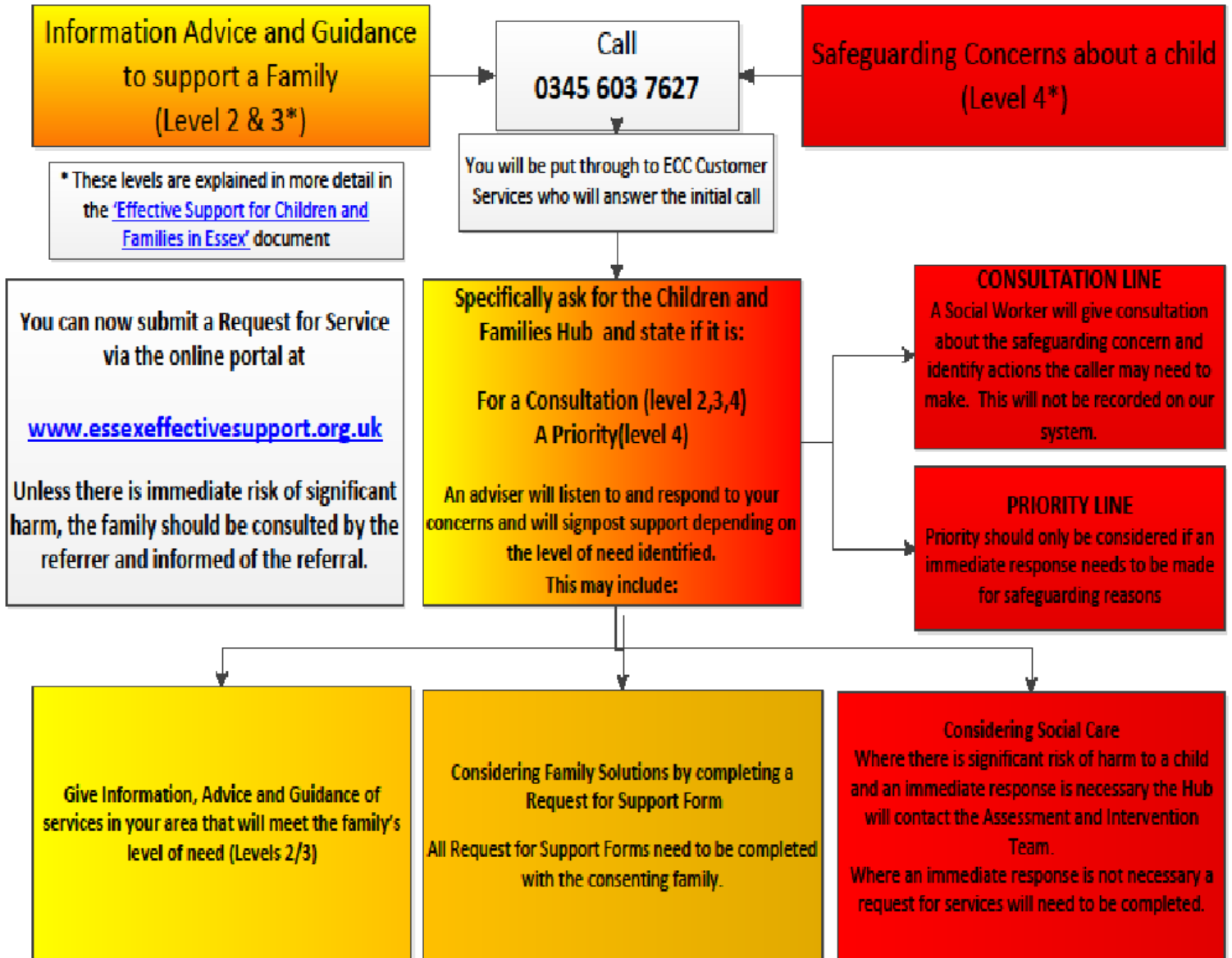
All members of staff should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concerns will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member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

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 .

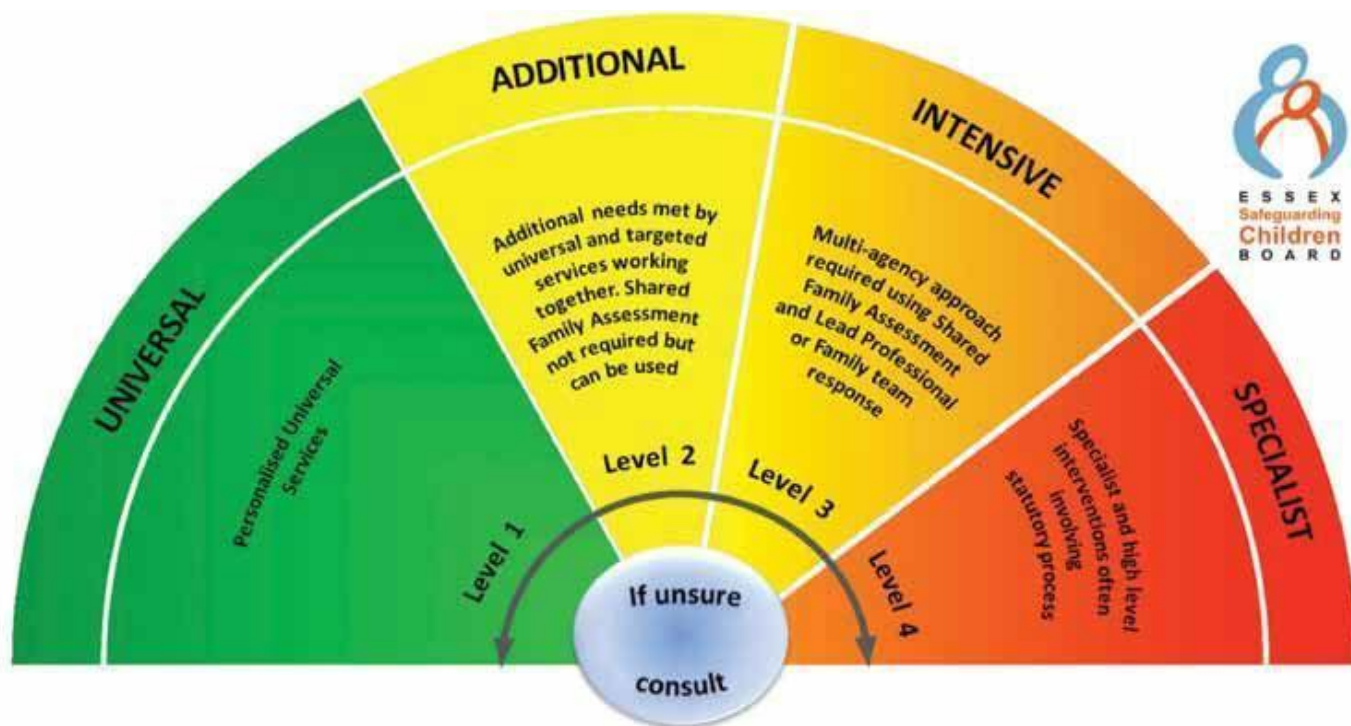
Appendix A: Children and Families Hub flow chart

Children and Families Hub Partner Access Map

(Mon-Thurs 8.45-5.30pm Fri 8.45-4.30pm) Out of Hours Tel no: 0345 606 1212



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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