



Colchester County High School for Girls

A3 Child Protection Procedures

COMMITTEE	Curriculum & Student Matters
SLT RESPONSIBLE	Kath Daniels Associate to SLT, Head of Year 10 & 11 and DSL
REVIEW	Yearly or following changes to Statutory Guidance
PROCEDURES REVIEWED	September 2025
REVIEW DUE	September 2026
APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY	November 2025

COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Safeguarding Key Contacts within the School

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

NAME: MRS KATH DANIELS kdaniels@cchsg.com

CONTACT NUMBER: 01206 576973

DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS CONTACT NUMBER: 01206 576973

NAME: MRS DAWN FROST dfrost@cchsg.com

DR SUZANNE PARROTT sparrott@cchsg.com

MRS KELLY SHARP ksharp@cchsg.com

MRS SINEAD HUGHES shughes@cchsg.com

MR BEN GORDON bgordon@cchsg.com

MR KRISTIAN KIDBY kkidby@cchsg.com

MR SEAN SNOW ssnow@cchsg.com

MR DAVID MAULKERSON dmaulkerson@cchsg.com

MRS SAM ASHWORTH sashworth@cchsg.com

SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS/CONCERNS REGARDING EMPLOYEES, GOVERNORS OR TRUSTEES: REPORT TO CEO/EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL, MRS GILLIAN MARSHALL BY EMAILING EP/CEO PA: tdunlop@cchsg.com

DESIGNATED CCHSG SAFEGUARDING AND WHISTLEBLOWING GOVERNOR

NAME: MRS DENISE GOODEY CONTACT EMAIL: DGoodey@cchsg.com

DESIGNATED ALPHA TRUST SAFEGUARDING and WHISTLEBLOWING TRUSTEE

NAME: MR ROGER COOKE CONTACT EMAIL: RCooke@cchsg.com

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

If you need to make a child protection referral, you should contact the Children & Families Hub (FOH) by calling **0345 603 7627** and ask for the **Children & Families Operations Hub**.

You must specify whether you want:

1. The Priority Referral line (for urgent referrals – if a child needs ‘immediate protection’) or
2. The Consultation line (for non-urgent referrals)

PRIORITY REFERRALS SHOULD ALWAYS BE REFERRED BY TELEPHONE

(if a child needs ‘immediate protection’).

Opening Hours: 08:45 to 17:30 Mon to Thurs; 08:45 to 16:30 Friday

OUT OF HOURS REFERRALS Phone: 0345 606 1212 or POLICE: 999

The Children & Families Request for Support online form should be used to make a referral (unless there is immediate risk) and to confirm a referral made by telephone (send within 48 hrs). This can be accessed through Essex Effective Support Portal www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk. A copy should be printed before sending.

A referral may need to be made to the appropriate agency for the student’s home location.

SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING EMPLOYEES:

Essex Children’s Workforce Allegations Management Team (LADO): **0330 139 797**

COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A3 CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

Alpha Trust & CCHSG believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people's development and learning, including keeping children safe. We understand that children and young people can and do experience social, personal and emotional barriers to their learning, over differing periods of time and at different stages of their development, which can have an effect on their academic learning. We recognise that education staff play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage.

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 2025)

The CCHSG Child Protection Procedures are 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:

- AT2 Alpha Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- AT19 Staff Code of Conduct
- AT P7 Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Policy
- AT P18 Management of Low Level Concerns Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 – DfE
- A4 Behaviour, Sanction & Rewards Policy
- 40 Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy
- A5 Anti-Bullying Policy
- 42 Attendance Policy
- 44 e-Safety Policy
- Pastoral Handbook for staff
- Staff Handbook

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 it underpins all systems, processes and policies. It

is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents/carers, governors and the wider school community. We believe that, only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

Context of the school

CCHSG is a selective grammar school for girls who are high performing, with a lower than national average number of disadvantaged and SEND students, however a significant proportion of students travel into school from outside the local area.

Although reported incidents of child protection, **child on child** abuse, bullying and racist incidences are low, CCHSG staff must always assume 'It can happen here' even if students do not always report every safeguarding concern.

In Alpha Trust, the term "Principal" is used to identify the person with responsibilities of headship within each Academy and who may be referred to locally as 'Executive Principal', 'Principal', 'Headteacher', 'Head of School' or 'Associate Principal'.

2. Expectations

All staff and volunteers must read and agree to these procedures before they start working with us. All children and their families will be provided with these procedures at enrolment. It is important for families to be aware of actions staff may take if there are any concerns for a child's safety, and for them to understand that they might not be consulted before action is taken. Knowing about child protection procedures ahead of time helps parents to engage better in the process, meaning that change is more likely to take place.

All adults working in our school who have contact with students are in positions of trust. Staff and volunteers should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.

This means that staff and volunteers:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
- must work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- must acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- must discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- must apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual orientation
- must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for our students
- must be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

3. What to look out for

Recognising children who are experiencing or at risk of harm

Keeping Children Safe in Education describes abuse as ‘a form of maltreatment of a child’. It sets out that:

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

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

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

In addition, Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains important information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Some of these, and our approach to them are highlighted below (refer to AT2 Alpha Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for our approach to all safeguarding issues).

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

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

CSE is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

“Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".

We recognise that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our 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, or a deputy safeguarding lead if the DSL is not available, will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

Child on child abuse (including sexualised behaviours)

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

Any incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern, and we will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as necessary and ensure that appropriate agencies are involved when required.

Our school recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. We understand there are many factors which may lead a child to display abusive behaviours towards other children, and that these matters are sensitive and often complex. We recognise our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of some students, particularly those who have experienced harm and trauma. We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, it is in the context of providing appropriate support to all students in our school where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will always take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour.

We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these. We use lessons and assemblies to teach students about healthy, positive relationships, how to report concerns, and to help them understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is. We aim to provide students with the language to report abuse and to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. We never assume, if abuse is not being reported, that it is not occurring in our school – we are vigilant to signs of abuse and promote a culture of safety and understanding. Child on child abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up" (refer to 40 CCHSG Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy).

Children who are absent from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. We recognise that good attendance begins with our school being somewhere our students want to be, and also that some students find it harder to attend school for a range of reasons. We will always try to understand underlying reasons for

absence and will work collaboratively with other partners to support students to attend school and to ensure that they receive the right help at the right time.

Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and we follow the procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. We believe that early intervention to address absence from school is vital, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where this does not happen, we will attempt contact with parents (parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to). Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Education Access Team, Social Care or Police). Our school informs the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more (refer to 42. Attendance Policy).

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day to ensure that there is an appropriate response to students who go missing (refer to AT2 Alpha Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy).

Children missing education due to a reduced education offer - part-time timetables

A reduced educational offer is an agreement made with a child, their parent/carer, and in some circumstances, the Local Authority to reduce the number of hours spent in education. A reduced educational offer will only occur in exceptional circumstances and where every other avenue to ensure a student receives their full-time education has been exhausted.

When a child is not in school, their vulnerability is increased. This can include increased risk of 'child exploitation', self-harming, radicalisation and other potential abuse or criminal activity. The potential harm that a child may suffer in the home i.e. neglect, exposure to domestic abuse or other safeguarding risks must also be considered.

When deciding whether a reduced educational offer is appropriate, the school considers the welfare and safety of the student and decisions are made in conjunction with other professionals involved. We work in accordance with the Essex guidance for children missing education due to a reduced education offer, ensuring that:

- An accountability and responsibility checklist has been completed.
- A risk assessment has been completed
- Approval and written agreement have been obtained from a parent/guardian

All requests for a reduced educational offer will be managed by the SENCO and authorised by the Associate Principal (Students), keeping the Executive Principal and CEO informed.

Risk in the community (RIC)/Contextual Safeguarding

RIC is the Essex partnership approach to tackling criminal and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors in the community, outside a child's home or our school. All staff are aware of 'contextual safeguarding' and we are therefore mindful of things in a child's life which may be a threat to their safety and / or welfare. We always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and will share it with other agencies when appropriate, to support better understanding of a child and their family. This is to ensure that our children and families receive the right help at the right time and to help keep our students safe.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can involve a wide range of behaviours and can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, and that it can take place inside or outside of the home.

Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse (either by witnessing or experiencing it) can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners, and we receive and share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

As part of our safeguarding arrangements and our work with safeguarding partners, our school has signed up to Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is a national initiative which aims to provide support to children who have experienced domestic abuse. It means the Police inform us if they have attended an incident of domestic abuse which involves a student on our roll, so that appropriate support can be put in place. Any information in relation to this will be held on the student's child protection file, as with any other safeguarding information.

Harmful sexual behaviour

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

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

We seek to teach our students about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe on and offline (refer to 40 CCHSG Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy).

Mental health

We recognise that good mental health for all our students and staff is very important, and we understand the part our school plays in this. We aim to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all students and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional

needs. We understand that there are risk factors which can increase someone's vulnerability and also protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in someone's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are needed to counter-balance these to promote resilience and keep children safe.

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

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

Online Safety

Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. We recognise that our students are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline including the use of AI. Whilst this presents many positive and exciting opportunities, we recognise it also presents challenges and risks, in the form of:

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

contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If required, the Safeguarding Team would report any such activity to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<http://apwg.org/>)

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

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

Filtering and monitoring

Filtering

Filtering software is used on the school network to prevent access to inappropriate internet sites, and to protect the computer systems. Online filtering involves using software or hardware tools to control and restrict access to harmful or inappropriate websites and content categories. This can include URL, keyword, or category-based filtering to help shield children from harmful material such as AI generated content, adult content, violence, drugs, extremism and hate speech.

Monitoring

Online monitoring is about observing and tracking our school community's digital activities, including web browsing, social media interactions and chat conversations. It aims to identify potential risks, rule violations, and raise alerts that can be acted on. Monitoring helps encourage students to become good digital citizens.

All Staff have a duty to report failings in technical safeguards which may become apparent when using systems and services. You should report if:

- You witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed.
- You can access unsuitable material.
- You are teaching topics which could create unusual activity on the filtering logs.
- There is a failure in the software or abuse of the system.
- There are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks.
- You notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material.

All staff are responsible for:

- Following school policies and procedures
- Providing effective supervision
- Taking steps to maintain awareness of how devices are being used by students.

All e-safety concerns must be recorded on an orange form and shared with the DSL, or Deputy DSL as soon as possible (refer to 44. e-Safety Policy).

Prevention of radicalisation

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

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion

- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

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

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

Serious violence

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

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

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

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. We understand that this form of abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

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

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

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

4. Early Help

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

CCHSG provides Early Help through:

- Form Tutor
- Pastoral Assistant
- Year Leaders
- Student Wellbeing Ambassadors
- MHST Team (Mental Health Support Team)
- YES Counsellor
- School Nurse services
- Referral to outside agencies for Early Help and support

This could involve just listening, monitoring or checking in, learning access provision or IHP, academic mentoring, home-school liaison, information sharing with subject teachers while respecting confidentiality.

5. Reporting a Concern

If you have a concern about a student's wellbeing, based on:

- a concern or worry a student or their parent has shared with you
- something you have noticed about the student's behaviour, health, or appearance i.e. something that may indicate abuse, self-harm or neglect
- an allegation is made
- a student displays concerning behaviour or produces concerning school work.

Pass all concerns in person immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL if they are not available.

Even if you think your concern is minor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a student. It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.

Do not investigate but decide whether you need to clarify your concerns by asking the student or parent open questions (beginning with words like who, how, why, what, where and when) and being careful not to lead them.

Clarify concerns using, if necessary, **TED: Tell, Explain, Describe**. Do **not** ask leading questions or make judgements.

Do not promise confidentiality or to keep a secret. Do not discuss your concerns with the parent(s) if this may increase the risk to the student.

If you have heard a disclosure of abuse or are talking with a student or parent about your concerns, let them know what you will do next. For example, 'I am worried about and I need to tell so that they can help us think about how to keep you safe.'

Inform the DSL immediately in person. If the DSL is not available, inform a Deputy DSL. Names are given at the start of these procedures. If none of the Designated Safeguarding staff or Principal are available, you must make the referral yourself. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures and on the sticker on the back of staff ID cards.

As soon as possible after the event, make a written record using the Orange Safeguarding Cause for Concern forms. Use the body map to record signs or indicators of abuse or self-harm if appropriate.

The Orange forms are available in the staff room, all pastoral offices and staff working areas. If there was a disclosure, record the words of the student or parent rather than your interpretation. Record what you saw or heard and why it is a cause for concern.

Although we encourage all staff to report safeguarding concerns via the DSL, any member of staff is entitled to report a safeguarding concern directly to the local authority if they do not feel able to refer the matter to the DSL or are unable to contact the DSL e.g. on a trip or out of hours. Details of how to do this are at the end of these procedures and on the sticker on the back of staff ID cards.

For all safeguarding concerns staff must without delay inform the DSL in person or by telephone, or one of the Deputy DSLs if the DSL is not available, as well as completing an Orange Cause for Concern Form.

6. Responding to a concern

On receipt of the concern the DSL or Deputy DSL will:

- Consider whether the child is at immediate risk of harm, e.g., mental health crisis, unsafe to go home.
- Speak to the student concerned – the voice of the student is important
- Speak to other students, staff, parents if appropriate
- Formulate a plan or strategy for in-school support, if appropriate
- Consult with and refer to other agencies, e.g., Local Authority Children’s Social Care, Mental Health Services, LADO, etc., and formulate an agreed course of action and support plan.
- Feedback to the person reporting the concern

The DSL will feedback to the person reporting the concern when they are able to do so, whilst maintaining confidentiality. The DSL will record all decision-making (including who and what confidential information has been shared with and why) and record actions taken in the student’s safeguarding file **on CPOMS**. Pastoral Leaders and Pastoral Assistants may also be asked to complete and record follow up actions on CPOMS. All follow ups, meeting notes and any further concerns including about the procedure, raised by staff, students or parents will also be recorded, with any subsequent actions.

7. If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

- Consult with DSL, Principal, Senior Leader
- Follow the school’s escalation procedures including reporting the concern yourself to the Local Authority
- Follow the Whistleblowing Procedures.

DSL:

- Review actions taken
- Re-refer and request further agency support
- Review any other intervention strategies e.g. parents accessing mental health services
- Consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer for further advice.

Students and Parents

- Speak to the DSL
- Inform the Principal
- Raise a concern following the Concern and Complaints Procedures (on school website).

8. Anonymous reporting

The school has a never acceptable anonymous reporting portal through the Whisper platform, accessed via the school website. <https://www.cchsg.com/neveracceptable/>

Although we always encourage students to come and speak to a member of school staff in person, by providing an anonymous link students can report any issue which is of concern to them to the school and if an email address is provided (which the school cannot see), a response with sources of advice and help can be given.

9. Safeguarding Concerns About Another Adult in the School

This part of the policy has two sections covering the two levels of concerns and allegations:

1. Concerns / allegations that may meet the harm threshold.
2. Concerns / allegations that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education as ‘low-level concerns’.

9.1 Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold

Safeguarding concerns about another adult in the school must be referred to the **Executive Principal** (or Associate Principals if the Executive Principal is unavailable), without delay. If the concerns are about the **Executive Principal**, they must be referred to the Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Trustee (see below).

They will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with students 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; or
- Behaved towards a student in a way that indicates they pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

9.2 Low- Level Concerns

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

Low-level concerns must be shared initially with the DSL or Associate Principals. If the DSL and Associate Principals are not available, then the Executive Principal should be informed. The DSL or Associate Principals will inform the Executive Principal of all the low-level concerns and

in a timely fashion according to the nature of the low-level concern. The Executive Principal/Principal is the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns.

In addition: Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If there is any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they will consult with the LADO.

If you feel your concern has not been responded to appropriately, please contact the Alpha Trust Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Trustee Roger Cooke (rcooke@cchsg.com)

10. Whistleblowing

If you are concerned about poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime, these should be raised with the Executive Principal or the Chair of the Local Governing Body, in the first instance. Please refer to ATP7 Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. The contact number is 0800 028 0285. This line is available from 8:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

11. Contact Details for Local Authority

Essex Children & Families Hub 0345 603 7627

Out of Hours 0345 606 1212

For advice before making a referral request the consultation line.

For an urgent referral i.e. for a child needing immediate protection request a priority referral. The Children & Families Request for Support online form should be used to make a referral (unless there is an immediate risk) and to confirm a referral made by telephone via the Essex Effective Support Portal www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk

A referral may need to be made to the appropriate agency for the student's home location (contact details are available from the DSL)

12. Reviewing these procedures

These procedures are reviewed at least annually and approved by the Local Governing Board. Copies of these procedures and supporting materials, such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, September **2025**), are available on the staff drive, in the Staff Quiet Room and on the school website. Hard copies may be requested from the school office.

Appendix 1: CCHSG safeguarding concern procedures

Appendix 2: The safeguarding incident journey



