



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, SENCO, and DSL
REVIEW	Yearly or following changes to Statutory Guidance
PROCEDURES REVIEWED	September 2023
REVIEW DUE	September 2024
APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY	November 2023

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: DR SUZANNE PARROTT sparrott@cchsg.com

MRS DAWN FROST dfrost@cchsg.com

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MRS KELLY SHARP ksharp@cchsg.com

MRS SINEAD HUGHES shughes@cchsg.com

MR KRISTIAN KIDBY kkidby@cchsg.com

MR SEAN SNOW ssnow@cchsg.com

MR DAVID MAULKERSON dmaulkerson@cchsg.com

Safeguarding allegations or concerns regarding employees, governors or trustees to be reported to Executive Principal, Mrs Gillian Marshall

DESIGNATED CCHSG GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING

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

DEPUTY DESIGNATED CCHSG GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING

NAME: MRS JANE HADLOW CONTACT EMAIL: JHadow@cchsg.com

DESIGNATED CCHSG GOVERNOR FOR WHISTLEBLOWING AND 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 2023)

The CCHSG Child Protection Procedures are for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and anyone involved in our community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our schools. It 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 2023 – 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:

- 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

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. 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.

CCHSG provides Early Help through

- Form Tutor
- Pastoral Assistant
- Year Leaders
- Student Wellbeing Ambassadors

- WARMS Team (Wellbeing and Resilience Mental Health Service)
- School Nurse services
- School Counsellor
- School Chaplain
- 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.

4. What to look out for

Recognising children who are experiencing or at risk of harm

Children can be harmed in several ways; abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or it can take the form of neglect (see Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) and AT2 Alpha Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy). Children sometimes suffer more than one type of abuse at a time. Children as well as adults can be abusers; **child on child** abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up” (**refer to 40 Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy**). Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our wider safeguarding duties: The Prevent Duty is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. Students may show changes in mood, behaviour, attendance or academic progress which could be indicators of a safeguarding concern and therefore need to be recognised and reported when they occur.

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. 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, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

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.

Filtering and monitoring

Filtering software is used on the school network to prevent access to inappropriate internet sites, and to protect the computer systems. This is to ensure students and staff are safeguarded from

potential harmful and inappropriate online material such as adult content, violence, self-harm, drugs and hate speech.

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).

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. Our school recognises that a child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children 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, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. 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.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Education Access Team, Social Care or Police). 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 children 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 has 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.

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 and 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 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 **2022**), 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



