



Every Opportunity for Every Child

Alpha Trust

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



Committee:	Board of Trustees
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Adopted by all Alpha Trust Academies	

Contents

Item	Page
Safeguarding contact details	5
Key contacts within Essex Local Authority	6
Children and Families Hub	
Out of hours referrals	
Safeguarding allegations or concerns regarding employees	
Section A	
Introduction	7
Policy Aims and Requirements	7
Policy Accessibility	9
Legislation and Statutory Guidance	10
Linked documents	10
Definitions and terminology	11
Roles and Responsibilities	12
• Prevention	12
• All staff	13
• Executive Principal/Principal/Headteacher/Head of School	14
• Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	15
• The Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s)	16
• The Designated Teacher	16
• Safeguarding Governance – The Board of Trustees	16
• Safeguarding Governance – The Local Governing Boards	17
The Alpha Trust schools 'written Child Protection Procedures	18
Recognising and reporting abuse	20
• Categories of abuse	20
• Body map for identifying possible abuse when reporting any concerns	21
• Annex A of KCSIE 2026	21
• Responding to a Child or Young Person making a Disclosure	21
• Responding to an Allegation of Child-on-child Abuse or when such Abuse is Suspected	22
• Responding to a Disclosure of FGM	23
• Responding to a Disclosure concerning Radicalisation and Extremism	23
• Removing Barriers	24
What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child	24
Professional Confidentiality	25
Record-keeping	25
Allegations about adults working in school	25
Abuse of Position of Trust	26
Students making allegations against staff	26
Use of Reasonable Force	26
Section B	
Abuse, neglect and exploitation	27
Recognising Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect	27
• Signs of Abuse in Children	27
• Risk Indicators	27
• Recognising Physical abuse	28
• Bruising	28
• Bite Marks	29
• Burns and Scalds	29

• Fractures	29
• Scars	29
• Behavioural Indicators	29
• Recognising Emotional Abuse	29
• Recognising Sexual Abuse	30
• Sexual Abuse by Young People	31
• Assessment	31
• Recognising Neglect	32
Safeguarding issues	32
• Child-on-child Abuse (including harassment and violence)	32
• Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CCE)	34
• Domestic Abuse	36
• Honour or faith-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)	36
• Forced Marriage	36
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	37
• What is FGM?	37
• Why is it carried out?	37
• Is FGM legal?	37
• Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening	37
• Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM	38
• The 'One Chance' rule	38
Mental Health	38
Self-harm	38
Serious Violence	39
Early Help/Family Help	39
Support before statutory intervention	39
Supporting Children	40
Risk in the community (RIC)	41
Children potentially at risk of greater harm	41
Looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children	41
Care Leavers	41
Students with SEND	42
Children who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	42
Supporting pupils who are questioning their gender	42
Students needing Intimate Care	42
Attendance and punctuality monitoring	42
Punctuality	42
Children Absent from Education	43
Online Safety	44
Mobile Phones	45
Remote Learning	45
Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism	45
Visiting Speakers	46
Work Experience (Secondary Schools)	46
Children Staying with Host Families	46
Private Fostering Arrangements	47
Bullying	47
Racist Incidents	47
Sharing Information	47

• The DSL: general information-sharing • The DSL: sharing child protection records • Pastoral Team	
Parents and Carers	49
Safeguarding training	49
Safer Recruitment • Following safer recruitment procedures • Volunteers • Site Security • Lettings • Contractors	50
Extended school, educational trips and visits and off-site arrangements	51
Whistleblowing	52
Monitoring and Evaluation	52
Appendix A - Legislation and Guidance	53
Appendix B – Safeguarding What to do in school	55
Appendix C – Flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a child	56
Appendix D – Actions taken once a referral has been made to children’s social care	57
Appendix E – Essex windscreen of need and levels of intervention	58
Appendix F – Missing Child Protocol – arrangements for children who have missing episodes	59
Record of amendments made	61

Safeguarding Contact details
Alpha Trust and its constituent schools

	Colchester County High School for Girls	The Gilberd School	Manningtree High School	Home Farm Primary School	The Trinity School
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Kath Daniels Email: kdaniels@cchsg.com Telephone: 01206 576973	Rebecca Litton Email: rlit@gilberd.com Telephone: 01206 842211	Nicki Gower Email: ngower@manningtreehigh.com Telephone: 01206 392852	Richard Potter Email: head@homefarmprimary.com Telephone: 01206 577430	Natalie Cook Email: cookn@thetrinityschool.co.uk Telephone: 01206 700910
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Suzanne Parrott Dawn Frost David Maulkerson Sinead Hughes Sean Snow Kelly Sharp Sam Ashworth Kristian Kidby Ben Gordon sparrott@cchsg.com dfrost@cchsg.com dmaulkerson@cchsg.com shughes@cchsg.com ssnow@cchsg.com ksharp@cchsg.com sashworth@cchsg.com kkidby@cchsg.com bgordon@cchsg.com	Nicola Hopwood Alison Philips Genine Sumner Simon Auton Email: nho@gilberd.com aph@gilberd.com gsu@gilberd.com sau@gilberd.com	Annie Greenhalgh (main DDSL) Ben Briggs Katie Mears Mark Edmondson Sarah Neville Helen Bailey Email: bbriggs@manningtreehigh.com kmears@manningtreehigh.com agreenhalgh@manningtreehigh.com medmondson@manningtreehigh.com sneville@manningtreehigh.com hbailey@manningtreehigh.com	Claire Arnold Emma Marks Rachael Child Clare Palmer Martha Lamb Email: senco@homefarmprimary.com rchild@homefarmprimary.com cpalmer@homefarmprimary.com carold@homefarmprimary.com mlamb@homefarmprimary.com	Joanne Sibley Robert Radley Jo Bonnett Email: sibleyj@thetrinityschool.co.uk radleyr@thetrinityschool.co.uk bonnettj@thetrinityschool.co.uk
Designated Teacher (LAC)	Kath Daniels Email: kdaniels@cchsg.com	Simon Auton Email: sau@gilberd.com	Nicki Gower Email: ngower@manningtreehigh.com	Richard Potter Email: head@homefarmprimary.com	Amy Lamb Email: lamba@thetrinityschool.co.uk
Designated LGB Safeguarding Governor	Denise Goodey Email: dgoodey@cchsg.com	Virginia Bevan Email: vbv@gilberd.com	Emma Donegan Email: edonegan@manningtreehigh.com	Emily Hale Email: Hale@homefarmprimary.com	Yemi Atiku Email: atikuy@thetrinityschool.co.uk
Designated LGB Whistleblowing Governor	Denise Goodey Email: dgoodey@cchsg.com	Linda Gous Email: lgu@gilberd.com	Sarah Rees Email: srees@manningtreehigh.com	Emily Hale Email: Hale@homefarmprimary.com	Vanessa McMahon Email: mcmahonv@thetrinityschool.co.uk
Board of Trustees					
Designated Safeguarding Trustee	Roger Cooke Email: rooke@cchsg.com		Designated Whistleblowing Trustee	Roger Cooke Email: rooke@cchsg.com	

Key contacts within Essex Local Authority

Children and Families Hub

If you need to make a child protection referral, you should contact the Children & Families Hub 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

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 [Children and Families Request For Support](#). A copy should be printed before sending.. A referral may need to be made to the appropriate agency for the student’s home location.

Before making a referral, staff should normally discuss concerns with the DSL. Where a referral is made directly by a member of staff because a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, the DSL must be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

Out of hours referrals

Phone: 0345 606 1212 or POLICE: 999

In cases of acute mental health issues, the SET CAMHS can be reached on 0800 953 0222 (out of hours: 0800 995 1000) or POLICE: 999.

Safeguarding allegations or concerns regarding employees

Essex Children’s Workforce Allegations Management Team (LADO): 03330 139 797

Alpha Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Section A

Introduction

1. Alpha Trust acknowledges its duty under education, safeguarding and child protection legislation and government statutory guidance, to keep children and young people safe and takes this responsibility seriously. The Trust recognises that it also has a moral duty to promote the well-being and security of all students and sets down three overarching principles in this policy:
 - **Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility.**
 - **The welfare of the child is paramount in all the work we do and all the decisions we make.**
 - **All safeguarding and child protection communications are timely, accurate and shared appropriately.**
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (everyone under the age of 18) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 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
3. The Trust understands that to best protect its students it must make sure that the following aims and requirements are understood by all staff and volunteers and are actioned.

Policy Aims and Requirements

4. Our policy has a series of key aims and requirements. Details of these are set out below together within information about how we action these aims and requirements. The personnel with the responsibility in each school for carrying out these actions will vary due to the different staffing structures and roles.

Aims of our safeguarding policy	How this aim is actioned
All staff are well-informed about what they should know and what they need to know.	➤ DSL / relevant school senior leaders remain informed on the latest safeguarding developments. ➤ In-school safeguarding training is regular, relevant and up-to-date.
All staff are aware of what they should do if they have concerns about the welfare of a child.	➤ In-school training is regularly given on school procedures. ➤ All staff know who the DSL and all other relevant staff are.
Adequate arrangements and procedures are in place in each school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering from harm.	➤ School child protection procedures are clear and regularly reviewed. ➤ Reporting procedures are robust and students are closely monitored.
All staff have read: • Keeping children safe in education 2026: for school and college staff (Part One); • Keeping children safe in education 2026 – Annex A – Further information [school and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children]	➤ All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and have the confidence to implement them. ➤ Staff have signed or acknowledged electronically to confirm they have read and understood these documents.

• Keeping children safe in education 2026 – Annex B – Role of the designated safeguarding lead • AT P14 Procedure for Dealing with Allegations Against Adults in School • AT P18 Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns Policy • AT P19 Alpha Trust Code of Conduct • Their school’s Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Procedures and child on child abuse policy.	
The Trust promotes a safeguarding culture; staff and volunteer commitment to safeguarding is serious and ingrained into their daily practice. Our schools promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.	➤ All staff have equal responsibility regarding safeguarding. ➤ Daily operational practices are sound – students are always ‘visible’ in all contexts in school and, e.g., their whereabouts known. ➤ In-school training is effective.
All staff work towards ensuring that each school provides a safe, positive, respectful and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the child.	➤ Schools align with the Trust Mission and Vision. ➤ This is a school leadership responsibility.
We recognise that education staff play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse, neglect or exploitation at an early stage and can institute early intervention to prevent concerns becoming more serious.	➤ Staff know the signs of neglect, abuse and exploitation and the indicators of safeguarding issues. ➤ ‘Early Help’ processes in school.
All children, regardless of age, sex, disability, culture, race, language, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection; we will carefully consider how we support all our children and students, including with regard to particular protected characteristics.	➤ Trust schools comply with the Equalities Act 2010. ➤ There are fit-for-purpose student monitoring, tracking and intervention processes in place.
We understand that some children are additionally vulnerable due to the impact of previous experiences; their current experiences; their level of dependency; having a heightened risk of exposure to abuse; isolation; mental health needs; witnessing abuse; if they are LAC or previously LAC; if they are asylum seekers; language difficulties or if they may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation (this list is not exhaustive).	➤ All children and young people are given the same protection regardless of any barriers they may face, in Trust schools. ➤ Appropriate safeguarding interventions and referrals are actioned. ➤ Staff know who any such students are and adjust practice accordingly, if appropriate.
All staff practice a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment: it is never acceptable.	➤ In-school training for staff. ➤ Appropriate lesson content for students. ➤ School Leadership and ethos in line with Alpha Trust Mission and Vision.
Students feel they are listened to, valued and respected.	➤ Trust schools have secure and safe learning environments. ➤ Students know who to speak to and have access to anonymous reporting or equivalent systems. ➤ Schools work with their students; student voice, student questionnaires.

Alpha Trust schools will work with other agencies in their areas under the shared and equal duty placed on the three Lead Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, the Police and Health services).	➤ Schools work in line with the statutory guidance – ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’.
The safety and wellbeing of children is ensured when adults, young people or children use the internet, social media, or mobile devices, including for school led learning and/or activities.	➤ School e-safety and IT policies and procedures are robust and up-to-date. ➤ Filtering and monitoring systems are fit for purpose. ➤ Trust cybersecurity testing in place.
All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous safer recruitment procedures	➤ All ‘Safer recruitment’ guidance is followed in all schools, with no exceptions. ➤ Alpha HR policies and procedures are adhered to.
Local Governing Board oversight of safeguarding in their school is robust	➤ LGBs receive regular safeguarding training. ➤ Each school’s child protection procedures are reviewed at least annually before approval by the LGB. ➤ LGBs receive safeguarding reports at least termly which include contextual safeguarding trends.
The Board of Trustees takes very seriously their strategic leadership responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements in Trust schools	➤ Trustees receive regular safeguarding training. ➤ Trustees receive termly schools’ safeguarding information in the CEO Report. ➤ Trustees receive reports from Alpha Trust external and internal safeguarding audits. ➤ There is a designated safeguarding Trustee who reports termly to the Board.
All students and staff involved in child protection issues receives appropriate support	➤ School wellbeing procedures.
Working in partnership with all stakeholders – children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies – is essential in promoting student welfare. All stakeholders are aware of and have access to safeguarding information, routes of reporting, who to contact, how to contact and what response may be expected from the school and any external agency involvement.	➤ Raise safeguarding awareness and understanding of issues with students through school assemblies, PSHE lessons, displays, projects, external speakers, ‘drop-down’ days, etc. ➤ Raise safeguarding awareness with parents and carers through all types of school communications, including websites, newsletters, bulletins, during parent consultation evenings, etc.
The Trust’s safeguarding duty extends to protecting all children involved in school-based activities, i.e., during educational trips and visits (including children staying with host families on foreign exchanges), during school lettings, third party hire of school premises, adults volunteering or working on site, private fostering.	➤ Educational trips and visits have quality assured risk assessments, e.g., using EVOLVE. ➤ Schools’ Lettings Policies reflect the expectations laid out in this policy. ➤ Contractors’ identity and DBS status are checked on school entry.

Policy Accessibility

5. In order to meet statutory requirements, each school in the Trust will:

- Ensure this policy is available on the school website.
- Place an electronic copy of the policy in the staff area of the school computer system.
- Make available paper copies on request.

- Raise safeguarding awareness through, for example, the school newsletter/bulletin, assemblies, class/form tutors, staff meetings, displays and posters, staff CPD, parent information evenings and all other appropriate communications, including to parents and carers.
 - Ensure support is offered to parents or carers where English is a second language, to assist understanding of the content of the policy.
6. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at the beginning of the academic year and for new staff, at induction. All staff receive at the same time:
- The current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One, Annex A and Annex B.
 - AT P19 Alpha Trust Code of Conduct.
 - Details of their school's Local Child Protection Procedures.
 - The school's Behaviour Policy.
 - Student Code of Conduct.
 - AT P14 Procedure for Dealing with Allegations against Adults in School policy.
 - AT P18 Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns policy.
 - At P22 Alpha Trust Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy
7. The new staff member will sign to evidence that induction has been completed.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

8. This policy is based on the following Department for Education's statutory guidance:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 ([KCSIE 2026](#))
 - 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' ([Working together to safeguard children](#)) is government guidance 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. In Essex, these arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB - [Welcome to the Essex Safeguarding Children Board - Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)). The statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and the NHS Integrated Care Board covering the county.
9. In addition to national statutory guidance, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#).
- 10. Appendix A details additional legislation and statutory guidance on which this policy is based (this is not an exhaustive list).**
11. Advice can be found in the DfE document, 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused - Advice for Practitioners' ([What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)).

Linked documents

12. This policy links to the following Alpha Trust policies and procedures:
- AT P14 - Dealing with Allegations Against Adults in Schools
 - AT P18 - Management of Low-level Concerns
 - AT P19 - Code of Conduct
 - AT P10 - Recruitment Policy
 - AT 1 - Concerns and Complaints Policy
 - AT P7 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - AT 4 - Health and Safety Policy
 - AT P22 – Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy

13. It also links to the following school policies and procedures (N.B., each Trust school uses different terminology and the content organisation of their policies may also differ):

- School Child protection procedures; reviewed and updated at least annually.
- Attendance Policy and Procedures
- E-safety/Acceptable use of ICT (students and visitors)/Mobile Device Use Policies and Procedures
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies and procedures
- Student Behaviour Policy / Student Code of Conduct
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- RSHE Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- First aid procedures
- Curriculum policy
- Supporting students with medical conditions
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Educational Trips and Visits
- Equal access
- SEND Policy
- Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy
- Equality Policy

Definitions and terminology

14. The key terms used in the document are defined below.

- **Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children means (from ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’):
 - 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.
- **Child protection** is part of the definition of safeguarding and refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who are identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering, significant harm.
- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. (Paragraphs 81-111 describes the main categories and signs of abuse). Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. 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 by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.
- **Child/children** includes everyone under the age of 18.
- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school or Trust, full time, part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, e.g., stepparents, foster carers, adoptive parents.
- **DSL** refers to the designated safeguarding lead at the school.
- **DDSL** refers to the deputy designated safeguarding leads at the school.
- **LGB** refers to Local Governing Board of each school.
- **KCSIE** refers to the DfE statutory document, ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ which is reviewed and amended for each academic year.
- **Victim.** In places, this policy uses the term ‘victim’. This is a widely recognised and understood term. Not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described

in that way and Trust staff will use any term the child feels most comfortable with when managing an incident.

- **Prevent** – The Prevent duty is part of the wider safeguarding obligations and requires education providers to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- **Harmful sexual behaviour** – Keeping Children Safe in Education defines Harmful Sexual Behaviour as sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people that is developmentally inappropriate, is abusive, or is otherwise harmful.
- **Perpetrators and alleged perpetrator(s)**. Although these are widely used and recognised terms, Trust staff will consider carefully what terminology they use, especially in front of children, when dealing with incidents. This is because abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator as well as the victim.
- **Low-level concerns**. 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 may have acted in a way that:
 - Is inconsistent with the Alpha Trust Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
 - Does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough, to consider a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) - but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.
- **Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes** is where children share nude or semi-nude images, such as photographs, videos or live streams. This also includes images that are digitally altered or wholly AI-generated (sometimes called ‘deepfakes’ or ‘deep nudes’) that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images requires a safeguarding response whether they are consensual or non-consensual.

Roles and Responsibilities

15. Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone’s responsibility**; all adults working with or on behalf of children have a duty to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Governors and Trustees in Alpha Trust.
16. Our policies and procedures also apply to extended school and offsite activities.
17. Each school in the Trust has its own context. Some safeguarding and child protection roles in one school may be taken by just one member of the leadership team whereas in another school, a number of senior leaders may take separate responsibilities.

Prevention

18. Trust schools play a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children and young people with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.
19. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children’s welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
20. Well-trained staff with the confidence to take action on behalf of a student’s welfare and prevent them coming to harm is key to robust safeguarding and child protection procedures and good outcomes in our schools.
21. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict. Our schools have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

22. Trust schools will:

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos, in line with the Trust Mission and Vision, where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- To do this the school will:
 - empower staff to be continuously vigilant, ‘professionally curious’ regarding child protection issues and to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’.
 - create an environment that prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.
 - create the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.
 - be clear about staff professional expectations, especially around confidentiality (Alpha Trust Code of Conduct).
- Include regular consultation with students, e.g., through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying activities, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes and school organisations such as Student Voice.
- Ensure that all students know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE/RSHE opportunities, which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm, the safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies, social media, personal safety, etc., and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- Provide anonymous reporting systems for students and young people to access.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Alpha Trust Code of Conduct.

All staff

23. The [Teachers’ Standards](#) state that **teachers** (which includes the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School) should safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Teachers’ Standards sets out expectations that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of students, including those with mental health needs.

24. In particular, **all Trust staff** must:

- contribute to the provision of a safe learning environment for all children.
- understand that school staff are particularly important regarding safeguarding of children because they are in a position to identify concerns early, promoting children’s welfare and preventing concerns from escalating – staff must be prepared to identify children, and young people, who may benefit from early help.
- read and understand at least Part One of KCSIE and review this guidance at least annually
- sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to confirm that they have read and reviewed the guidance
- know the school’s safeguarding and child protection procedures, in particular how to report issues, and always follow them.
- be aware of the role and identity of the school’s DSL.
- if anything is unclear in the school’s child protection procedures, to immediately seek clarification and be satisfied with the answer.
- know who the other relevant safeguarding personnel and pastoral staff are in the school, e.g., DDSLs, Heads of Year, Key Stage Leaders.
- be aware of safeguarding and child protection issues at all times; know the signs of different types of abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery and the safeguarding issues such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines) described in KCSIE.
- be aware that pupils can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home or school and also online.
- be aware that safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm, including:
 - Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse

- Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
- know how to make a referral to social care if there is a need to do so.
- know the process for community-based Family help assessments as outlined in paragraph 13 of KCSIE 2026
- maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
- never assume that 'someone else' has taken action; always act on concerns and report immediately to the DSL, or other relevant person named in the school's child protection procedures.
- know what to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- model best practice in when responding to a Child or Young Person Making a disclosure as outlined in paragraph 47.
- contribute to any school safeguarding systems review process.

25. Employees are required immediately to notify the Trust if they are or become:

- subject to any change in their circumstances that affects their right to work in the United Kingdom;
- barred from working with children or vulnerable adults;
- the subject of a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or any successor body;
- the subject of a referral to, or a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency, or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other country;
- the subject of a referral to, or proceedings before, the Department for Education or other appropriate authority where consideration was given to imposing a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- the subject of any change in circumstances which has or may result in them being disqualified from providing childcare in connection with early or later years provision or from being directly involved in its management;
- investigated, arrested, charged or convicted of any criminal offence;
- subject to an investigation for any allegation of a disciplinary nature at any other employer or organisation at which they are a volunteer;
- in receipt of a police caution, reprimand or warning, or if there is a formal child protection investigation of the employee or any member of their household; or aware of any circumstances (whether related to the employee or anyone with whom they have an association) that may reasonably be considered to pose a risk or an increased risk to children

The Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School

26. The Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding. They are also accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and their school's compliance with it and the associated safeguarding-related Alpha Trust and school policies.
27. The Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School is also responsible for ensuring that their school's Child Protection Procedures follow this policy and all statutory guidance (in particular the latest version of KCSIE) and that the school's Child Protection procedures are robust and regularly reviewed.
28. The Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School must ensure that all staff follow statutory safeguarding guidance and the requirements of this policy.

29. In addition, the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School must:
- ensure that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of the school's Child Protection Procedures;
 - ensure that all staff follow the school's procedures;
 - ensure the school's Child Protection Procedures and the identity of key safeguarding personnel are communicated to parents and carers when their child joins the school and to all parents and carers via the school website, newsletters, bulletins, etc., and that this is regularly updated;
 - ensure that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent;
 - ensure that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is updated regularly;
 - ensure the LGB receives appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, at the beginning of each academic year and that this is regularly updated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

30. Each Trust school has a named DSL whose details are in the school's Child Protection Procedures and in this policy. The DSL in each school has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They are a senior member of staff with the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post.
31. To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, schools should implement robust cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to illness, leave, or other circumstances. This could, for example, include a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored, and acted upon without delay.
32. Annex B of KCSIE 2026 describes the role of the DSL in detail: Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026. The DSL will:
- manage child protection referrals.
 - work with other agencies.
 - ensure referrals to Social Care (Children and Families Hub) and / or the Police are timely and made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.
 - ensure all staff are appropriately trained, including Prevent training.
 - raise awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times.
 - take the lead on understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and the processes in place in their school, which ensure online safety (KCSIE 2026).
 - provide safeguarding training for the LGB.
 - keep records of the safeguarding training which has been delivered.
 - raise awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures throughout the school.
 - ensure that all personnel working in the school, including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of the child protection procedures and that they are followed at all times.
 - ensure the name of the DSL and deputy DSL(s) for Safeguarding and Child Protection are clearly advertised in the school.
 - act as a source of advice and support for other staff regarding child protection matters.
 - work with Local Authorities when required.
 - oversee the school's safeguarding and child protection recording processes, making sure detailed reports of all concerns are made and that they are stored securely with access to such records being strictly controlled.
 - ensure that information is shared appropriately, for instance on a 'need to know' basis, and in a timely manner (Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners).
 - ensure that safeguarding information is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, reviewed and actioned promptly at all transition points, including in-year moves.
 - provide reports to school senior leaders, and to the LGB, as required and in a timely manner.

- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions.
- as Prevent lead (where applicable), ensure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s)

33. The Deputy DSL (DDSL) is trained to the same level as the DSL and in the absence of the DSL, carries out their functions. A school may have more than one Deputy DSL.

The Designated Teacher

34. Depending on local need, schools may have a designated teacher who has lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of students who are looked after (LAC) through working with the Local Authority and assisting school staff in their understanding of what may affect how looked after children learn and achieve.
35. Virtual school heads (VSHs) are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority which they work for; the designated teacher will work with the VSH to discuss how best to support the progress of the child in the school and to meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan. They also promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children. Virtual School Heads also have a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of all children in kinship care.

Safeguarding Governance - The Board of Trustees

36. The Board of Trustees has strategic leadership responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements in the Trust's schools and must ensure that the schools comply with their duties under legislation and follow statutory guidance.
37. Under the Alpha Trust Scheme of Delegation, the Trust delegates safeguarding and child protection responsibilities to the Local Governing Boards (paragraph 111-112).
38. The Board of Trustees will:
- ensure that all Trustees and Local Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction and read the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education document, being aware of the changes to KCSIE at the beginning of each academic year on changes to KCSIE and any significant or emergent safeguarding issues.
 - appoint a safeguarding Trustee with an agreed remit.
 - ensure Trustees have an overview of Trust safeguarding effectiveness via termly reports from the CEO and the Safeguarding Trustee and intermittently from any Trust-wide safeguarding-related audits.
 - ensure all LGBs understand their delegated role in monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and child protection procedures in their school (paragraphs 39-41).
 - ensure LGBs appoint a safeguarding Governor with an agreed remit.
 - aside from Alpha Trust policies, ensure each school has:
 - written child protection procedures
 - a Student Behaviour Policy/Student Code of Conduct which includes online safety and safe behaviour.
 - recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust.
 - ensure Trust schools and organisations operate 'safer recruitment' practices.
 - ensure Trust schools review regularly their Single Central Record (SCR).
 - ensure Trustees and Governors have undergone enhanced DBS checks.
 - Ensure that as part of their safeguarding training staff understand their role, responsibilities and the expectations placed on them, regarding the filtering and monitoring systems which provide for online safety in their schools (KCSIE 2026) and review the DfE's online safety guidance: [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring: core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Safeguarding Governance - The Local Governing Boards

39. Under the Alpha Trust Local Governing Board (LGB) Terms of Reference, the LGB of each school is responsible for adopting this policy and overseeing its effective employment throughout their school. They are also responsible for holding their school's leadership to account for the school's 'quality of care', of which this policy is a key element.
40. In particular, LGBs must:
- ensure the school's approach to safeguarding has the best interests of the child central to all its safeguarding systems and procedures.
 - ensure they receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction and that they are then regularly updated; in particular, reading the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education document, being aware of the changes to KCSIE and emergent safeguarding issues. This training is essential to equip Governors with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in their school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.
 - ensure that all staff who work directly with children read at least Part One of Keeping Safe in Education (KCSIE) and those staff who do not work directly with children read Part One of KCSIE
 - ensure the school's child protection procedures are reviewed at least annually
 - ensure the school's child protection procedures and its safeguarding training are effective and comply with the law and Trust policies.
 - ensure the LGB has a named safeguarding governor who takes strategic responsibility at LGB level for safeguarding arrangements in the school and whose details are in this policy and in the school's child protection procedures (this cannot be a staff governor).
 - ensure the school has a named DSL, and at least one named DDSL, in place whose details are in this policy and in the school's child protection procedures.
 - ensure every DSL, and any DDSLs undertake all relevant training and keep themselves up to date.
 - ensure the school follows statutory and local guidance when involved in multi-agency working including Working together to safeguard children.
 - ensure safeguarding and child protection information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - ensure that all adults in the school who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training on induction.
 - ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training at the start of each academic year and have read the relevant section in the current KCSIE.
 - ensure that staff also receive regular training and updates on specific and current safeguarding issues.
 - ensure students are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through teaching and learning opportunities, through designated PSHE lessons and from external providers as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
 - ensure mandatory subjects (Health Education, Relationships Education for primary schools, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education for secondary schools) are taught, in line with government regulations.
 - ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems which are reviewed at least annually to ensure they are effective.
 - be responsible for ensuring the school follows 'safer recruitment' procedures and the relevant Trust HR policies, including DBS checks, and that recruitment record-keeping is in line with safeguarding requirements.
 - ensures volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.
 - ensure that the school has the following policies and procedures:
 - a behaviour policy, which includes measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - a staff code of conduct policy (AT P19), low-level concerns policy (AT P18), allegations against staff policy (AT P14) and whistleblowing policy (AT P7), and a policy outlining acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), and
 - appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods.

- be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the data protection laws.
- where reasonably possible, schools hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

41. It is recommended that:

- LGBs receive a report from the DSL at least termly which contains no personal details or information likely to lead to the identification of an individual but does provide information on the different types of safeguarding incident, the number of concerns raised by staff, the number of referrals, safeguarding trends and context.
- LGBs receive an annual report from the designated teacher, if applicable

Alpha Trust schools' written Child Protection Procedures

42. Each Alpha Trust School has its own written Child Protection Procedures which reflect the following requirements:

- a) The school's written procedures align with KCSIE 2026 and this policy.
- b) The written procedures describe how the school will promote a robust safeguarding ethos:
 - staff will be empowered to be continuously vigilant, 'professionally curious' regarding child protection issues and to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
 - the procedures should refer to how the school will create an environment that prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.
 - the procedures should describe how the school will create the right culture and environment so that staff feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.
 - staff professional expectations, especially around confidentiality, are clearly set out (Alpha Trust Code of Conduct).
- c) Those responsible in schools for formulating their school's Child Protection Procedures are advised to consider:
 - KCSIE 2026 [Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026](#) and part 2 in particular; 'The Management of Safeguarding.'
 - all of this policy but in particular paragraph 3, 'Policy Aims and Requirements', which is the framework for Alpha Trust's approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- d) All action will be taken in accordance with:
 - The SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) procedures - [SET Procedures](#) – with which all professionals in Essex must work in accordance.
 - Essex Effective Support: [Resources for practitioners: Effective support resources | Essex County Council](#).
 - KCSIE 2026 [Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026](#)
 - [Working together to safeguard children](#).
 - Local guidance from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) can be found at: [escb.co.uk](#).
 - [the Prevent duty](#) (Prevent flow chart paragraph 50)
- e) Our schools work with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm: [Working together to safeguard children](#). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of 'Early Help/Family Help' (paragraphs 160-162) when additional needs of children are identified as well as contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support.
- f) All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected or actual abuse or disclosures of abuse, neglect or exploitation:

- identification of abuse (paragraphs 43-44), Recognising the signs of child abuse and neglect, (paragraphs 81-111), Recognising signs of CSE and CCE (paragraphs 124-136).
 - responding to a disclosure (paragraphs 47-68).
- g) Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor **must** refer any concerns to the school's DSL or Deputy DSL - see page 5 for Safeguarding contact details.
- h) If the DSL or DDSL is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff and visitors have open access to safeguarding support. To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, schools should implement robust cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to illness, leave, or other circumstances. This could, for example, include a confidential shared mailbox or equivalent system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received, monitored, and acted upon without delay.
- i) If the DSL or DDSL assess the risk of harm is immediate, they will refer straight away to the relevant Social Care provider (for instance, Essex Hub: [Support for children, young people and families | Essex County Council](#)) and /or the police in the case of suspected FGM, CSE, CCE or serious violence, including domestic abuse.
- j) If the DSL or DDSL assess the risk of harm as less urgent, the school may contact Social Care or seek advice from the relevant social care provider or another appropriate agency.
- k) Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are on page 6 of this policy and therefore all staff members have access to urgent 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. Staff must Inform the DSL as soon as possible if they make a referral directly.
- l) Informing parents and carers:
- Wherever possible, schools will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents and carers unless it is felt that to do so would put the child at risk of more harm or would impede a criminal investigation.
 - If it necessary for another agency to meet with a child in school, parents or carers will be informed, unless the school is advised not to do so by that agency.
 - If necessary, advice will be sought from Social Care or the Police concerning when to share information with parents and carers
- m) If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child after action has been taken and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the DSL.
- n) All staff should know how to make a referral to social care (paragraph 55).
- o) New staff, volunteers and regular visitors are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, know the name of the DSL (and Deputy DSLs) and know how to inform them of any safeguarding concerns they may have.
- p) What to do about safeguarding concerns regarding other adults in school is described (paragraphs 69-76).
- q) Information about the use of reasonable force in the school's particular context is described (paragraphs 77-79).

- r) Attendance is part of safeguarding and includes knowing the whereabouts of children on site during the school day. The school's written procedures should take into account the information and procedures in paragraphs 178-189 of this policy, regarding attendance and punctuality monitoring
- s) Record-keeping (paragraphs 64-68), professional confidentiality (paragraphs 61-63) and Information sharing is outlined (paragraphs 220-237).
- t) Whistleblowing processes in Alpha Trust are outlined (paragraphs 257-260).

Recognising and reporting abuse

Categories of abuse

43. All staff must know the signs of abuse. 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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others... 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 by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse."*

There are four categories of abuse referred to in the document Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

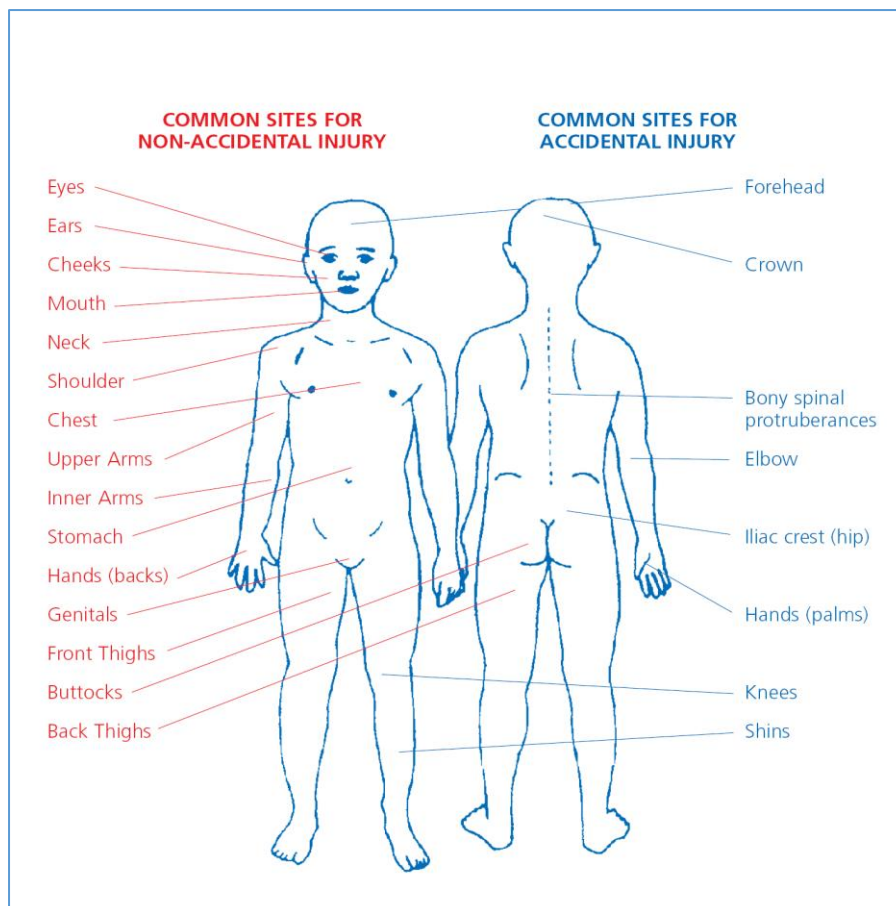
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Additional safeguarding issues, include child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, serious violence, modern slavery, honour-based abuse, online abuse and child-on-child abuse.

44. All staff are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that children or young people who may be in need of protection can be supported. Section B of the policy includes the following information:
- Categories of Abuse
 - Signs of Abuse in Children
 - Risk Indicators
 - Recognising Physical Abuse
 - Recognising Emotional Abuse
 - Recognising Sexual Abuse
 - Recognising Neglect

Body map for identifying possible abuse when reporting any concerns

45. Depending on age and context, injuries may present in differing areas. As a Trust, we question and challenge anything that raises suspicion.



46. Annex A of KCSIE 2026 Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026 contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Alpha Trust school leaders and staff who work with children and young people directly **must** read this Annex. It contains further information on:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents.
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- County lines.
- Children and the court system.
- Children missing from education.
- Children with family members in prison.
- Cybercrime.
- Domestic abuse.
- Homelessness.
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism.
- Preventing radicalisation.
- The Prevent duty.
- Channel.
- Serious Violence.
- So-Honour-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage).
- FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers.
- Forced marriage.
- Additional advice and support.

Responding to a Child or Young Person making a Disclosure

47. It takes a lot of courage for a child to make a safeguarding disclosure. They may feel shame or humiliation, may have been threatened by their abuser not to disclose, may have lost all trust in adults or been told that it is they who are at fault. Sometimes a child or young person is not aware that what is happening is abuse.

In addition, a child's personal vulnerability disability, sexual orientation or lack of English may make it difficult for children or young people to talk about abuse.

Staff should:	Staff should not
- Listen carefully. - Remain calm, not show shock or upset or be judgemental - Let the child lead the conversation. - Reassure the child it is not their fault - Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking out - understand the barriers to coming forward which children and young people may face and may be experiencing; - Reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe. - Ask open questions. Staff may wish to use the acronym 'TED' as a reminder that the child can be encouraged to 'Tell', 'Explain' and 'Describe' the concern. - Reflect back what the student is saying. - Make accurate notes afterwards (using the student's words) - Explain what happens next and who in the school will be taking appropriate action on behalf of the child or young person. - Follow the schools safeguarding concern reporting procedures. - Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.	- Promise confidentiality. - Give the child the impression they are creating a problem by disclosing abuse. - never give the impression of judging a child or young person and to make them feel ashamed for making a report; - Ask leading questions. - Use their own words to describe something. - Investigate. - View any inappropriate material such as images, text conversations, etc.

Responding to an Allegation of Child-on-child Abuse or when such Abuse is Suspected

48. See paragraphs 114-122 for information on Child-on-child abuse.

All staff:

- Must tell the DSL immediately and record the allegation but **must not investigate** it. Where the report includes an online element, a key consideration is for staff not to view, download or forward illegal images of a child.

The DSL:

- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
- Whenever sexual violence has occurred or is disclosed the DSL will ensure that both the "victim(s)" and the "perpetrator(s)" are formally referred to children's social care. This will be in addition to reporting the matter to the Police. Sexual violence includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault. Children under 10 are below the age of criminal responsibility. Therefore, if they engage in child-on-child abuse it is referred to as harmful sexualised behaviour rather than sexual assault. However, this should not deter schools from taking it seriously and formally referring both the "victim(s)" and the "perpetrators(s)" to children's social care.
- The DSL will record a risk assessment and support and protection plan for all children involved – the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any other child affected – with a named adult they can talk to if needed but the choice of any such adult should be the child's.
- The DSL will contact the relevant children and adolescent mental health services (e.g., EWMHS, CAMHS), if appropriate.

Responding to a Disclosure of FGM

49. See paragraphs 144-149 for information on FGM.

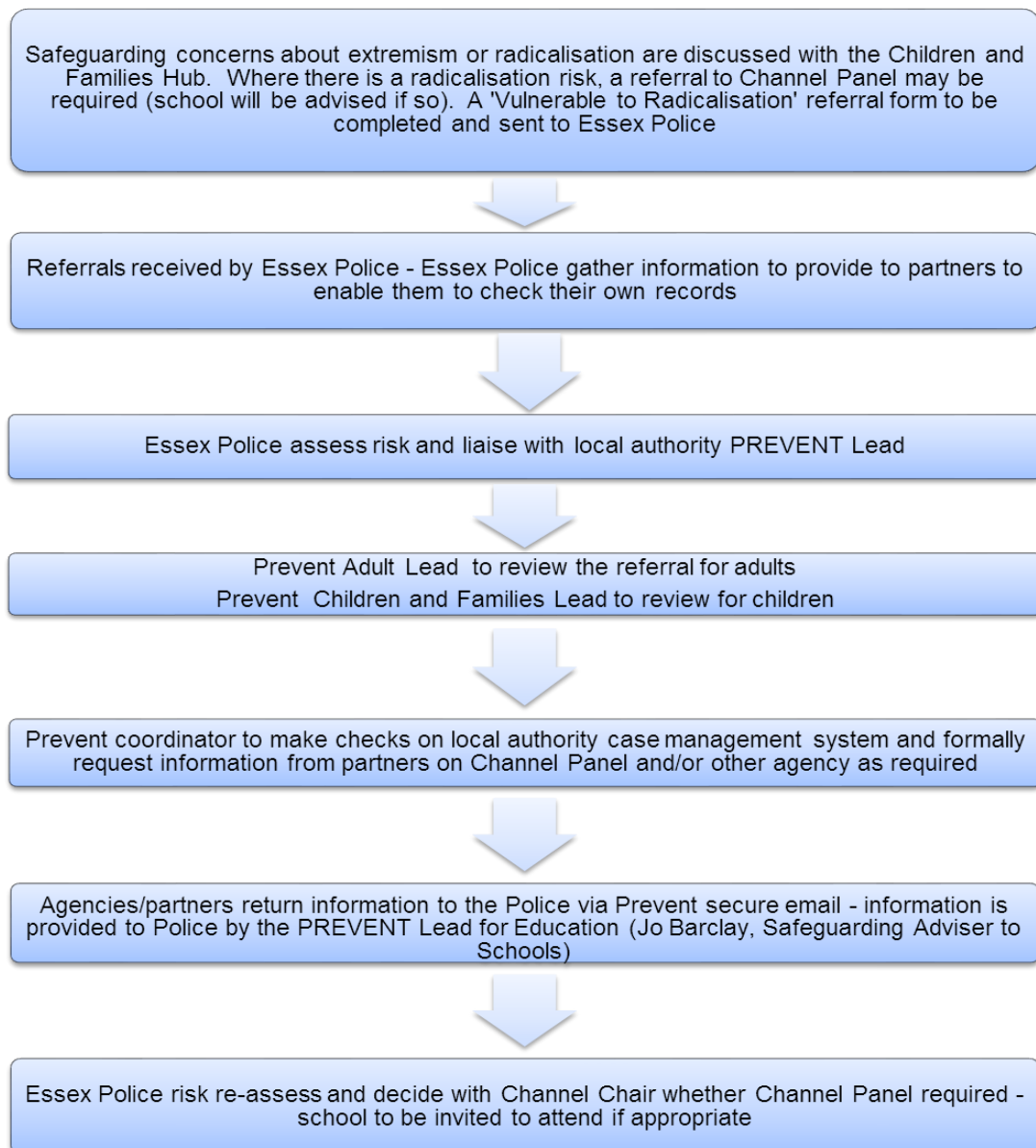
All staff:

- All staff should speak to the DSL and follow local safeguarding procedures in the first instance.
- There is a specific legal duty on teachers that if, in the course of their work in the profession, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the

teacher must report this to the police. Teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet this statutory duty.

Responding to a Disclosure concerning Radicalisation and Extremism

50. See paragraphs 202-213 for more information on radicalisation and extremism and the Prevent flow chart (below).



Essex Safeguarding Team require that all cases are discussed with their Prevent Lead before making a PREVENT referral.

All staff:

- If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to local authority children's social care directly if appropriate (see 'Referral' above).

The DSL:

- Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

Removing Barriers

51. Students may find it difficult to communicate their concerns and worries to staff in school for a variety of reasons and so schools should ensure barriers to reporting are regularly reviewed and remedial action taken.
52. All schools will publicise to students who they can approach with their concerns and what they may expect when they do so. All staff in our schools will take seriously and act on any safeguarding information children may disclose. The use of student questionnaires, consultation with student representatives (such as Student Voice) and feedback during PSHE/ Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) activities, sessions and/or lessons will help schools understand how best to encourage and support student reporting.
53. To allow children to report freely, secondary schools should use appropriate anonymous reporting systems, e.g., 'Whisper'. In primary schools, the use of 'worry boxes' or regular circle time will ensure the school is a 'listening' school.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

54. All staff and visitors receive training on, and/or are made aware of, the school's child protection procedures. The diagram in Appendix B outlines the school's safeguarding reporting process, with the first step being the referral of any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
55. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police (see page 6). Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [Children and Families Request For Support](#). The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if the school is unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, the school will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to another agency, with parents or carers. However, the school will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or may impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for an external agency to meet with a child in school, the school will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers. The flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a child are summarised in Appendix C and Appendix D
56. All staff understand that, if they continue to have concerns about a child, feel a concern is not being addressed or that a situation does not appear to be improving for a child, they should raise this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
57. Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are on page 5 of this policy and therefore all staff members have access to urgent 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. Staff must Inform the DSL as soon as possible if they make a referral directly.
58. When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our schools they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them. The school also provides information on safeguarding to any visitor to our school, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

59. It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children who are on the school roll or have been previously known to the school. Where possible and if appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parents or carers. 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 discussions.
60. If a child is subject to a Care, Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, the DSL 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 DSL will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at such 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 greater risk of significant harm. In this case, the DSL will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so together with the agreed actions.

Professional Confidentiality

61. All Trust staff and volunteers will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the student and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.
62. Staff and volunteers are expected to treat information they receive about staff, children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. When discussing personal or sensitive safeguarding information, staff should ensure that no one outside of the conversation can overhear.
63. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Executive Principal/Principal/ Headteacher/Head of School or CEO (depending on who is the subject of the concern – please refer to the AT P14 Procedure for Dealing with Allegations Against Adults in School or AT P18 Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns Policy). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on the need-to-know basis.

Record-keeping

64. All safeguarding concerns, discussions, and decisions made, together with the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing, either electronically on a system such as CPOMS, or in paper files or as a mix of both. Where concerns, discussions or decisions are recorded on paper, schools will ensure that these are also uploaded to digital systems so that paper copies are not kept outside of a digital, secure copy. If there is doubt about whether the concern is a safeguarding issue, continue to record and discuss with the DSL as soon as possible.
65. Information must be kept confidential and stored securely with appropriate limited access arrangements in place as necessary.
66. All schools ensure that safeguarding files received from other settings when children join the school roll, including files transferred from primary to secondary, are uploaded to the school's own digital safeguarding records.
67. Each child or young person will have a separate child protection file when there are concerns for that child. Records will include:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
 - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
 - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome (which may be ongoing)
68. Following the completion of a record of concern (the nature of which depends on individual Trust school procedures) staff will be provided with feedback of action taken by the DSL or other person delegated by the DSL.

Allegations about adults working in school

69. Our policy on allegations about adults working in school covers all staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, visitors to the school and contractors.

70. Whilst the vast majority of adults who work with children in education settings act professionally and seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, all staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude and actions of colleagues if they arise. Each school follows the procedures in the:
 - AT P14 Procedure for Dealing with Allegations Against Adults in School
 - AT P18 Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns Policy
 - the SET procedures (SET Procedures)
 - Part Four of KCSIE 2026
71. Each Alpha Trust school ensures that its school Child Protection Procedures contain clear procedures for sharing confidentially any concerns, including 'low-level' concerns, about other adults working in schools.
72. All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and sign that they have read the AT P19 Alpha Trust Staff Code of Conduct and AT P22 Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy and also read their schools appropriate policies regarding e-safety and the use of mobile devices. Each school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with students. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. These matters form part of new staff induction and are revisited at the start of each academic year for all staff.
73. All staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable that interviews or working with individual children, or interviews with parents, are conducted in view of other adults.

Abuse of Position of Trust

74. All staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence. The Alpha Trust Code of Conduct states our expectations of staff.

Students making allegations against staff

75. We understand that students do sometimes make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or who is aware of the information, will immediately inform the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School.
76. If the allegation concerns the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the CEO, who will contact the LADO if appropriate without notifying the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School first.

Use of Reasonable Force

77. 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 necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Our schools work in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.
78. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness, wherever possible. Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.
79. We recognise that touch is on occasion appropriate in the context of working with children, and staff are given guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary. Department advice for schools is available at Restrictive interventions. including use of reasonable force in schools

Section B – Further information

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

80. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.

Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Recognising Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

81. Keeping Children Safe in Education recognises the following categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including witnessing the ill treatment of others)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

82. Although divided into four categories, these forms of abuse are often found together.

Signs of Abuse in Children

83. The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation.

Risk Indicators

84. The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:
- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm

- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services i.e. Social Care.

85. The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

86. In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her (or his) age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

87. The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

88. Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

Recognising Physical abuse

89. Physical abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

90. The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents/carers are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

91. Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite Marks

92. Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

93. It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:
- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
 - Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
 - Burns of uniform depth over a large area
 - Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
 - Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation
 - Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

94. Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:
- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
 - There are associated old fractures
 - Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
 - There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

Scars

95. A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Behavioural Indicators

96. The following behavioural indicators may be linked to physical abuse:
- Flinching when approached or touched;
 - Reluctance to change clothes for PE lessons;
 - Wary of adult contact;
 - Difficult to comfort;
 - Apprehension when other children cry;
 - Crying/irritability;
 - Frightened of parents/carers;
 - Afraid to go home;
 - Rebelliousness in adolescence;
 - Behavioural extremes – aggressiveness, withdrawal, impulsiveness;
 - Regresses to child-like behaviour;
 - Apathy;
 - Depression;
 - Poor peer relationships;
 - Panic in response to pain.

Recognising Emotional Abuse

97. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as not giving the child opportunities to

express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

98. The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others e.g. biting
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness (particularly in pre-school children)
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others
- Compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding
- Behaviour which seems to be too grown up or too young for the age and stage of development of the child.

Recognising Sexual Abuse

99. Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their local school Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy and procedures. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

100. Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

101. Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour or conversation, inappropriate to the child’s age
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Running away from home
- Wary of adults or poor peer relationships.

102. Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing
- Difficulty in walking or sitting down
- Excessive crying.

Sexual Abuse by Young People

103. The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.
104. ‘Developmental Sexual Activity’ encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.
105. ‘Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour’ can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.
106. If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.
107. Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Assessment

108. In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:
- Equality – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
 - Consent – agreement including all the following:
 - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
 - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
 - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
 - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
 - Voluntary decision
 - Mental competence
 - Coercion – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.
109. In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

Recognising Neglect

110. Neglect is 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
111. Neglect is not always easy to recognise, but the following may give cause for concern when considered in relation to the age of the child. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:
- Failure by parents/carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
 - A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsible with no apparent medical cause
 - Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
 - Child thrives away from home environment
 - Child frequently absent from school
 - Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
 - Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Safeguarding issues

112. All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm (including but not limited to those listed below). The following behaviours and indicators can be signs that children are at risk:
- drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
 - unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
 - serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation, and
 - consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi nudes.
113. Annex A in KCSIE 2026 (Keeping children safe in education 2026) has information on many safeguarding issues but, as stated in KCSIE 2026 all staff should be aware of the following:

Child-on-child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

114. Alongside this Trust policy there are the following relevant local school policies:
- Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy – which includes information from Part Five of KCSIE 2026 which details how schools should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises and/or online.
 - Behaviour Policy.
 - Anti-bullying Policy.
 - SEND Policy.
 - Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy.
 - Equality Policy.
115. Child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously in our schools and will never be tolerated or downplayed or dismissed.
116. All staff must be aware that children can abuse other children. and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their

school it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Any concerns should be discussed with the DSL.

117. All staff should recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour may have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and should be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
118. In line with the guidance in KCSIE (2026), our schools may decide that children involved in child-on-child sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help. It is the responsibility of our Designated Safeguarding Leads to know what the local early help process is and how and where to access support.
119. It is essential that all Trust staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children which are abusive in nature (see list below). Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny and/or an unsafe environment for children; in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse will lead to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
120. All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.
121. As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff should know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviours and indicators of risk early, staff should know that timely, evidence based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.
122. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
 - bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, e.g., racism.
 - discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice based incidents
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as 'teenage relationship abuse').
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
 - serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.
 - sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
 - sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
 - consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes, including those generated using AI. The department provides [Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools](#). The UKCIS Education Group has published [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) which outlines how to respond to an incident
 - Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing and/or without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Prevention

123. We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour.
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female or male students, and initiation or hazing type violence.
- Ensuring the schools' curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour in relationships and consent.
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

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

124. Both CSE and CCE 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. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CSE and CCE can affect both male and female children and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery, and further information is available in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance ([Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#)). In accordance with this guidance, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified. Both CSE and/or CCE can happen to children from any background or community. Please also refer to paragraph 136 – Recognising signs of CSE and CCE

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

125. CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.
126. 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"*.
127. 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 will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate
128. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and can be committed by an individual or an organised network. CSE may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.
129. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network (see footnote 13 KCSIE 2026) and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take

whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

130. 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 vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.
131. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. Children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professionals (particularly older children) and should be treated as victims. It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked, and they may not recognise that it is happening to them.
132. Essex has adopted the following definition for CCE: *'Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 years. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.'* (Home Office, 2018)
133. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

County Lines

134. County lines is the term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (e.g., crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK) using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure their compliance.
135. Missing episodes from both home and school is one way of identifying potential involvement in county lines.

Recognising signs of CSE and CCE.

136. The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual / criminal exploitation.

Signs include:

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections
- In girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- Receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- Having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- Changes in the way they dress
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Seen at known places of concern

- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Contact with known perpetrators
- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation including online activity/sexting
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, police records
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

Domestic Abuse

137. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
138. As part of our safeguarding arrangements and our work with safeguarding partners, our schools have 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 the school if they have attended an incident of domestic abuse which involves a child on our school's roll, so that appropriate support can be put in place. Any information in relation to this will be held on the child's child protection file, as with any other safeguarding information.
139. In Essex, the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) is responsible for designing and implementing the Domestic Abuse Strategy and provides advice, guidance and resources to support work around domestic abuse.

Honour or faith-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

Honour-Based Abuse

140. Honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes, which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community. These crimes include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving honour often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse regardless of the motivation.

Forced Marriage

141. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties and where the participants are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Since February 2023, it is a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

142. A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

143. All staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a student about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK and must report any such concerns following the school's child protection procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

144. Whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**; if a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must personally report this to the police.

145. It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

146. It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are four types of procedure:

- Type 1: Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris
- Type 2: Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- Type 3: Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- Type 4: all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

147. Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

148. FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is illegal in most countries including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities

- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

The 'One Chance' rule

149. As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that schools take action without delay.

Mental Health

150. All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

151. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise.

These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour,
- ongoing difficulty sleeping,
- withdrawing from social situations,
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

152. Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, by identifying these and other potential warning signs, staff can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. Schools should ensure that any interventions they offer are evidenced as safe and effective and appropriate for the need and phase of education.

153. If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should follow their school's child protection policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or arrange for them to be taken to A&E immediately by a parent/carer or other suitable person. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Self-harm

154. Self-harm is any behaviour where the intent is to cause harm to oneself. This may include a student:

- cutting or scratching themselves.
- poisoning themselves.
- over-eating or under-eating.
- biting themselves.
- picking or scratching at their skin.
- burning their skin.
- inserting objects into their body.
- hitting themselves or walls.

- overdosing.
- exercising excessively.
- pulling their hair.
- getting into fights where they know they will get hurt.

155. If staff suspect a child or young person may be self-harming, they should take immediate action by following their school's child protection procedures and speaking to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible.

Serious Violence

156. All staff should be aware of the indicators which may signal children or young people are at risk from, or are 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 educational performance.
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

157. Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- having been frequently absent, suspended, spent time in alternative provision, or permanently excluded from school
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- being male
- having experienced child maltreatment
- having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence
- having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

158. If staff notice any of these signs or indications in a student, they must raise the issue immediately with the DSL or a deputy, following their school's child protection procedures.

Early-Help/Family Help

159. Early Help (sometimes referred to as Family Help within the Families First reforms) means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help. Chapter one of '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)' provides detailed guidance on the early help and Family Help processes. Essex windscreen of need and levels of intervention is summarised in Appendix E. Essex Safeguarding Children Board has produced the following guidance [Early help and effective support - Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)

Support before statutory intervention

160. Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based early help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help., but our staff are particularly alert to the potential need for additional support 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 pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours

- 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 been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, 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 into terrorism
- 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 honour or faith-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

161. Without intervention, a child may be put at risk of neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm or be at risk of extremism. Our schools do not have pre-determined criteria for supporting children and their families but assess each case according to needs. A bespoke programme may be put in place for that child and/or family, as appropriate and where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment will be arranged by the DSL or delegated personnel.

Supporting Children

162. All staff should be aware of the following:

- Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate abuse and harm. It also includes such things as student safety, bullying, harassment, racism, safety during educational visits, intimate care, substance abuse, Children Missing Education, internet safety, etc.
- Certain situations cause harm, for instance being the witness to abuse, including domestic abuse, can have a damaging effect on a child or young person and may have a significant impact on their health and well-being.
- Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, in person or via social media, particularly on mobile phones.
- Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.
- Children or young people may not know how to, or feel ready to, tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected. They may not recognise their experience as harmful. They may feel embarrassed or may be being threatened. This may be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation or there may be language barriers. Staff should remain professionally curious and share with the DSL any concerns they have, however small.

163. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important that all staff and volunteers in our schools know the indicators of abuse (paragraphs 80-111) and, if they have a concern, to follow school procedures.

164. The DSL and wider pastoral team will consider whether children or young people are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation. Staff understand that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap.

165. Advice can be found in the DfE document, 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused - Advice for Practitioners' ([What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)).

Risk in the community (RIC)

166. Risk in the community 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 children safe.

Children potentially at risk of greater harm

167. We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm than others (both online and offline) and require additional help and support. These may be children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

168. Our schools understand that children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. These 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 affected by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs.
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children.

169. Many looked after children have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. The gaps in their learning – and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences – are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect or exploitation.

170. A previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

171. Section 20 of the 2008 Act places the following duties on governing boards:

- to designate a member of staff (the designated teacher – also see 'Roles and Responsibilities', above) as having the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those aged between 16 and 18 who are registered students at the school.
- to ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training.
- the governing body and the designated teacher must have regard to this guidance and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Care Leavers

172. The Local Authority (LA) has on-going responsibilities to young people who cease to be looked after and become care-leavers aged 16 or 17. A Personal Advisor should be appointed by the LA to develop a pathway plan with the young person describing how the care leaver will be supported to participate in education. The DSL or Designated Teacher must therefore ensure that they have the details of the Personal Advisor and liaise with them as necessary.

Students with SEND

173. All staff understand that children with special educational needs (SEND) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. This can be due to:

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

174. Safeguarding children and young people with SEND requires understanding, foresight and reflection. Keeping children safe from harm in school relies on **all** staff being able to recognise the raised risk factors, identify young people with the greatest levels of risk and create focused action plans (e.g., an ECC One Plan) that sufficiently respond to their needs. Monitoring processes for more vulnerable children must be particularly robust.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

175. LGBTQ+ young people can face additional barriers to identifying abuse and seeking help; they may be concerned about revealing their sexual orientation and/or are fearful of homophobic reactions from family, friends and professionals. They may be unaware of specialist support services. It follows that risks can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff in our schools endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ children to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Supporting pupils who are questioning their gender

176. KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026) has guidance on children who are questioning their gender

Students needing Intimate Care

177. All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis. Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Attendance and punctuality monitoring

178. See the section of this policy dealing with 'Children Absent from Education'.

- The school must know at all times where a student is, including on site during the school day.
- Registers must be taken and when taken, immediately checked for unexplained absences by the attendance officer or similar personnel.
- If a student has 'gone missing' from the register, they are looked for immediately.
- If a child is missing from a lesson or leaves a lesson, to go to the toilet or attend an extra school-based activity (e.g., music lesson), schools must have robust procedures in place to track a student's whereabouts.
- Immediately after the first morning register is taken, any late students are noted and school-based punctuality procedures put into action.
- These arrangements are followed by all staff.

Punctuality

179. Schools are encouraged to put in place appropriate sanctions for repeated lateness and processes to improve punctuality.

Children Absent from Education

180. Our schools recognise that a child or young person being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines.
181. Our schools also recognise that if a student is repeatedly absent from school with no attempted intervention, this can be a significant factor in facilitating the child or young person becoming a child missing education in the future. School attendance policies and procedures will be proactive, responsive and effective.
182. Trust schools' response to persistently absent pupils and to children with unexplainable and / or persistent absences from education supports identifying abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them escalating and becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.
183. Parents should always inform the school of the reason for any absence. Where this does not happen, the school 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 (Children Missing Education Team, Social Care and / or Police). The school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.
184. The school follows the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (see Appendix F), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.
185. Further information and support is found in the DFE's statutory guidance on school attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
186. All staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.
187. The following **must** be included in Trust schools' child protection procedures:
- At **all** times, schools must seek to account for the whereabouts of their students, including during the normal school day, whether enrolled onsite or at alternative provision, and when attending curriculum enrichment activities. Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs. The school is also responsible for obtaining written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out, as set out in paragraph 211 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and complying with the requirements for alternative provision set out in paragraphs 210-215 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
 - In the case of long-term absence, there must be regular contact between the school and the student (not just the parent).
 - Trust schools will follow their own procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education, immediately a concern arises.
 - Schools **must** ensure that parents/carers always inform the school of the reason for any absence.
 - Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Essex Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police).
 - Parents/carers are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school
 - Trust schools contact the local authority concerning 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. Our schools work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day

and each school has its own procedures written into their Child Protection Procedures and/or Attendance Policy, or equivalent.

- Trust schools will engage in absence escalation procedures where appropriate.
- Our schools will work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. (When not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks).

188. Our schools recognise that in very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary reduction in an educational offer to meet a child's individual needs. In these cases, our schools follow the guidance set out in the Essex County Council guidance 'Children missing education due to a reduced education offer' (August 2024).

189. Our schools recognise that missing children are the most vulnerable in our community and we adhere to the Essex County Council Missing Child Protocol (Appendix F) which sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools.

Online Safety

190. Whilst being online presents many positive and exciting opportunities, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

191. Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology, web sites and social networking apps and sites. Any student can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance.

192. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable but the main areas of online risk can be categorised as:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-semitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- **conduct:** personal 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, and sharing other explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying).
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams or trading in inappropriate images or items. Schools who feel that pupils, students or staff are at risk should report this to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>)

193. All staff will be aware of the risks to children and young people online and understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and well-being issues, including bullying, sexual harassment, the sharing of indecent images (consensual or non-consensual), pornography and other harmful content.

194. In order to minimise the risks to students, Trust schools will ensure that they have appropriate in-school measures in place, such as security filtering and monitoring, as well as relevant and up-to-date policies and procedures concerning e-safety, acceptable use of IT, mobile devices, smart technology, etc.

195. Paragraphs 173-177-of KCSIE 2026 provides school senior leaders and LGBs with information about what needs to be done to support their school in meeting the required standards for filtering and monitoring as outlined in Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring: core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK. Schools can use the DFE's 'plan technology for your school service' to self-assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and can refer to the DFE's 'Generative AI: product safety expectations' in order to ensure that filtering and monitoring is applied to the use of generative AI in education.

196. A review of the school's filtering and monitoring effectiveness should be carried out at least once every academic year. Reviews should be carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the school's designated safeguarding lead and IT support.
197. Senior leaders and the school's LGB ensure that online safety is a running and inter-related theme in the school's approach to devising safeguarding and related policies and procedures, and in their implementation. This will include considering not only how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies but also considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) and any parental engagement and carrying out an audit of online safety activity as necessary.
198. Senior school leaders and the LGB will also consider very carefully how they integrate technology used for learning with the fact that many children have unlimited (i.e., unfiltered and unmonitored) access to the internet, via their mobile phones in particular, which they mostly carry with them in secondary schools. The management of mobile devices in school and of safe access to the internet, which may be required for school projects or homework, will depend on the school's context and will be reflected in each school's relevant policies and procedures.
199. Considering the 4Cs (above) will provide Alpha Trust schools with the basis of an effective online policy.

Mobile Phones

200. In line with DfE guidance Mobile phones in schools (DfE 2026), our schools operate as phone-free environments for students up to and including Year 11. Reasonable exceptions may be made to support individual medical, disability, or safeguarding needs. As young adults, Sixth Form students are permitted to bring smartphones into school but will have limited access during the school day. The management of mobile phones is embedded within our wider safeguarding arrangements and is detailed within each school's Mobile Phone Policy.

Remote Learning

201. Guidance to support schools understand how to help keep students, and staff, safe whilst learning remotely can be found at: Safeguarding and remote education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The NSPCC also provides helpful advice: Undertaking remote teaching safely | NSPCC Learning. Linked policy - AT P22 Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism

202. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
203. Terrorism is defined as an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.
204. Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.
205. Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities, which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Schools should remain alert to religious extremism, expressions of political violence, race supremacy or violent misogyny.

206. Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK](#).
207. Staff are able to identify the signs of extremism and must raise any concerns immediately by following the child protection procedures in their school.
208. As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act](#) placed a duty on schools and other education providers; in the exercise of their functions, schools are required to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”. This duty is known as the **Prevent Duty**.
209. It requires schools to:
- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students 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.
210. *Channel* is a national, voluntary programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Those who are referred to Channel are required to provide their consent before any support in the programme is provided.
211. Our schools work in accordance with the local procedures for Prevent and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where there are concerns about extremism or radicalisation, schools will seek advice from the Local Authority Education Prevent Lead or appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to social care and/or Channel panel (Paragraph 50– Prevent flow chart).

Visiting Speakers

212. Trust schools will ensure in general that all external speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised when on site. Paragraphs 245-250 concerning site security outlines school visitor safeguarding considerations for Trust schools.
213. The Prevent Duty particularly sets out an expectation of clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised. This includes a formal procedure for inviting speakers which involves approval by a delegated member of the SLT and/or school committee, appropriate checks on the suitability of the person, that they understand they must abide by the school’s equality commitments including no statements that might cause offence to others or undermine tolerance of faiths or beliefs and no extremist material. Staff will know the content of the presentation before the event. Any presentation that proves to be unsuitable will be brought to an early end by staff. Any presentation to raise funds will be with the written permission of a delegated member of the SLT only.

Work Experience (Secondary Schools)

214. The school must have robust procedures to safeguard students undertaking work experience either arranged by the school directly or contracted by the school to a preferred organisation. The procedures must be in accordance with KCSIE.

Children Staying with Host Families

215. The school may make arrangements for students to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour and/or some overseas students may reside with host families during school term time. We will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable. In such circumstances, the school follows the guidance in KCSIE to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible and all relevant and appropriate checks are completed.

Private Fostering Arrangements

216. A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone, other than a parent or a close relative, cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. Should staff become aware of a Private Fostering arrangement they will inform the DSL who will consult with the family and if appropriate will inform Social Care.
217. It is a statutory duty for the school to inform the Local Authority when it is made aware of a child or young person being subject to private fostering arrangements.

Bullying

218. While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our schools' anti-bullying procedures.

Racist Incidents

219. All schools keep a record of racist incidents; repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Sharing Information

220. Information sharing can help to ensure a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address. Our schools recognise that effective multi-agency information sharing is a vital part of safeguarding work and our schools understand how important it is and its role in our safeguarding arrangements. Our schools work in accordance with all statutory requirements (including the Information Sharing Duty) and ensure that information shared is focused, proportionate and always in the child's best interests. Our schools will never share information where it is not in the child's best interests or where to do so would place a child at increased risk.
221. Our schools understand that no individual knows everything about a child or family and that, where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information can reduce the risk of harm. It is only when this happens effectively that adults working with a child have a better understanding of their needs and can better assess any risk and safeguard them. Our schools work in a transparent way with parents/carers and will always inform them of any concerns when sharing with other appropriate agencies, unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.
222. Our schools will always consider what it is relevant to share and that it is appropriate and proportionate. Our schools recognise our duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and also understand this is not a barrier to sharing information, where failure to do so could place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent us sharing information where there are safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.
223. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and are regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

The DSL: general information-sharing

224. The DSL will share information concerning 'at risk' students with staff members and/or volunteers on a "need to know and in the child's best interest" basis. The sharing of information will be proportionate to the risk faced by the child and their resilience to such risks.
225. The DSL will work in accordance with all statutory requirements (including the Information Sharing Duty) as summarised in paragraphs 220-223. The DSL works in a transparent way with parents/carers and will always inform them of any concerns when sharing with other appropriate agencies, unless to do so may place a

child at risk of harm. The reason(s) why consent was not sought before information-sharing occurred will be recorded, where this applies.

226. Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the DPA, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. Where the serious harm test is met, schools may withhold personal data if disclosure would be likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of the child or another person. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harm test is met. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Executive Principal/Principal/Headteacher/Head of School. If in doubt we may seek independent legal advice.
227. The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners ([Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)) supports those staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). Information sharing is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping, in the next section, and for allegations of abuse made against members of staff or volunteers, please refer to the Alpha Trust Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations against Adults in Schools Policy.
228. Each school's Subject Access policy is available to parents and students via the school website or on request.

The DSL: sharing child protection records

229. When a child for whom there is a child protection record leaves one of our schools, the DSL will inform the relevant social worker and send the child protection records to the receiving institution immediately. These will be transferred separately from the main student file, by secure transit and with return information clearly stated, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained and retained.
230. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new institution in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new educational setting to continue ongoing support for a child on its arrival.
231. If the name of the receiving institution is not known, the DSL will notify the child's social worker as a matter of urgency as soon as the child leaves or appears to be missing. In these circumstances, the child protection records will remain at the school until the child is known to have registered elsewhere.
232. When a child joins one of our schools and records from the previous institution indicate they have a child protection plan, the DSL will make contact with the local authority children's social care service.
233. When a child who is known to have child protection records joins one of our schools and no child protection records have been received from the previous school, the DSL will contact the DSL at that institution to request the records be sent immediately. This request will be confirmed in writing and repeated if necessary. If they remain unavailable, the school will inform the Education Welfare Service.
234. If a child leaves one of our schools to be electively home educated, their child protection records will remain at the school until the child is known to have registered elsewhere. If a child joins one of our schools following a period of elective home education, the DSL will contact the DSL at their last known school to establish whether there are any child protection records and request that they be sent on without delay. (Some electronic recording systems, such as CPOMS, will alert the new school if any previous record exists, however, the previous school will need to release the record.)
235. Trust schools receiving safeguarding and child protection information should ensure key staff, such as DSLs, SENCOs, Year Leaders, form tutors or class teachers, are aware of this information, as required and as appropriate.
236. Each school has a record retention policy and/or protocol.

Pastoral Team

237. Other members of the pastoral team in the school will follow the DSL's direction on information-sharing with staff and/or volunteers, on a case-by-case basis.

Parents and Carers

238. We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students:

- We will support parents/carers so that they understand all the statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding children.
- Schools will ensure that they work positively, openly and honestly with parents and will respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality.
- We will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.
- If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.
- A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the DSL making the appropriate referral, for instance to Children's Social Care.

239. In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the school requires parents to provide accurate and updated information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives.
- At least two emergency contact numbers.
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above).
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).
- Any legal or criminal changes which effects parental responsibility e.g., bail condition, contact orders, non-molestation orders, court orders, etc.

Safeguarding training

240. Staff should be encouraged to remain 'professionally curious' when it comes to safeguarding and child protection issues and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

241. Staff should also know that they must take action, following school procedures, over any concerns they have about a child's or young person's welfare and safety.

- Safeguarding training is in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board ([esccb.co.uk](https://www.esccb.co.uk)).
- All staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation (paragraphs 80-111) and to know what to do if they have a concern (paragraphs 48-68) and local school procedures).
- All staff members, Governors and Trustees receive safeguarding and child protection training at the beginning of the academic year and also receive regular updates and training throughout the year on specific safeguarding issues: e-safety, FGM, online abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, child-on-child abuse, etc.
- All staff need to understand their role and responsibilities and the expectations placed on them, regarding the filtering and monitoring systems which ensure online safety in their schools, (KCSIE 2026).
- New staff, Governors and Trustees will receive safeguarding training during their induction.
- The DSL and deputies undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years.
- The school also ensures that the DSL and deputies undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

- All staff have access to advice and guidance on all aspects of safeguarding in school and should discuss matters with the DSL in the first instance.
- All members of staff, volunteers, Governors and Trustees should know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse.

242. A record of all child protection training is kept for all staff, Governors and Trustees.

Safer Recruitment

Following safer recruitment procedures

243. Our schools comply completely with part three of KCSIE 2026. They also follow 'Juniper' safer recruitment procedures, the relevant Alpha Trust policies, follow their own DBS Procedures and seek legal support from the Trust's legal advisors, as appropriate.

- At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training and at least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise.
- All pre-appointment vetting checks follow the latest guidance, including researching candidates' online profiles and activities which may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that the school might conduct an online search as part of due diligence.
- All new employees (involved in early year's settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and their obligations to disclose relevant information to the school.
- Schools obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.
- Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.
- Each school maintains its own Single Central Record (SCR) detailing all the recruitment checks that have been undertaken by the school and all the safeguarding checks that have been carried out on all staff and other relevant people, for instance regular visitors and volunteers. The school's SCR is audited on a regular basis by internal and external audit.
- Linked policy – AT P10 Recruitment Procedure

Volunteers

244. In accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026, any person volunteering in a school or college in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight, is undertaking regulated activity. Schools must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information, before such a volunteer begins work in regulated activity. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised with children.

Where a school has an existing volunteer who will now be in regulated activity from 1 September 2026 because of the changes brought in by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, they must check their children's barred list status. This should be done by obtaining an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

Schools are able to obtain a standalone barred list check. Schools may do this where either:

- the school or college wishes to allow the volunteer to undertake regulated activity prior to obtaining the enhanced DBS check certificate; or
- the school or college has recently obtained an enhanced DBS check without children's barred list information, and there has been no break in service since that certificate was issued.

Site Security

245. Each Trust school ensures that regulated and non-regulated activities and staff supervision are understood across the school. The identification of volunteers, students and visitors can be clearly identified by the school's visitor system.
246. Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge / lanyard / sticker, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in.
247. Any individual on the school site who is not known or identifiable or wearing a badge / lanyard / sticker should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
248. Schools have a responsibility for identifying approved adults who are collecting children from school.
249. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School or a delegated member of SLT will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.
250. Our schools will not accept the behaviour of any parent or individual that threatens the school's security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in the decision to refuse access onto the school site for that individual.

Lettings

251. Each school's Lettings Policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on site at any time. Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures; these are provided as part of the lettings' arrangement. The lettings policy will set out safeguarding expectations for hirers as follows:
- For school organised events or lettings where school staff are directly supervising or managing the service or activity, then the school's child protection arrangements will apply.
 - For third party hirers, which includes parent-teacher associations, the school ensures that the hirer:
 - has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
 - knows that the school will inspect these policies and procedures as needed, for instance by ensuring the hirer has carried out DBS checks by asking to see DBS certificates or by asking for written confirmation from the hirer that DBS checks have been carried out.
 - signs a declaration that they will adhere to the school's policies and procedures if the letting takes place during the school day or if students will be on site.
 - Informs the school if they receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened
 - For individual hirers; an appropriate safeguarding mechanism would be, for example, a free membership scheme, which requires photo identification.
252. If a school is notified of an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their premises for the purpose of running activities for children, the school will follow Alpha Trust safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO. This will be in addition to the hirer following their safeguarding policies and procedures which would include informing the LADO.

Contractors

253. The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school's day.

Extended school, educational trips and visits and off-site arrangements

254. All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Our schools should use Essex Educational Visit Support – EVOLVE – for risk assessment and trip planning.

255. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, its own Child Protection Policy / Procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on a school site on behalf of the school, the school will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.
256. When students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, schools will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place and/or utilise the EVOLVE system.

Whistleblowing

257. All members of staff and the wider community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school. The Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Policy is available on the Alpha Trust website at: [AT-P7-Whistleblowing-Policy.pdf \(alphamat.org\)](#)
258. All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School. Complaints about the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School should be reported to the CEO. Concerns about the CEO should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
259. Any member of staff who feels unable to raise these concerns internally can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
260. Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Monitoring and Evaluation

261. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:
- Local Governing Board visits to the school including review of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Audit.
 - SLT Learning Walks and discussions with students and staff.
 - Review of parental concerns, surveys and student questionnaires.
 - Scrutiny of attendance data.
 - Scrutiny of a range of risk assessments.
 - Scrutiny of LGB minutes.
 - Logs of bullying, racist, and behaviour incidents for Senior Leaders and Governing Boards to monitor.
262. Trustees receive reports on safeguarding in our schools and school attendance via the CEO Report to Trustees and from CEO verbal reporting at Trust Board meetings which are minuted. They also receive schools' Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School Report to the LGB which monitors Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and areas of concern.

Appendix A – Additional legislation and Statutory Guidance

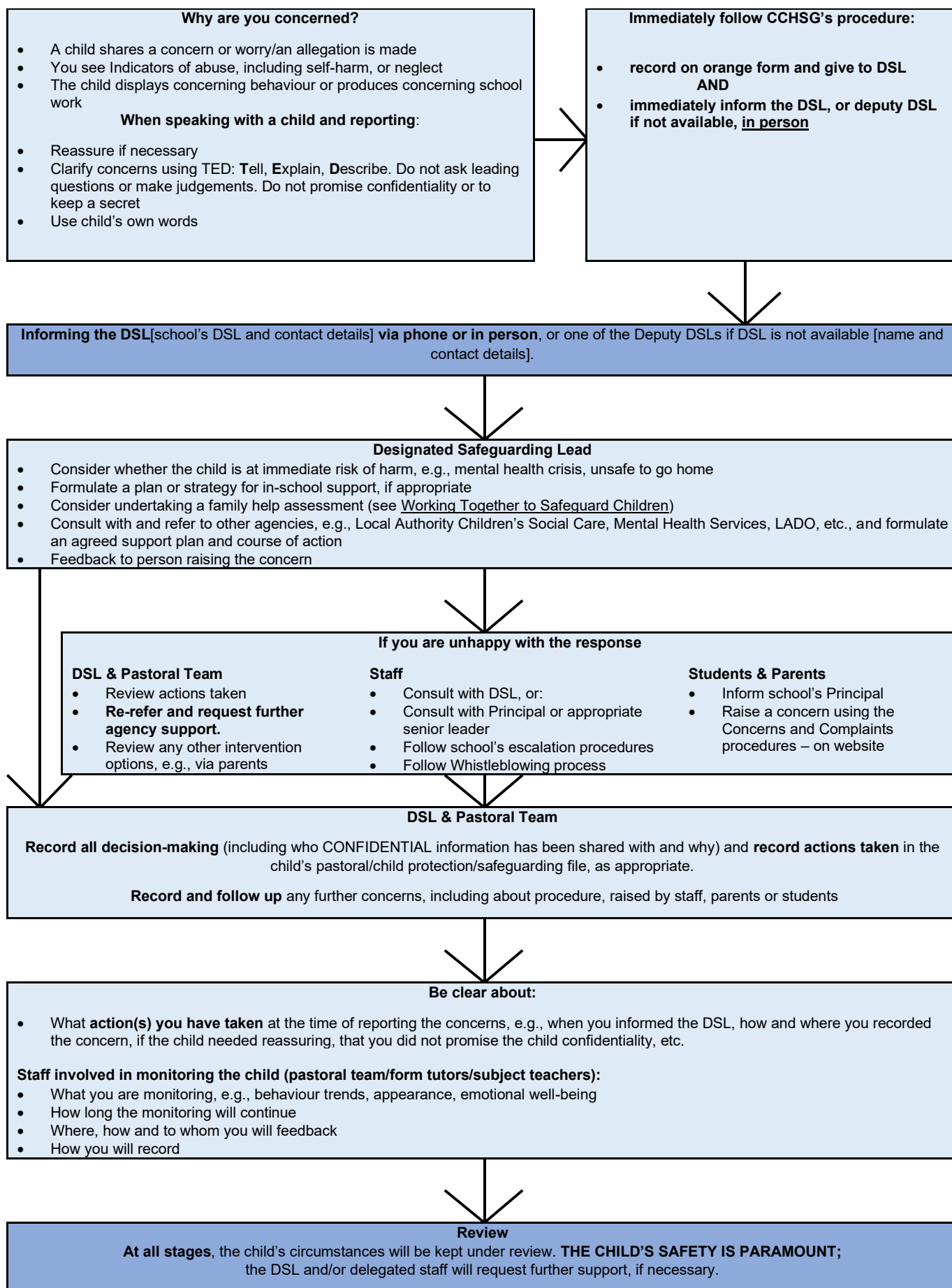
This policy is also based on the following legislation and guidance although this is not an exhaustive list.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 [Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)
- Working Together to improve school attendance 2026 [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)
- Children's wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 - [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)
- [Information Sharing Duty \(DfE, 2026\)](#)
- Generative AI: product safety standards 2026 [Generative AI: product safety standards - GOV.UK](#)
- Mobile phones in schools 2026 - [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions - [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK](#)
- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring: core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- Teaching online safety in schools - [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools 2026- [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2025 - [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)
- Searching, screening and confiscation: [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - 2023.](#)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people: [UKCIS: Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings.](#)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners 2024: [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners.](#)
- Online safety guidance from the DfE (2026): [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring: core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- Guidance on school behaviour policies 2024: [Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK.](#)
- Children & Social Work Act (2017): [Children and Social Work Act 2017.](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003): [Sexual Offences Act 2003.](#)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006: [Education regulations 2006.](#)
- Children missing from education (2025): [Children missing from education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools](#)
- Modern Slavery statutory guidance 2026 ([Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#))
- Local guidance and resources from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) can be found at: [escb.co.uk](#) .
- Essex CC also provides the following:
 - Early help and effective support 2026 - [Early help and effective support - Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)
 - Education access and home education: [Education Access - The Education Access Team \(essex.gov.uk\).](#)
 - Mental health support (Essex CC): [Social, Emotional and Mental Health Portal for Schools.](#)
 - Guidance on provision and reduced timetables - [Provision and reduced timetables | Essex Schools Infolink](#)
- Education Act (2002) which places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils: [Education Act 2002.](#)
- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent Trust Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school: [Education Regulations 2014.](#)
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children: [Children Act.](#)

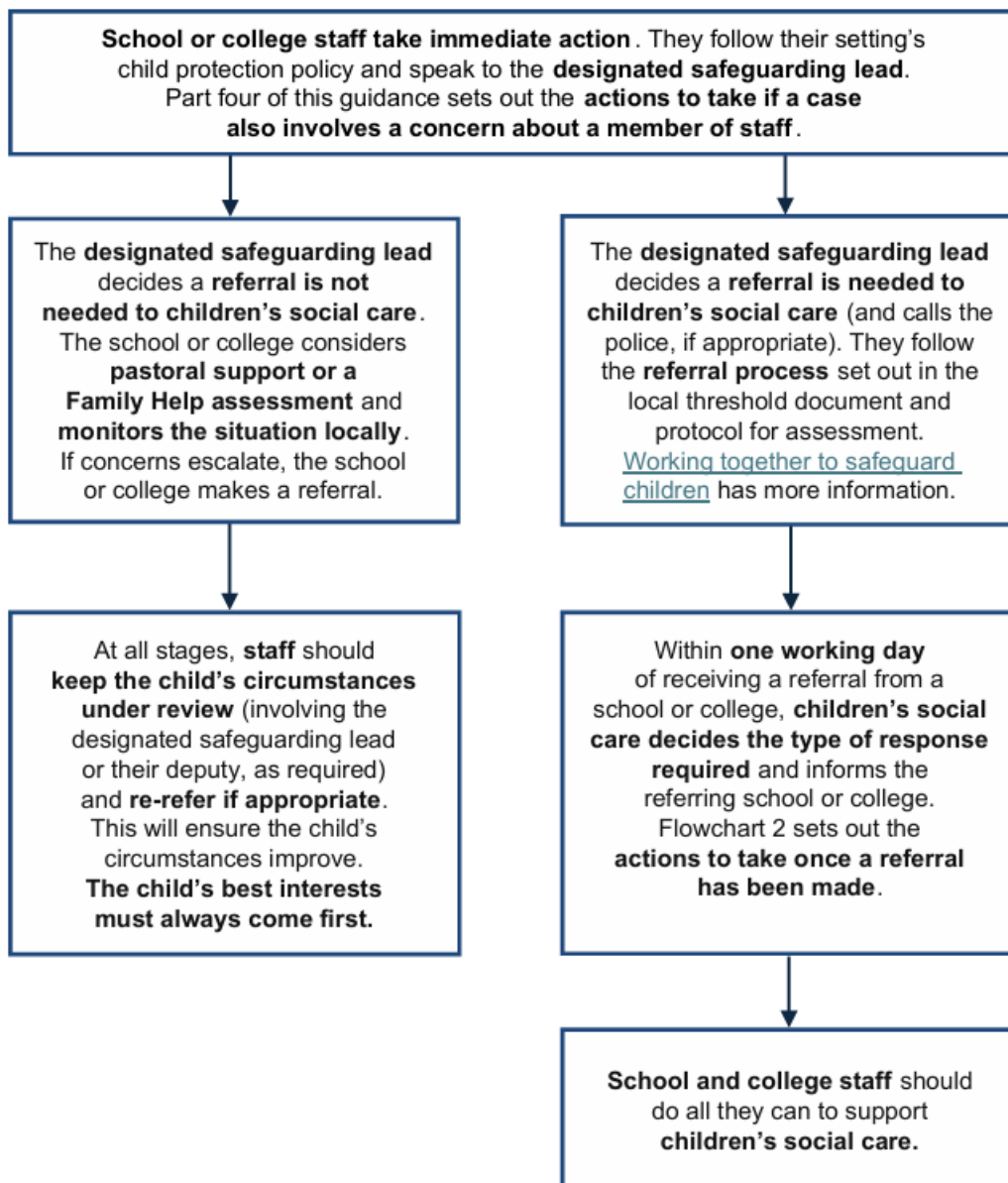
- Requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): [Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#).
- The Public Sector Equality Duty which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as: sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#)
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18: [Serious Crime Act 2015 and Section 74 - Duty to notify police of FGM](#).
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children. Guidance at: [New guidance on the rehabilitation of offenders](#).
- Information sharing duty: Operation Encompass 2025, explains that the police must notify our school of any incidents involving domestic abuse - [Information sharing duty: Operation Encompass - GOV.UK](#)
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 ([available here](#)) and Childcare Act 2006 ([available here](#)), which set out who is disqualified from working with children.
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and The Crime and Policing Act 2026), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques: [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).
- Equality Act 2010: [Equality act 2010 - guidance](#). The Equality Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a specific group of pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ([Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)) with respect to protecting people: [Statutory guidance on the prevent duty](#).
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- Government guidance on forced marriage: [Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines 2023](#).
- County Lines: [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#).
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement (Home Office 2015) ([Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)).
- NSPCC – [Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#) and [NSPCC – Safeguarding child protection of deaf and disabled children and young people](#).

263. Expert and professional organisations are supportive of schools in providing up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. Information for schools can also be found on the TES ([TES](#)), MindEd ([minded.org](#)) and the NSPCC ([NSPCC](#)) websites.

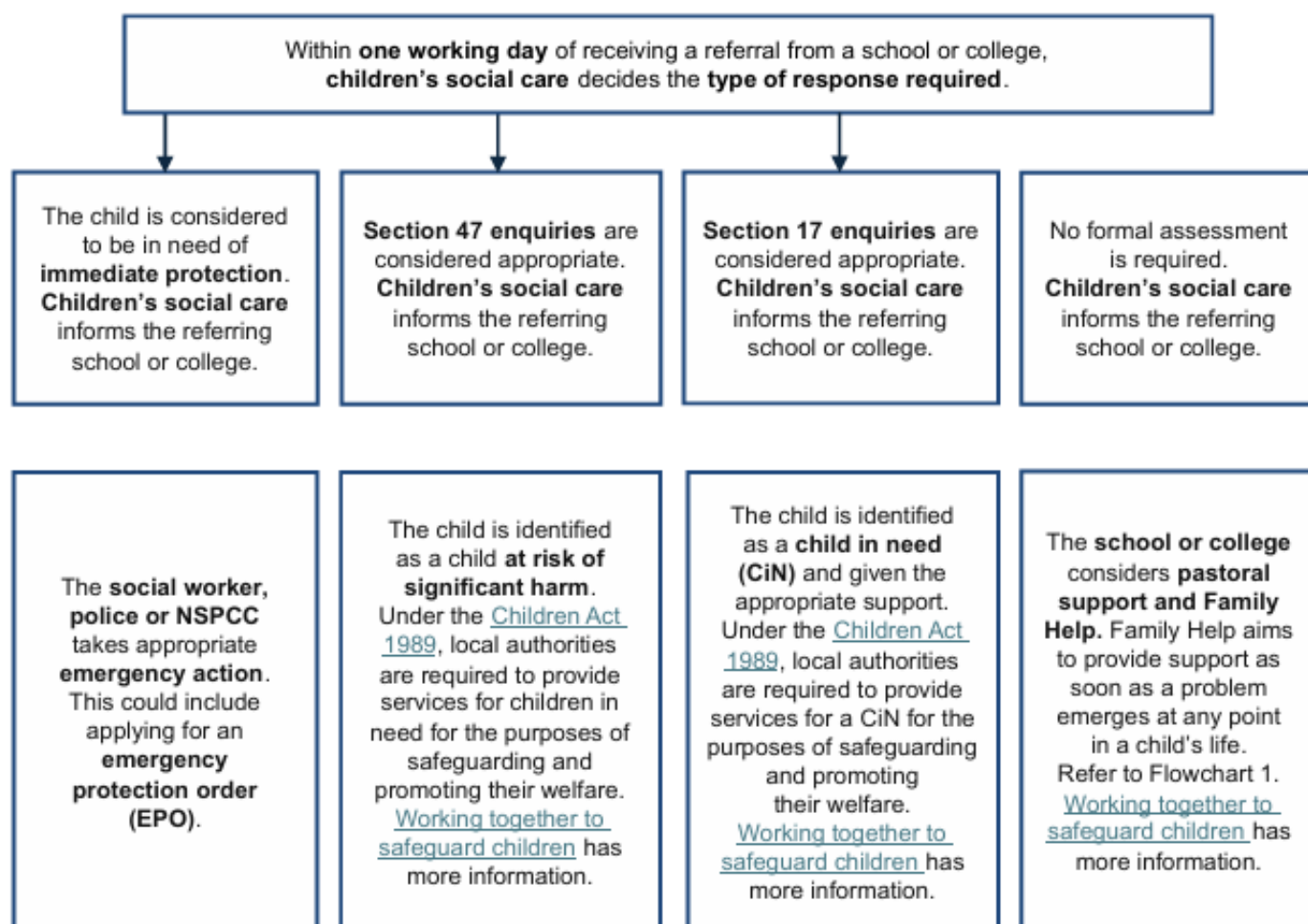
Safeguarding - What to do in school



Appendix C. Flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a child

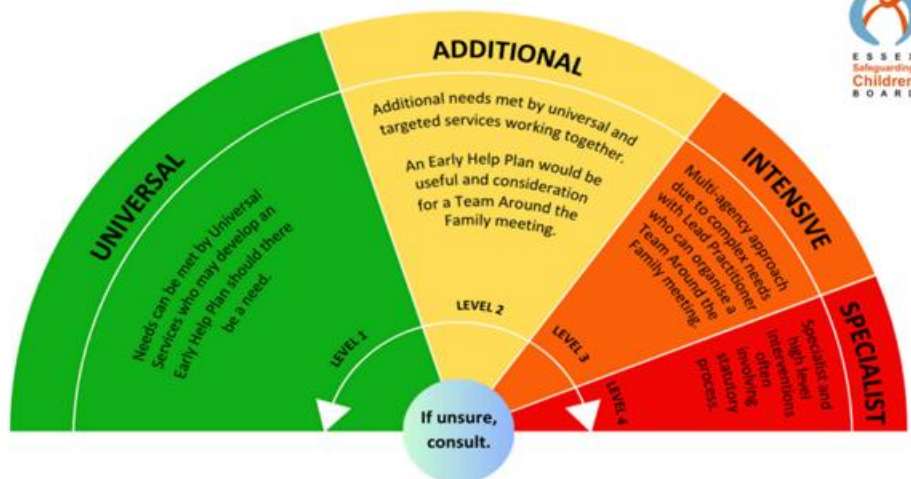


Appendix D. Actions taken once a referral has been made to children's social care



Appendix E Essex windscreen of need and levels of intervention

The Effective Support Windscreen



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

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

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

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

Appendix F. Missing Child Protocol – arrangements for children who have missing episodes

Definition

The definition of missing used in Essex is *‘anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and his or her well-being confirmed’*

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

Introduction

A child going missing could be a ‘one-off’ incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, multiple episodes of children who go missing can be an indicator of wider concerns (for example: exploitation, difficult home lives or poor mental health).

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other education settings, hereafter referred to as education settings. Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from education settings. When this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures. This document should be read in conjunction with the education setting’s Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

- [Essex Schools Infolink](#) – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
- [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) – for the SET Procedures and other resources

Education settings should consider missing episodes like any other child protection concern and take action as appropriate. This may include contacting parents/carers, the Children & Families Hub (CFH) consultation line or, in an emergency, the CFH priority line and / or the police. It may be appropriate to use the Early Help Procedures (including holding a Team Around the Family meeting) to identify underlying reasons for the missing episodes, address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought from appropriate partners, and concerns should be escalated if there is no improvement.

Education setting staff may be asked to attend strategy meetings for a missing child and should prioritise attendance at these meetings. Where children missing frequently are open to Children’s Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the education setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a child goes missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an education setting, this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, attempting contact with the child by phone, text and social media and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, they must be reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, or **999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm**. It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

Education setting staff must inform the child’s parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where the child has a Social Worker, they should also be informed. After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the child is found

If the child is found by education setting staff, or if the child returns to the setting of their own accord, the police must be notified immediately by dialling 101 or 999 if the matter is an emergency. It is important that this action is prioritised, as the child will remain classified as a missing person until seen by the police.

Essex Police

On receiving a report of a missing child, Essex Police will classify the child as missing and will respond based on the level of risk involved.

Essex Police will conduct a vulnerability interview for all children who have been missing and have returned. It may be that the child refuses to engage or speak with police. On these occasions the parents/carers can assist by reporting to officers their observations on the child's return, e.g. did the child shower, have gifts, appear unwell or under the influence of any substance etc. The setting may also be able to contribute to this process and should provide the police with any relevant information or observations.

Missing Chats

Each child years that is ten or older that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child.

Useful contacts:

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk

Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

Record of amendments made

A record of amendments made for September 2026 is below.

Throughout	References to KCSIE 2026 in place of KCSIE 2025 Relationships, and Sex Education (RSE) Policy changed to Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy Reordering of material Updates to include relevant policies
Introduction	Updates to staff contact details.
Paragraph 4	New expectation that schools promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture as part of their safeguarding responsibilities
Paragraph 14	Definition of abuse expanded which also includes additional sentence about child to parent or care giver abuse.
Paragraph 24	All staff should recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
Paragraph 42k	Where an immediate response is required, and if for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are on page 6 of this policy and therefore all staff members have access to urgent 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. Staff must Inform the DSL as soon as possible if they make a referral directly.
Paragraph 50	Addition of requirement to discuss with Essex Safeguarding Team Prevent Lead before a PREVENT referral is made
Paragraph 69	Addition of reference to trainee teachers
Paragraph 80	Abuse, neglect and exploitation to include KCSIE addition "modern slavery" and addition "including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, stalking" and "financial exploitation"
Paragraph 89	Update of definition of physical abuse
Paragraph 97	Update of definition of emotional abuse including the 2026 clarification that emotional abuse may include verbal abuse (e.g., criticism, belittling, name-calling).
Paragraph 99	Update of definition of sexual abuse including the expanded section on sexual abuse to provide clear examples of physical contact. Sexual abuse definition widened from "forcing or enticing" to "forcing, causing or inciting", with new lines confirming children are more likely to know their abuser than not, and that under-13s can never legally consent to sexual activity
Paragraph 110	Update of definition of neglect
Paragraph 112	Clarification that safeguarding issues often overlap
Paragraph 117	All staff should recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour may have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and should be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.
Paragraphs 117-120	KCSIE 2026 – Mental Health section substantially updated
	Retitled Child-on child abuse to Child-on child abuse (including harassment and violence)
Paragraphs 120-122	Expanded child-on-child abuse content to emphasise that: it is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator, it is preventable and it may involve serious physical harm or threats involving weapons

	Discriminatory behaviour, including racism and faith-targeted abuse, added to the definition of child-on-child abuse
Paragraph 124	Expanded CCE and CSE content. "This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and victims may identify as part of this group.", "This may constitute modern slavery..." and a reference to Modern Slavery statutory guidance, including referral expectations.
Paragraphs 126 and 132	Essex definitions of CSE and CCE
Paragraph 129	Addition of "This can be committed by an individual or an organised network..." and "Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim." Added clarification that victims may be criminalised for actions taken under coercion. Reference to footnote 12 in KCSIE 2026 defining "organised network" (from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse).
Paragraphs 156-158	Updates relating to Serious Violence
Paragraph 159	Early Help (sometimes referred to as Family Help within the Families First reforms)
Paragraph 160	Types of support before statutory intervention Expanded examples of issues staff should remain alert to
Paragraph 166	Terminology updated from "Contextual Safeguarding" to "Risk in the Community" to reflect KCSIE 2026 language and the broader consideration of safeguarding risks beyond the school and home environment
Paragraph 176	Supporting students who are questioning their gender
Paragraph 183	Parents should always inform the school of the reason for any absence. Where this does not happen, the school 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 (Children Missing Education Team, Social Care and / or Police). The school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The school follows the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (see Appendix F), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.
Paragraph 196	A review of the school's filtering and monitoring effectiveness should be carried out at least once every academic year.
Paragraph 200	Mobile phones in school Reasonable exceptions may be made to support individual medical, disability, or safeguarding needs.
Paragraphs 220-223, 225, 227	Updated information relating to the Information Sharing Duty September 2026
Paragraph 244	Addition of "Any person volunteering in a school or college in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children on more than 3 days in a month or overnight is now in regulated activity." Volunteers must not be permitted to begin working within the setting covered by the EYFS framework until the school has received the volunteer's enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information.
Appendix A	Updates to Legislation and statutory guidance
Appendices C-F	Updated