The Bridge Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Essex Schools)

September 2026

The Bridge Trust

Pride
Passion
Partnership
Professionalism
Positivity

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Policy Author	Barney Geen, Head of School Improvement and Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead
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Please note that all Trust policies are reviewed annually or sooner as required. Should you have any queries regards this policy, note an omission or wish to propose an amendment, please email matttheweldon.lake@thebridgetrust.academy

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Introduction and Ethos

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children has an important role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, taking action and supporting children at the earliest opportunity.

School staff are particularly well placed to notice changes in children's behaviour, presentation, attendance, relationships or wellbeing. All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, must understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report concerns.

Columbus and Pioneer are committed to creating and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture where all children feel safe, valued, respected and listened to. We want children to know that they can speak to trusted adults, that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that staff will act in their best interests.

a. We are committed to providing an environment where children can learn, develop and achieve, and where safeguarding is embedded in everyday practice. We are alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and wider safeguarding concerns, including risks that may arise outside the home, in the community or online. We will follow our procedures so that children receive timely help, protection and support.

b. We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to harm because of their experiences, circumstances, identity, additional needs, family context or wider environmental factors. Children who have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma or adversity may find it harder to trust adults, feel safe, regulate their emotions or communicate what is happening to them. Their behaviour may be distressed, withdrawn, challenging or concerning. We will respond with professional curiosity, sensitivity and consistency, while keeping the child's safety and welfare at the centre of decision-making.

c. Our core safeguarding principles are that:

- safeguarding is a whole-school responsibility;
- schools and colleges are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children;
- all children have the right to be safe, protected and supported;
- all children should be heard, and their wishes and feelings should be taken into account;
- all children should be treated with dignity and respect, without discrimination;
- staff must be alert to vulnerability, risk and emerging concerns, and act without delay;
- staff must follow this policy, the staff code of conduct and all related safeguarding procedures;
- safeguarding practice should be child-centred, inclusive, trauma-informed and proportionate;
- concerns should be recorded clearly, shared appropriately and kept under review; and
- safeguarding decisions should be informed by professional judgement, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

The procedures in this policy apply to all staff, governors, volunteers, temporary staff, contractors and anyone working on behalf of The Bridge Trust at the Essex Schools.

Monitoring and Review

- Safeguarding policies will be reviewed at least annually by the Head of School Improvement and Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead, then passed to the Trust Board of Directors for further review and approval. They are also reviewed following changes in statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, learning from child safeguarding practice reviews, significant safeguarding incidents, allegations against staff, or any other learning that indicates practice should be strengthened.

- Each school's DSL and Headteacher will ensure that safeguarding activity, themes and systems are reported regularly to the local governing body. Reports should support effective oversight and assurance, while protecting children's confidentiality and avoiding unnecessary identification of individual children or families.

Definitions

Safeguarding is broader than responding to abuse. It includes the actions we take to protect children from harm, promote their welfare and support them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

- protecting children from maltreatment, whether this takes place within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;
- recognising and responding to children's health, wellbeing and safety needs, including mental health;
- meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities;
- responding appropriately to medical needs, intimate care, first aid and use of reasonable force;
- promoting online safety and responding to online harms;
- planning safe educational visits and off-site learning;
- maintaining safe site security and supervision arrangements; and
- working with other agencies to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

Child protection is part of safeguarding. It refers to the action taken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Staff** means all adults working for or on behalf of the Trust at the two Essex schools, whether paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time. This includes teachers, support staff, agency staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, contractors and visitors where relevant.
- **Child** means anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Where relevant, this policy also recognises the continuing responsibilities education settings may have towards young people with SEND, care experience or other additional vulnerabilities, in line with applicable legal and statutory frameworks. Some students on roll are aged 19 years.
- **Parent** means birth parents and other adults with parental responsibility or a parenting role, including adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians, kinship carers and foster carers.
- **Abuse** may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation, and these may overlap. Harm may be caused by adults or other children, by direct action or by a failure to act.

Context

This policy sets out how Bridge Trust's Essex Schools fulfil their statutory safeguarding responsibilities and promotes the welfare of all children. It is informed by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*.

It should be read alongside each school's related policies and procedures, including but not limited to the Behaviour, Whistleblowing, Attendance, Managing Allegation Against Staff, Equality, SEND, Health and Safety, and Data Protection Policy, as well as the Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook.

Safeguarding is central to the welfare, safety and educational outcomes of children. This policy forms part of the setting's wider safeguarding framework and applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, trustees and regular visitors, according to their role and responsibilities.

All staff and volunteers must treat every safeguarding concern seriously, including concerns that appear low level, uncertain, emerging or linked to changes in a child's behaviour, attendance, presentation or communication. Staff are expected to respond promptly, record accurately, share information appropriately and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where needed.

All staff must read and understand the relevant parts of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, including Part 1 and Annex A, and know how to apply this policy in practice. Staff should also be familiar with the school's internal reporting arrangements and the role of the DSL and safeguarding team.

Where staff have concerns about a child, they should follow the actions set out in this policy and the flowchart in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*. These should be used alongside local safeguarding reporting procedures, known as the safeguarding poster, and advice from the DSL.

The Headteacher and DSL, supported by the Trust, will ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are understood, implemented and followed by all staff. This includes arrangements for identifying concerns, making referrals, recording decisions, sharing information, managing allegations and escalating concerns where appropriate.

Reporting, Responding to Concerns and Sharing Information

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor who receives a disclosure, becomes aware of an allegation, or has a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm must report this immediately to the DSL or, in their absence, a deputy DSL. Concerns must be treated seriously, including those that appear low level, uncertain, emerging or linked to changes in a child's behaviour, attendance, presentation or communication. Staff should not delay sharing safeguarding concerns because of data-protection anxieties.

The DSL will immediately refer cases where a child is at immediate risk of harm by contacting Essex children's social care, the police or emergency services as appropriate. DSLs and deputies must not wait to complete written records before taking urgent safeguarding action.

When seeking information from a child, staff should avoid leading questions and use open prompts. The TED approach can help: ask the child to **Tell**, **Explain** or **Describe** what happened, for example, "Tell me what happened", "Explain what you mean", or "Describe what you saw or heard". Staff must listen, reassure, avoid investigating, and report the concern to the DSL without delay.

Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 intends to introduce a mandatory duty to report child sexual abuse where abuse is known, suspected or disclosed by a child. Once commenced, this will strengthen existing safeguarding responsibilities and may create criminal consequences for failure to report, as well as a criminal offence of obstructing or preventing a report. Our Essex schools must not manage child sexual abuse concerns "in house" where statutory thresholds are met. The duty will come into force through regulations, supported by national guidance and training expectations. Until commencement and guidance are confirmed, we should not change referral thresholds, but should prepare by ensuring staff understand how to recognise, record and report concerns promptly.

DSL Response and Referrals

The DSL will consider the concern, review the information available, seek advice where needed and decide what action is required. This may include early help or family help, referral to Essex children's social care, contact with the police, referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer where the concern relates to an adult working with children, or continued monitoring and support within school. The schools follows the relevant local safeguarding arrangements. Further guidance on specific safeguarding issues is available through Trust colleagues, such as the Trust DSL (Head of School Improvement), Head of People Services, and Safeguarding and Attendance Officer.

Where the DSL decides that a referral to Essex Children's Services is required, they should follow the referral process by:

- calling our children's line on 0345 603 7627 (Monday to Thursday 8:45 am to 5pm, and Fridays 8:45am to 4:15pm)
- calling the hours number: 0345 606 1212 (out of hours and bank holidays)
- filling out our online request for support form

Urgent safeguarding concerns should always be followed up by telephone, particularly where a child may be at immediate risk of harm or where same-day action may be required. Leaders must not delay urgent safeguarding action while written referral information is being completed. If the child you are concerned about is at risk of immediate harm, call our priority consultation line or call the Police on 999.

Recording, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All safeguarding concerns, welfare concerns, disclosures, incidents and allegations must be recorded clearly, accurately and promptly in line with the school's safeguarding recording procedures. Staff must use CPOMS and complete a body map where injuries or marks have been observed. Records should be completed as soon as possible after the event and passed without delay to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Records should be factual, clear and concise, distinguishing between fact, observation, allegation and professional opinion. Where appropriate, the child's own words should be recorded. All records must be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record and should include what was seen, heard or reported, action taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions and any follow-up required. If any member of staff is unsure whether a concern should be recorded, they should seek advice from the DSL. If in doubt, record and report. Further information about CPOMS entries is available in Annex 5 (CPOMS checklist).

The DSL will maintain clear, accurate, up-to-date and confidential safeguarding records for individual children. These records will be stored securely, maintained separately from the child's main educational record and retained in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's records retention procedures. Safeguarding records will include, where appropriate, a chronology of significant events, actions taken, conversations held, referrals made, information shared and outcomes.

Safeguarding and child protection information is highly sensitive and must be handled appropriately. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and only where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child. The Headteacher, DSL and Deputy DSLs are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding information is managed appropriately and shared with relevant individuals and agencies in accordance with statutory guidance and legislation.

All staff understand that they have a duty of confidentiality in relation to children, families and colleagues. However, they also understand that they have a professional responsibility to share information where this is necessary to protect a child from harm. Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child and must explain, where appropriate, that information may need to be shared with those who can help keep them safe. Staff must not assume that someone else has taken action and must not allow concerns about sharing information to prevent appropriate safeguarding action being taken.

The schools will work openly with parents and carers wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and where sharing is necessary to safeguard a child or individual at risk. If speaking to parents or carers may increase risk to the child, impede a police investigation or place another person at risk, advice should be sought from children's social care and/or the police before information is shared.

The Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. The schools will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles and lawful bases for processing personal information. Information shared should be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure, and clear records must be kept of decisions made and the rationale for sharing or withholding information.

Where a request is received for information about a child and there is reason to believe that sharing that information may place the child or another person at risk of serious harm, the schools will consider the application of the serious harm provisions within data protection legislation and seek appropriate advice where required. Where safeguarding concerns may affect the wider community, advice will be sought from the Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing - Essex County Council, Children's Social Care, Police or other relevant safeguarding agencies before information is shared more widely, so that children remain protected and any investigations are not compromised.

The schools recognises the importance of effective information sharing when children move between education settings. Where a child transfers to another school, college or education provider, the DSL will ensure that the safeguarding file is transferred securely and without delay to the receiving DSL, in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and data protection legislation. Receipt of the file will be obtained and recorded. The DSL will consider whether additional information should be shared with the receiving setting in advance of transfer so that suitable support and safeguarding arrangements can be put in place, including information relating to the Channel Programme, Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans or other safeguarding processes where relevant.

When safeguarding files are transferred, the DSL will, wherever possible, have a direct conversation with the DSL at the receiving setting to ensure that important safeguarding information is understood and that appropriate support can continue without delay.

The schools will follow the DfE Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners and the Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing. Staff can also access the Data Protection Toolkit for Schools.

Escalation Process

If any member of staff feels that a concern has not been responded to appropriately, or that a child may remain at risk, they must escalate this without delay. This should usually be done by speaking again with the DSL or a deputy DSL, and then with the Headteacher or safeguarding governor if the concern remains unresolved. Where concerns remain unresolved, or there is professional disagreement within or between agencies, the school must follow the local Escalation Policy. Staff are responsible for ensuring that their concerns are heard and acted upon; safeguarding concerns must never be left unaddressed because another person has been informed.

Safer Recruitment

- The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in education. The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the pupils and students in its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- The Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and processes for key members of staff responsible for the recruitment of all categories of individuals working on the Trust's premises (including employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, regular visitors and members of the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies).
- The Safer Recruitment Policy aims to achieve the intentions above by outlining the Trust's processes to:
  - Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies on the basis of their merit, abilities and suitability;
  - Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
  - Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

1. The Safer Recruitment Policy is available on the Trust's Landing Page.

Staff Awareness, Induction and Training

What staff must read

Headteachers and line managers will ensure that all staff are provided with, and confirm that they have read and understood, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Governors, Directors (Trustees) and senior leaders must

read all of the guidance. The schools may use a KCSIE 2026 safeguarding quiz or other knowledge check to confirm understanding following induction, annual INSET or refresher training.

Staff Induction

All new staff, volunteers, temporary staff and regular visitors will receive a safeguarding and child protection induction, including online safety, that is proportionate to their role and responsibilities. Induction will ensure that everyone working in or on behalf of the school understands the safeguarding systems, reporting routes, communication lines and what to do if they have a concern about a child.

Through completing this essential activity annually and through induction all staff confirm that they have read, understood and had opportunities to ask questions about the following documents.

- Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping children safe in education 2026
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Essex Schools)
- Safeguarding training slides (School specific versions)
- Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Staff Handbook
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Relationships at Work Policy

The DSL will ensure that induction also explains how to record and report concerns, respond to disclosures, make or support referrals where required, escalate concerns, and access early help, children's social care, police or other specialist support. The schools will keep a record of safeguarding induction, including the date completed, documents shared and confirmation that the member of staff, volunteer, temporary staff member or regular visitor has understood their safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff Training and Updates

All staff must complete safeguarding and child protection training to enable them to identify concerns, respond appropriately, record and share information, and refer concerns to the DSL in line with this policy and local safeguarding procedures.

Training will ensure that staff are aware of a range of safeguarding issues, including online safety, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence, persistent absence from education, alcohol and drug misuse, serious violence, exploitation, and the risks associated with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including consensual and non-consensual sharing and AI-generated or manipulated imagery such as deepfakes. Training will also cover whole-school safeguarding responsibilities, child protection procedures, safe working practice and external reporting mechanisms.

Safeguarding and child protection updates will be provided regularly, and at least annually, so that staff maintain the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard children effectively. Updates may be provided through staff meetings, briefings, e-bulletins or blogs, supervision, training sessions or other agreed communication routes.

The Headteacher will ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff. At all times, the child's safety and welfare must be the primary consideration. Where there is a conflict of interest between a child and an adult, the child's interests must come first.

Central Training Record

- Each school's DSL will maintain an up-to-date record of safeguarding and child protection training delivered to staff, the date of training, and any safeguarding knowledge checks or quizzes used by the school. The record will be kept on a tab within the Safeguarding Tracker, which is regularly checked by the Head of School Improvement.
- The Head of Training and Development maintains an up-to-date central register of which staff have completed mandatory safeguarding training through National College.

Governor and Trustee Training

Although the Local Governing Body has a nominated safeguarding lead governor, all governors and Directors (Trustees) must complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, relevant to their role. This training will cover their strategic responsibilities, including oversight, assurance and appropriate challenge. Training will be refreshed at least every three years, with annual updates in between.

Safer Working Practice

- All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

- All staff will be provided with a copy of our Trust's Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook at induction and during the annual affirmation exercise. A copy of the latest Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook are available on the Trust's Landing Page and National College. These two documents provide clear guidelines on the expectations around safe working practices and acceptable conduct. Whilst they don't attempt to cover all eventualities, they do give a framework to help staff think about what they should or shouldn't do and to help them apply sound judgement and knowledge to carry out their duties in accordance with the advice.

- There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for safe restraint must be adhered to and any physical contact must be done so in a way that is appropriate to the staff member's professional role. Further information is available in the Trust's Behaviour Policy and the Staff Handbook. A list of staff that have accessed Norfolk Steps training will be kept by the DSL and Headteacher on the training log.

- If staff or visitors are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with and for how long. Doors have a clear glass panel in them.

- The details above are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in the latest published versions of 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings'. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

- As outlined in the Trust's Code of Conduct, when working with our children and young people, adults must:

    - consider if activities they are undertaking are in the children and young peoples' best interests;

    - be sensitive to the needs and feelings of the children and young people;

    - must be respectful and polite;

    - must be aware of confidentiality;

- must communicate effectively;
- always use the proper routes for communication; and
- co-operate and collaborate, working together to meet the school's shared goals in the best interests of the children.

Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers

- Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children at our schools. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

2. The Trust's Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy outlines the key responsibilities for groups of staff responsible for managing allegations, how staff should report any allegations concerning an adult working onsite and the actions that the Trust will take. The Policy is available to view on the Trust's Landing Page. The key principles and reporting mechanisms are outlined below but further guidance is provided in the policy.

Referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Headteacher will contact the LADO immediately, and within one working day, where it is alleged that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including transferable risk from behaviour outside school; or
- behaved in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010

The schools will not investigate allegations that may meet the harm threshold before consulting the LADO. The Headteacher may make basic enquiries to establish the facts and will follow LADO advice on next steps, including whether to involve children's social care, the police, or the person's employer.

Concerns or allegations must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Where the concern or allegation is about the Headteacher, it must be reported to the CEO: Hermann Farrington or the Head of People Services: Lisa Cardinali.

Low-level concerns

- A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the schools may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including conduct outside work, but does not meet the harm threshold for a LADO referral.
- Examples may include being over-friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs of children on a personal phone, engaging one-to-one with a child in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or humiliating children.
- Low-level concerns must be shared promptly with the Headteacher. Staff are also encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or may fall below expected professional standards.

- Where a low-level concern relates to a supply worker, trainee teacher, contractor or other person not directly employed by the school, the concern will be recorded and their employer will be notified so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified.
- The LADO may be consulted.

Managing and Recording Low-Level Concerns

- Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, including the concern, context and action taken. The name of the person sharing the concern will be recorded unless they wish to remain anonymous, in which case this will be respected as far as reasonably possible.
- Records will be held securely, kept confidential and managed in line with data protection requirements. All schools will record low-level concerns on their safeguarding tracker
- Records will be reviewed by the Headteacher so that patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
- The schools will consider whether any wider cultural, policy, supervision or training issues have contributed to the concern and will take action to reduce the risk of recurrence. Records will be retained at least until the individual leaves employment, unless an investigation is ongoing.
- All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the school's whistleblowing procedure. Concerns about the conduct of an adult that could place a child at risk must be reported. Staff may also contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk if they do not feel able to raise concerns internally.
- The schools will make a referral to the DBS where a person has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child; has been removed from regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left; and the legal referral criteria are met. Referrals will be made as soon as possible following resignation or removal and in line with advice from the LADO and/or human resources.

Community-based Early Help/Family Help

Our settings recognises that any child and family may benefit from community-based Early Help/Family Help when needs are emerging or escalating, but do not require a statutory social care response. Family Help brings together targeted early help and support for children in need, with the aim of providing timely, coordinated support through a whole-family approach. Assessments may be led by non-social-worker practitioners, including the DSL or a deputy, where this is appropriate. All staff understand that they have a role in identifying concerns early, speaking to the DSL, sharing information appropriately and supporting other professionals with assessments and plans. Staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help/Family Help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs, with or without a statutory Education, Health and Care plan
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or is attending Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised, or is experiencing or at risk of harm outside the home, including exploitation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, stalking or financial exploitation
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending

- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child, or
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

- All staff are aware of the local Early Help/Family Help process and understand their role within it. This includes recognising emerging needs, recording and reporting concerns, liaising with the DSL, contributing to assessments and plans, and sharing information with other professionals where this is necessary and proportionate to support the child and family. In some cases, a member of school staff may act as the lead practitioner, with support from the DSL. Our setting will work in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and local Essex procedures.
- Early help assessments require the consent of families. If parents and/or the child do not consent to an early help assessment, then the lead professional should make a judgment as to whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into local authority children's social care may be necessary. Similarly if the child's situation does not improve, or if concerns increase, the DSL will consider whether a referral to statutory children's social care is required, for a Section 47 child protection assessment.

Inter-agency Working

- We have an important role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and contribute to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- We are not the investigating agency when there are child protection concerns, and we will therefore pass all relevant information to the statutory agencies. We will however contribute to the investigation and assessment processes as required and recognise that a crucial part of this may be in supporting the child while investigations take place.
- We will share information with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies in a timely, appropriate and proportionate way where this is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, in line with statutory guidance and local procedures.
- We recognise the importance of inter-agency working and will ensure that staff are enabled to attend and contribute to relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings and community-based Family Help meetings, in line with local thresholds and referral pathways.
- The Leadership Team including the DSLs will work to establish strong and co-operative relationships with relevant professionals in other agencies. The Leadership Team, including the DSLs, will promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture and will challenge barriers, bias or discrimination that may affect children's safety, wellbeing or access to help and protection.

Professional Curiosity and Action to Protect a Child

Where a concern is shared, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider the information available, seek advice where needed and decide what action is required. This may include early help or family help, referral to children's social care, consultation with the Children's Services Contact Team, contact with the police, referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer where the concern relates to an adult working with children, or continued monitoring and support within school.

Where a referral is made to children's social care, the DSL will follow local procedures and record the referral, advice received, decisions made and any follow-up action required. If the referral is made to Essex Children's Services, contact should be made using the referral route and telephone numbers provided in this policy. For children living outside Essex, the relevant local authority children's social care service should be contacted.

Staff should recognise that some children may communicate harm, distress or unmet need through behaviour rather than words. This may include children with disabilities, special educational needs, communication needs, language delay, or children for whom English is not their first language. Staff should remain professionally curious, including where children have limited mobility and present with unexplained injuries, marks or other indicators.

These procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and visitors. They will be covered through induction, safeguarding training and ongoing updates so that everyone understands their role and responsibility. New staff, volunteers and regular visitors will be told about the safeguarding arrangements in place, the names and contact details of the DSL and deputy DSLs, and how to share concerns.

Recognition and Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

- All staff should be able to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and maintain an attitude that "it could happen here". Harm may take place inside or outside the setting, inside or outside the home, and online. It may include children seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, and abuse may occur wholly online or be facilitated through technology. The main categories are:
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Emotional abuse
  - Neglect
  - Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, which are forms of child abuse
- Staff should refer to Part 1 of Keeping children safe in education for the definitions, indicators and required actions, and follow local Essex children's social care procedures. Staff may also refer to What to do if you are worried a child is being abused.
- Staff should understand that safeguarding concerns may be linked to factors outside the setting and outside the child's family, including peer groups, the community, public spaces and online. This is sometimes referred to as extra-familial harm and may include sexual or criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, radicalisation, domestic abuse, online abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Indicators may not always be obvious. Staff should be alert to changes in a child's behaviour, attendance, wellbeing, relationships, learning, online activity or appearance, as well as concerning parental or carer behaviour.

Online Safety

Our setting recognises that technology is central to children's lives and can present safeguarding and wellbeing risks both online and offline, inside and outside the setting. Online safety is therefore part of our whole-setting safeguarding approach and reflects *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, relevant filtering and monitoring standards, EYFS requirements where applicable, and local safeguarding procedures.

- content: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, including pornography, violent or extremist content, misogyny, racism, self-harm, suicide, misinformation, disinformation and other harmful material;
- contact: harmful online interaction, including grooming, exploitation, harmful advertising, peer pressure or adults posing as children;
- conduct: online behaviour that increases risk, including bullying, harassment, abuse, sharing nude or semi-nude images, and harmful or abusive use of emerging technologies; and
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, financial scams, in-app purchases and other commercial or financial exploitation.

All staff should:

- recognise that children can experience abuse, exploitation, harassment and harm online as well as face to face;

- respond to indicators of online harm, including changes in behaviour, attendance, wellbeing, relationships or learning;
- record and report concerns promptly to the DSL, including concerns that are emerging, low level or not directly disclosed by a child; and
- challenge inappropriate online behaviour so it is not normalised.

The DSL has lead responsibility for online safety, including oversight of filtering and monitoring. Staff with appropriate expertise, including central team colleagues, may support the DSL and leadership team with curriculum planning, technical decisions, risk assessments, data protection and the safe and ethical use of generative AI.

We will have clear rules on the use of mobile phones, cameras, smart watches and other devices with imaging, recording or sharing capability by staff, pupils, volunteers, visitors and parents/carers. In line with KCSIE 2026, the school should be mobile phone-free by default, with any exception carefully considered and managed. Expectations will be reflected in relevant policies, including behaviour, anti-bullying, acceptable use and image-use policies.

Smartphone use during the school day

In line with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, all schools that are part of The Bridge Trust will have and implement a policy that prohibits pupils from using smartphones during the school day, except where a clearly defined exception applies. This supports safeguarding by reducing exposure to online harms, including child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, filming and sharing incidents, bullying and access to harmful content.

Our local arrangements are set out in each school's mobile phone protocol and explain whether phones must be not brought onto site/handed in/stored securely/switched off/etc, how breaches are managed, and how safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL.

Exceptions, including reasonable adjustments for SEND, medical or disability-related needs, will be agreed by The Headteacher recorded clearly and reviewed as needed. Expectations will be communicated to pupils, parents, carers and staff and reflected in the behaviour, online safety, acceptable use and safeguarding policies.

Online Safety Review

In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, The Bridge Trust Essex schools will complete an annual online safety review. The review will consider policy, curriculum, staff training, pupil voice, parental engagement, incident records, acceptable use, filtering and monitoring, and emerging risks. Findings will be reported to The Head of School Improvement, COO, CEO and Chair of the Local Governing Board.

Online safety is embedded through parental engagement, appropriate security, staff training, curriculum planning, DSL oversight and an annual review of procedures and risk assessments. We will teach children how to recognise online risks, make safe choices, seek help and use technology responsibly. We will also work with parents and carers so they understand how children are supported online, what filtering and monitoring arrangements are in place, which websites or platforms may be used, and whether children may interact with staff online.

- unsuitable material is accessed or appears accessible;
- filtering or monitoring systems fail, or misuse is suspected;
- restrictions unreasonably affect teaching, learning, safeguarding or administration; or
- abbreviations, misspellings or workarounds allow access to restricted material.

Cybercrime and Cyber Security

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers or the internet. We recognise that children may be at risk of being drawn into low-level cyber-dependent offences, as well as being affected by cyber-enabled harm such as fraud,

online exploitation, bullying or unsafe online behaviour. Where concerns arise, staff should follow safeguarding procedures, seek advice from the DSL and consider whether specialist support or referral is needed.

We will use relevant guidance, including Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes, to support preparation and proportionate responses to online challenges and hoaxes. Additional advice is available through Cyber Choices. The school is also implementing measures in line with the cyber security standards for schools and colleges to strengthen cyber resilience and support our safeguarding responsibilities.

Images, Videos and Early Years Screen Use

For children in the early years, screen use will be limited, purposeful and developmentally appropriate, in line with Help for early years providers: screen use. Screens should not replace adult interaction, play, movement, communication, outdoor learning, real-world exploration or rest.

We will follow UK Safer Internet Centre guidance on managing images and videos on school websites and social media. Best practice includes regularly reviewing online content, avoiding unnecessary personal identifiable information, removing image metadata, and limiting public visibility of children's images.

Harmful Practices

Honour-based and faith-based abuse

- Staff and volunteers are aware that honour-based abuse and faith-based abuse are forms of abuse and will be responded to through this policy and local safeguarding procedures. Honour-based abuse can include forced marriage, female genital mutilation, breast ironing and other harmful practices committed to protect or defend perceived family or community honour. Faith-based abuse can include abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, witchcraft or other harmful belief systems. We will follow Keeping children safe in education, the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 summary of changes, and relevant local safeguarding procedures.
- Indicators of honour-based and faith-based abuse will be included in safeguarding training. All staff should be alert to children who may be at risk of, or have experienced, these forms of abuse. Concerns must be recorded and reported to the DSL without delay. Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff should call 999.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.
- As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.
- We will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures. Whilst all staff should speak to the DSL with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal duty on teachers.
- The DSL will complete the FGM e-Learning package (FGM E-Learning Course – National FGM Centre)
- The DSL will also ensure that information and training is made available as appropriate to all members of staff. This includes, FGM The Facts
- All members of staff will follow this policy and ISCP procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty

If a girl is at immediate risk of harm, staff must call 999. The DSL will also inform Children's Social Care or the Disabled Children's Team, as appropriate.

If a teacher, in the course of their professional duties, discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, they must report this directly to the police on 101. Staff should also inform the DSL so that appropriate safeguarding action can be taken. Further information is available in Annex A of KCSIE 2026.

Forced Marriage and Under-age Marriage

- A forced marriage is one entered without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used, and it is a crime.
- Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue. We will contact the Forced Marriage Unit for advice or information on 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk .
- The Forced Marriage Unit has published Multi-agency guidelines, with pages 32-36 focusing on the role of Schools and colleges. Staff should report concerns regarding forced marriage to the DSL or can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information
- Since February 2023 any marriage that takes place under the age of eighteen years, whether there is consent or coercion, is illegal.

Abuse linked to a belief in Spirit Possession Or Witchcraft

Abuse linked to a belief in 'spirit possession' or 'witchcraft' is a global issue that is not confined to particular countries or cultures. These are harmful to children and reported numbers are small although it is believed many go undetected. The nature of the abuse can be particularly disturbing and the impact on the child serious. There are links between 'spirit possession' and 'witchcraft' and exploitation in that belief in magic or witchcraft may be used to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

The term 'spirit possession' means that a force, spirit, god or demon has entered a child and is controlling him or her resulting in a change in health or behaviour. Sometimes the term 'witch' or 'witchcraft' is used. This is the belief that a child can use an evil force or supernatural powers to harm others. Terminology examples are black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah and child sorcerers. Families, carers and the children involved can hold genuine beliefs that evil forces are at work and be deeply worried by the evil that they believe is threatening them. There may also be an element of the adult gaining some gratification through the ritualistic abuse of the child, which may even result in the death of the child.

Vulnerability

In cases of 'spirit possession' or 'witchcraft' which involve children, the parent/carer views the child as 'different' and attributes this to the child being 'possessed'. This can lead to attempts to exorcise the child.

The reasons for being 'different' can be varied, and include disobedience, independence, bedwetting, nightmares or illness. In some cases, there will be no obvious difference, and the child will have been targeted because they are perceived to be 'spiritually' different. The attempt to exorcise may involve beating, burning, starvation, cutting/stabbing and/or isolation within the household, all of which obviously constitute abuse.

Things to Look Out For

Indicators of abuse linked to belief in spirit possession, which may also be common features in other kinds of abuse, include a child reporting that they are, or have been, accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them'.

Signs of physical abuse

- A child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated;
- Personal care deteriorating;
- Attendance becoming irregular or child being taken out of school altogether;
- A deterioration in a child's performance at school;
- Lack of parental concern or attachment.

What to do if you are concerned

Everyone working with children has a responsibility to recognise and know how to act on evidence, concerns and signs that a child's health, development and safety is being or may be threatened, especially when they suffer or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Standard child safeguarding procedures apply and must always be followed in all cases where abuse or neglect is suspected including those that may be related to particular belief systems

- Contact the DSL immediately or make a referral to Children's Social Care

Child Abduction and Community Safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent or another person with legal responsibility. It may be committed by parents or other family members, people known to the child but not related to them, or strangers.

Community safety incidents near the school or setting may also raise safeguarding concerns. These may include unknown adults loitering nearby, attempting to engage children in conversation, following children, or behaving in a way that causes concern. Staff should record and report any such concerns to the DSL so that appropriate action can be taken, including seeking advice from the police, children's social care or the local authority where necessary.

As children become older and more independent, including when travelling to and from school, we will help them develop practical safety skills. This may include age-appropriate teaching, assemblies or outdoor safety lessons delivered by staff or local police. The focus will be on building children's confidence, judgement and ability to seek help, rather than creating fear of all strangers.

Further information is available from Action Against Abduction and Clever Never Goes.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

Modern slavery is linked to human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - Modern slavery - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Learning at home

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the DfE has provided Providing Remote Education Advice for Schools and settings. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Staff with access to the setting's devices are reminded about rules on the misuse of technology – devices used at home should be used just like if they were in full view of a teacher or colleague. Staff will:

- not use private accounts
- log all contacts
- log issues and concerns
- consider the increased vulnerability of pupils with SEND
- avoid private chats with pupils

Learning at an Alternative Provision

We recognise that some children attending alternative provision (AP) may have additional vulnerabilities or complex needs. The schools remains responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and will seek written confirmation that the alternative provision has completed appropriate safeguarding checks on staff working with children as per the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 which strengthens inspection, information-sharing and enforcement powers in relation to independent education settings and alternative provision, with safeguarding at the centre. This means that there will be increased scrutiny of safeguarding practice across all AP and clearer expectations to carry out appropriate due diligence for our setting.

We will ensure that we know and visit the address where each child is being educated, including the full address of the provision and any subcontracted provision or satellite site they may attend. We will review each placement at least half-termly to assure ourselves that the child is attending, engaging, making progress, and that the placement remains safe and suitable. Where safeguarding concerns arise, these will be considered by the DSL and responded to in line with this policy and local safeguarding procedures. The placement will be reviewed promptly and may be suspended or ended if concerns are not addressed satisfactorily. We will follow the statutory Department for Education guidance, Arranging Alternative Provision 2025, to ensure we meet our safeguarding and educational responsibilities.

Residential Settings and School Trips

During residential trips, we will comply with our safeguarding duties as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and will ensure that sleeping arrangements are planned in advance, risk assessed, appropriately supervised, and consistent with relevant equality, safeguarding and residential accommodation requirements. Risk assessments for residential provision and school trips will consider the needs and safety of all children, including children with SEND or communication needs, known safeguarding concerns, child-on-child abuse risks, sleeping arrangements, supervision, privacy, toileting and changing arrangements, and any individual requests for support or alternative arrangements.

We are alert to the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities that may arise in a residential setting including the increased vulnerability of children with SEND or communication needs, the potential for inappropriate pupil relationships, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour, and risks linked to the balance of boys and girls in the group or setting. Safeguarding arrangements for residential provision will be led by the DSL, supported by senior leaders, and will include appropriate risk assessment, supervision, information sharing and recording

When considering any request for support with social transition in relation to residential accommodation, toilets, changing rooms or single-sex activities, the schools will comply with its safeguarding duties and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998. In line with statutory guidance and the requirements relating to schools premises, independent school standards and residential accommodation, pupils must not be permitted to use toilets, changing rooms, boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex. Where single-sex sporting activities are provided for safety reasons, pupils must not participate in sports designated for the opposite sex. Any request for support will be considered sensitively and, on a case,-by-case basis, with regard to the child's welfare, privacy, dignity and safety, while ensuring that safeguarding, supervision and legal requirements are met.

As a general safeguarding expectation, children will not share overnight accommodation with a child of the opposite biological sex. Where a child does not feel comfortable sharing accommodation with children of the same biological sex, the school will consider alternative safe arrangements where reasonably practicable. Decisions will be made on a case-

by-case basis, taking account of the child's welfare, privacy, dignity, any known risks, the views of parents/carers where appropriate, and the school's duties under safeguarding and equality legislation.

The school will keep a written record of the rationale for any alternative arrangement and will ensure that supervision, staffing and emergency arrangements remain suitable throughout the residential visit.

Mental Health

We have an important role in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. Staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. This may include concerns about self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions, but they are well placed to observe children day to day, notice changes in behaviour or presentation, promote positive mental health, and share concerns with the DSL.

We will follow the government guidance on promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges and will use resources such as the Anna Freud Mentally Healthy Schools guidance and hub to support a whole-school approach, staff awareness and access to appropriate support.

Mental health needs may arise or be intensified where children have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, bereavement, trauma, adversity or other significant life events. Children may show distress in different ways, including significant changes in behaviour, ongoing sleep difficulties, withdrawal from social situations, loss of interest in usual activities, self-harm, neglecting themselves, or changes in attendance, relationships or learning. Not every child who shows these behaviours will have a mental health need or be at risk of suicide, but staff should take concerns seriously and seek advice.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a child, they should record and share this with the DSL in line with this policy. The DSL may consider early help, pastoral support, consultation with parents/carers where appropriate, referral to the local Mental Health Support Team, or referral to other specialist services.

If a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the child protection procedures and speak to the DSL without delay. If a child appears to be at immediate risk of serious harm, staff should call 999 or arrange urgent medical help. If urgent mental health help is needed but it is not an emergency, staff can use NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Children in Specific Circumstances

Children who need a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker because of safeguarding or welfare needs, including abuse, neglect, exploitation or complex family circumstances. Experiences of adversity and trauma can increase vulnerability to further harm and may affect attendance, learning, behaviour, relationships and mental health.

- When a school is informed that a child has, or has had, a social worker, the DSL will use this information to support decisions made in the child's best interests. This will include decisions about safeguarding, welfare, attendance, behaviour, pastoral support, academic support and liaison with statutory services.
- This information will help staff respond proportionately to concerns, including unauthorised absence, missing education, changes in behaviour or presentation, and known safeguarding risks. The schools will work with social workers, the Virtual School Head, parents/carers where appropriate, and other professionals to promote the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

- Further information is available in the government review Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection and the concluding report Help, Protection, Education: Concluding the Children in Need Review.

Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We recognise that children with SEND, disabilities and certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, both offline and online. These may include greater dependence on adults for care, communication barriers, increased isolation, prejudice-based bullying, or difficulty recognising risk, including online risk. In supporting children with SEND or medical needs, we will follow the SEND Code of Practice 0–25 years and statutory guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

Staff are aware that additional barriers can make it harder to identify abuse, neglect or exploitation for children with SEND, disabilities or certain health conditions. These include:

- assumptions that behaviour, mood, injury or communication relate to a child's disability or health condition rather than possible abuse or neglect;
- greater risk of peer isolation or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying;
- disproportionate impact from bullying or harmful behaviour, including where there are few outward signs;
- speech, language or communication needs that make it harder to tell someone what is happening;
- intimate care needs or dependence on adults for personal care; and
- difficulty understanding online content, distinguishing fact from fiction, or recognising the consequences of repeating harmful online behaviours.

Staff will remain professionally curious and will not make assumptions about the causes of changes in a child's presentation, behaviour, attendance, communication or wellbeing. The DSL will work closely with the SENCO, pastoral staff, parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure concerns are understood in context, communication support is in place, reasonable adjustments are considered, and safeguarding responses are proportionate and child-centred.

Safeguarding Children with Medical Conditions

Each school will support pupils with medical conditions, including asthma and allergies, as part of its safeguarding, health, safety and inclusion responsibilities. We will follow statutory guidance, including appropriate healthcare plans, staff training, accessible medication, emergency arrangements, communication with parents and carers, and learning from incidents or near misses.

A medical-condition incident will not automatically require a safeguarding referral. A referral should be considered where the incident suggests the child may be at increased risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, for example because key medical information is not shared, essential medication is repeatedly not provided or agreed health or emergency arrangements are not followed.

The DSL will work with relevant staff, parents, carers and health professionals to respond proportionately. Safeguarding concerns linked to a medical condition must be recorded and shared in line with this policy. Where urgent medical help is needed, staff must act immediately and follow the child's healthcare plan or emergency procedures.

Asthma Friendly School

Each school will work towards being an asthma friendly school by improving asthma awareness, strengthening day-to-day asthma management and ensuring that pupils with asthma are supported to participate safely and fully in school life, including PE, trips and wider activities. This includes having clear arrangements for identifying pupils with asthma, keeping an asthma register, supporting asthma care plans, ensuring inhalers and spacers are accessible, maintaining emergency arrangements and making sure staff know how to respond to asthma symptoms or an asthma attack.

Becoming asthma friendly benefits the whole school community. It improves asthma awareness and management, reduces avoidable absence linked to poor asthma control, supports pupils with asthma to feel safe and included, and helps staff understand their responsibilities for the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. It also supports the school to implement current and best practice asthma management strategies and to promote its self-evaluated asthma friendly status so that pupils, families, staff and the wider community are aware of the school's commitment to asthma friendly practice.

Children Absent and Missing from Education

- We recognise that all children are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Being absent from education, particularly when absence is unexplained, persistent or repeated, and children missing education, can be warning signs of safeguarding concerns, including abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, county lines, mental health concerns, family difficulties or wider contextual risks.
- We will follow our attendance and children missing education procedures to identify and respond to concerns early. This includes monitoring patterns of absence, making timely contact with parents/carers, listening to children, working with the local authority and other partners, and sharing information with the DSL where absence may indicate a safeguarding concern. Where appropriate, this may include liaison with children's social care, the police or other agencies.
- We recognise that absence from education may increase safeguarding risks for children who already have, or have had, a social worker, or who are otherwise vulnerable. Our response will support early help, statutory safeguarding action where required, and action to prevent children becoming missing from education.
- We will follow the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2026, which sets out expectations for schools, local authorities and partners to work together to promote and support attendance. Where a child or family cannot be located, we will follow local children missing education procedures and have regard to the Home Office strategy Missing Children and Adults.

Children Not in School and Elective Home Education

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 requires local authorities to maintain oversight of children not in school, including children who are electively home educated, so that children are safe, visible to services where necessary, and receiving a suitable education.

Where parents or carers indicate an intention to home educate, the schools will follow statutory and local authority procedures. A child will not be automatically removed from roll for elective home education, particularly where there are safeguarding, welfare, attendance, SEND or vulnerability concerns. The Act states that Local Authority agreement is required before some children can be withdrawn for home education, including where a child is subject to child protection enquiries, has a CP Plan, or attends special school or specially organised independent provision. In these cases, the local authority must be satisfied that home education is compatible with its safeguarding and welfare duties.

Safeguarding considerations will take precedence where a child may be at risk of harm, become hidden from services, or not receive a suitable education.

The DSL and headteacher will seek local authority advice before agreeing to removal from roll for any child with safeguarding, attendance, SEND or welfare concerns, and will share relevant information promptly and securely. Advice, decisions, information shared and the rationale for action will be recorded on the safeguarding record. Where risk is immediate or escalating, the schools will follow child protection procedures.

Young Carers

Our staff are alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. A young carer is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years of age who provides or intends to provide care for another person of any age. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers are responded to in a child-centred and whole-family way and receive support at the right time.

Signs and Indicators

- Frequent lateness, absence or unexplained time away from school
- Tiredness, anxiety, distraction, withdrawal, low confidence or sudden changes in behaviour
- Falling behind with learning, homework or participation in clubs, trips and activities
- Needing regular contact with home or showing worry about a sick, disabled or dependent family member
- Isolation from peers, bullying, poor relationships or reluctance to talk about home life
- Poor hygiene, diet, physical pain or emotional outbursts linked to pressure or caring responsibilities

Young carers may also be identified through family circumstances, such as illness, disability, mental ill health, substance misuse, missed appointments or limited engagement with school. Staff understand that they must avoid assumptions, judgement and not assume that caring is always harmful to a child but must consider the child's welfare using professional curiosity to understand the child's daily life at home and in school. Staff will record patterns of concerns and discuss them with the DSL who can explore those concerns with the child and family where safe and appropriate.

Our staff are further able to support young carers by:

- Taking a flexible and supportive approach to homework, punctuality, attendance and participation where caring responsibilities are affecting the child
- Making sure the child has a trusted adult in school and regular opportunities to talk about worries or pressures
- Being particularly alert before and after school holidays, when caring responsibilities and family pressures may increase
- Considering the whole family context, including illness, disability, mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, bereavement or financial pressures

Child-on-Child Abuse (including Harassment and Violence)

- All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for all children involved, whether they cause harm or are harmed. We may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst here, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. We recognise that some children may abuse other children, and any incidents of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the local procedures. There is an ISCP Protocol for Managing Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse, Violence and Harassment which must be followed. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

- Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) can take many forms and may happen in person, online, or through a combination of both. It includes bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying; abuse within intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse or threats of violence; sexual violence and sexual harassment; coercing another child to engage in sexual activity; the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images; upskirting; and initiation or hazing-type violence or rituals. The schools recognises that such behaviour is harmful, will not be dismissed as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will be responded to in line with safeguarding procedures, with appropriate support for all children involved

- We recognise that LGBTQ+ children can be targeted by others as can children perceived to be LGBTQ+ who can be just as vulnerable. We will ensure that these children have a trusted adult to share concerns with, and we will work to consider how we can reduce additional barriers faced by these children and how safe spaces can be provided for them to talk or share concerns. We recognise that some children will question their gender and that this may intensify as they enter puberty and we will maintain flexibility and avoid rigid rules based on gender stereotype. We will use the Statutory Guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education for support on addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

Where we are concerned that a child may be misusing drugs or alcohol, we will seek advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate, we will also seek a referral to the service so that the child can receive timely specialist support.

Serious Violence

Staff are aware that serious violence is a safeguarding concern and may include physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, and violence linked to peer conflict, bullying, criminal exploitation, gangs or wider community harm. Staff must report any concerns about a child carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon, or being at risk from serious violence, to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.

The DSL will consider the risk to the child, other children and the wider school community, taking account of the child's circumstances, peer relationships, contextual risks and any known safeguarding concerns. Appropriate action may include a safety and support plan, action to reduce peer conflict, referral to children's social care, consultation with the police, or other multi-agency support. DSLs should refer to Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* for guidance on managing referrals and when to contact the police.

Indicators that a child may be at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- increased absence from school or setting;
- disrupted education, including suspensions, permanent exclusion or time in alternative provision;
- a history of offending or contact with the criminal justice system;
- changes in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- significant decline in performance, attendance or engagement;
- signs of self-harm or significant changes in wellbeing;
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries; and
- unexplained gifts, money or possessions, which may indicate involvement with criminal networks, gangs or exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as disrupted education, experience of maltreatment, offending, early drug or alcohol use, or previous experience of violence.

We recognise that risk can increase before and after school, including during journeys and in specific local places. We will listen to children, consult staff and work with local partners to understand where children feel unsafe and support a coordinated safeguarding response. We will have regard to the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy , County Lines guidance, and the Serious Violence Duty, which does not replace our safeguarding duties.

Early, evidence-informed support is important when concerns emerge. This may include access to trusted adults, social and emotional skills support, family help, mentoring, therapeutic support or targeted intervention. Practical guidance on evidence-informed approaches to preventing violence is available from the Youth Endowment Fund.

Contextual Safeguarding/Extra Familial Harm

The schools recognises that safeguarding concerns can arise both within and outside the home. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to risks that children may experience in their peer groups, school, online and in the wider community. It recognises that the environments in which children spend time can influence their safety and wellbeing.

The schools will take a whole-school approach to identifying and addressing extra-familial harm, including child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and violence, bullying, exploitation, serious violence and online abuse. We will listen to pupils' experiences, identify patterns and trends, and work with parents, the local authority and safeguarding partners to reduce risks and improve safety.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider whether individual concerns may indicate wider contextual risks affecting groups of pupils or particular locations and will seek advice or make referrals where appropriate. The schools will work in accordance with local safeguarding partnership procedures and relevant protocols relating to extra-familial harm.

We will use a self-assessment resource tool to identify what we are doing well to mitigate against the harm risks in our setting, and, importantly, to identify areas for development and improvement :https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/toolkit-overview/beyond-referrals-harmful-sexual-behaviour/

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

Children may be subjected to child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), or both. Exploitation can be carried out by adults or children, acting alone or as part of an organised network or gang. Children who appear to be involved in offending or harmful behaviour may also be victims of exploitation and should be responded to through a safeguarding lens.

Exploitation involves an imbalance of power where a child is coerced, controlled, manipulated or deceived into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve exchange for money, gifts, affection, protection, status, accommodation or substances, or may benefit the perpetrator financially or socially. CCE and CSE may involve modern slavery; further information about referral routes is available in the Modern Slavery statutory guidance.

Exploitation may happen in person, online, or through a combination of both. It can include county lines, forced or coerced criminal activity, trafficking, sexual exploitation, online grooming, image-based abuse, threats, violence, debt bondage or control through fear, shame or dependency.

Possible indicators

- unexplained gifts, money, possessions, clothing, phones or travel;
- going missing, returning home late, unexplained absences, or being found in areas away from home;
- poor attendance, disengagement from education, decline in attainment or behaviour changes;
- association with older individuals, groups, gangs, or others involved in exploitation;
- substance misuse, self-harm, emotional distress, fearfulness, secrecy or withdrawal;
- injuries, sexual health concerns, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, or sexualised behaviour that causes concern;
- owing money or being subject to debt, threats, coercion, violence or intimidation; and
- changes in online activity, contact with unknown adults, image sharing, or evidence of online grooming or control.

CSE can be one-off or ongoing and may range from opportunistic abuse to organised exploitation. Children can be exploited even where activity appears consensual, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to sexual activity, or where the child does not recognise that they are being abused. Any concern about exploitation must be taken seriously.

Staff should record and report concerns to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider the child's safety, wider contextual risks, online activity, peer and adult relationships, missing episodes, attendance, family circumstances and any links to county lines, modern slavery, trafficking, CSE or CCE. The DSL may seek advice or make referrals to children's social care, the police, the National Referral Mechanism or other multi-agency services, as appropriate. We will use the Children's Society guidance on the prevention of child sexual exploitation to support staff awareness and practice.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. It can include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economic or technology-facilitated abuse, and may be a single incident or a course of conduct. Further information is available in the government's statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance.

Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to, or under parental responsibility of, the person being abused or the person causing harm.

Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a child's safety, wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, learning, relationships and mental health. Staff should be alert to indicators that a child may be affected by domestic abuse, including changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, emotional wellbeing, relationships or learning. Concerns should be recorded and reported to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider the child's safety and support needs, including whether early help, children's social care, police involvement, specialist domestic abuse support or other multi-agency action is required.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass provides advice and a helpline service for school staff who are concerned about children who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse. The helpline is available on weekdays from 8 am to 1 pm on 0204 513 9990.

When the school receives an Operation Encompass notification, the DSL or deputy DSL will:

- review the information promptly,
- check whether the child is already known to safeguarding or pastoral staff,
- record the notification on the safeguarding system, and
- consider what support is needed that day.

This may include a discreet check-in with the child, adjustments to routines or expectations, monitoring attendance, behaviour and wellbeing, liaising with the child's social worker or other professionals where relevant, and ensuring staff only receive information on a need-to-know basis.

Parents or carers will not be contacted about the notification unless it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to:

- negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others;
- undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve either of the above.

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to people, causes serious damage to property, or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat of action must be designed to influence the government or intimidate the public and be made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Protecting children from radicalisation, extremism and terrorist influences is part of our wider safeguarding duty. We will support children to stay safe, build resilience, think critically and seek help if they are worried about themselves or someone else.

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools and colleges must have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. We will follow Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales, The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation, and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

Prevent concerns will be managed as safeguarding concerns. Staff must record and report concerns to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider the child's needs, risk, online and offline influences, and whether advice or referral is required.

Our Prevent arrangements

- **Leadership, risk and training:** Senior leaders and the DSL will understand local and national Prevent risks, work with relevant partners, complete and review a proportionate Prevent risk assessment annually, and ensure staff receive appropriate training, including Home Office Prevent Training and WRAP for Schools where relevant.
- **Online safety and environment:** We will have arrangements for filtering and monitoring, visiting speakers, curriculum content, premises hire and external activities, so children are not exposed to extremist or terrorist material or radicalising influences.
- **Curriculum and support:** We will promote fundamental British values, inclusion, respect, critical thinking, safe debate and online safety. Where a child is identified as susceptible to radicalisation, the DSL will consider pastoral support, family help, mentoring, consultation with the local Prevent team or referral to Prevent/Channel where appropriate.

Recognising concerns

There is no single profile of a child susceptible to radicalisation. Staff should consider concerns in context and be alert to changes in behaviour, online activity, peer relationships, language, attitudes, isolation, grievances, identity concerns, exposure to extremist content, or association with individuals or groups that promote terrorism or extremist ideology.

The Curriculum and Staying Safe

- We recognise that preventative education is a core part of safeguarding. Through a planned, age-appropriate curriculum, including PSHE, relationships education, relationships and sex education where applicable, health education and online safety, children will be taught how to recognise risk, build healthy and respectful relationships, understand consent and boundaries, challenge prejudice and harmful behaviour, and seek help from trusted adults.
- Our curriculum will reflect statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and will help children learn about online safety, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation, bullying, discrimination, mental health, personal safety and where to get support.
- Staff understand that children may not always know that they are being abused, may not be ready or able to disclose, or may communicate distress through behaviour, attendance, presentation or changes in wellbeing.
- We will build trusted relationships so children know they will be listened to, taken seriously and supported. Staff will respond with professional curiosity and will consider whether behaviour may indicate harm, trauma, unmet need or safeguarding risk.
- We will adapt preventative education and communication approaches for children with SEND, disabilities, communication needs or other vulnerabilities, so they can access safeguarding messages and support.
- We will use Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff to support a calm, safe and respectful environment, and to help staff consider whether behaviour may indicate harm or trauma. Behaviour responses, including sanctions, suspension or exclusion, will be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and fair.

- Staff are expected to model kindness, dignity and respect, challenge harmful behaviour, and help children understand how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Children will have a range of safe ways to share concerns and influence safeguarding practice. These may include pupil voice activities, student council, trusted adults, worry boxes, listening spaces, buddy or peer support systems, feedback questionnaires, assemblies, PSHE events and online safety education.
- The schools will review these arrangements regularly to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and understood by children.

Complaints and Safeguarding Concerns

Schools have a Complaints Policy, available to parents, carers, pupils/students and staff who wish to raise a concern or make a complaint. This can be found on the schools' website

The school recognises that some parental concerns and complaints may include safeguarding issues, such as bullying, mental health and wellbeing, behaviour, supervision, staff conduct or the school's response to a child's needs. We will respond to these concerns in a clear, respectful and child-centred way, with the child's welfare remaining central.

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns early through the school's safeguarding and complaints pathways, usually starting with the member of staff closest to the issue and escalating proportionately where needed. Concerns should be clear, factual and focused on the impact on the child and the outcome being sought.

Where possible, schools will encourage early conversation to clarify concerns, reduce escalation and agree next steps. Each school will promote constructive dialogue, maintain professional boundaries and discourage the use of social media, aggressive communication or lengthy correspondence as a way of resolving concerns.

Where correspondence is lengthy, unclear, repetitive or appears to have been generated or significantly supported by AI, the schools may ask parents or carers to summarise the key concern, relevant facts, impact on the child and outcome sought. The schools may also offer a meeting or telephone call to clarify the issues, avoid delay and keep the focus on the child's welfare.

All safeguarding-related concerns, decisions and communication with parents or carers will be recorded accurately and promptly, with the DSLs involved where required.

Staff Supervision and Support

The Senior Leadership Team and DSL will promote a safeguarding culture in which all staff feel confident to raise concerns, seek advice and act in the best interests of children. Staff affected by safeguarding concerns or child protection work are encouraged to seek support from the DSL or another appropriate senior leader.

All new staff, including early career teachers, support staff, temporary staff and volunteers, will receive safeguarding induction as set out in this policy. Induction will make clear that any safeguarding or child protection concern must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.

Each school will provide appropriate support, guidance and, where relevant, supervision to help staff carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. This may include opportunities to reflect on practice, discuss concerns, review work with children and families, and access further support where needed.

Where staff need additional professional or wellbeing support, the DSL or senior leaders may signpost them to appropriate internal or external sources of support, including unions or professional organisations.

Staff are encouraged to contact the Education Support helpline for free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff | Education Support helpline 08000 562 561.

The Use of School Premises by Other Organisations

Where school premises are used by another organisation to provide services or activities for children, the Headteacher and Trust premises manager will ensure that safeguarding is addressed as part of the hire, lease or commissioning arrangement. This includes seeking written assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures, staff and volunteer suitability checks, reporting arrangements, insurance and health and safety arrangements in place. Expectations will be consistent with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and the DfE guidance *After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers*.

Providers using the premises must comply with any safeguarding requirements set out in the school's hire agreement or memorandum of understanding, including arrangements for reporting concerns to the provider's safeguarding lead and, where relevant, to the school.

If the school is not satisfied that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, the application to use the premises will be refused or the arrangement will be ended.

Where the school becomes aware of a safeguarding concern or allegation relating to an adult involved in an external activity on the premises, it will ensure the concern is referred to the appropriate agency or safeguarding partner and will consult the LADO where the concern may meet the harm threshold. The provider will also be expected to follow its own safeguarding and allegations procedures.

Site Security

All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light. We operate within a whole-school community ethos and welcome comments from pupils/students, parents and others about areas that may need improvement as well as what we are doing well.

Each school will have clear arrangements in place for all visitors and external speakers coming onto the premises. Visitors attending in a professional capacity will be asked to provide identification, and the school will seek assurance that they have had the appropriate DBS checks for the activity they are carrying out, where relevant; in such circumstances, the school will not normally ask to see the DBS certificate itself. Where a visitor will have no contact with children, a DBS check is unlikely to be required. Before inviting or permitting an external organisation or speaker to work with pupils, the school will consider the educational value of the activity, whether the content is age appropriate, the suitability of the organisation or individual, and whether any relevant checks, risk assessment or supervision arrangements are needed. All visitors must follow the school's safeguarding and visitor procedures while on site.

Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

We will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or professional) who threatens school security or causes others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to our site.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, supply and temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and staff from other services working on site or with our children and families, must understand and follow this policy. All staff will have access to this policy, know who the DSL and deputy DSLs are, and understand how to report concerns without delay.

Local governing bodies

- Governors on local governing bodies will monitor and review the school-specific elements of this policy after the policy has been reviewed and approved by Trust directors (trustees) and will also hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of the policy. All members of each local governing body have read and will follow KCSIE 2026.
- At each school, we have a nominated local governor for safeguarding. They are appointed to act as the governor with a specific responsibility for safeguarding, to liaise with the Headteacher and school DSL on local safeguarding issues and report to the lead director for safeguarding. This is a strategic role rather than operational – they will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils.
- Whilst directors hold overall responsibility for the child protection and safeguarding functions of all schools, the day-to-day operational responsibility rests with the Headteacher. All directors and local governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. Both directors and local governors have access to GovernorHub and are included in safeguarding training provided for staff in person as well as remotely. This is to make sure that they:
  - have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge.
  - can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

- The Head of People Services and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring that robust recruitment procedures are followed that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. They adhere to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and make sure that robust recruitment and selection procedures are in place, including ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised while at work.
- The CEO and Head of People Services are responsible for liaising with Essex's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) lado@essex.gov.uk in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has day-to-day operational responsibility for safeguarding and will ensure that:

- this policy and related safeguarding procedures are implemented consistently by all staff, volunteers and relevant contractors;
- the DSL and deputy DSLs have sufficient time, training, resources and authority to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
- staff who hold cases can contribute to strategy discussions, child protection conferences, core groups, Team Around the Child meetings and other multi-agency work, including providing written reports where required;
- poor or unsafe practice is addressed promptly and sensitively in line with the allegations against staff, whistleblowing and low-level concerns procedures; and
- there are robust arrangements for planned and unplanned DSL absence, including named deputy DSLs with the role reflected in their job descriptions.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies (DSL)

- The school Designated Safeguarding Leads, named at the front of this Policy. The Senior DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems. Deputy DSLs are identified to support the DSL and provide cover when the DSL is unavailable.
- The Governing Body, Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure that the DSL team has sufficient time, support, training and resources to carry out this role effectively.
- The DSL and deputy DSLs will complete appropriate training in line with ISCP expectations. Formal DSL training will be updated at least every two years, and knowledge and skills will be refreshed at least annually through

safeguarding updates, local briefings, DSL forums, newsletters, supervision, relevant training and learning from local and national reviews.

- During term time, the DSL or a deputy DSL will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. Where availability is by telephone or video call, confidentiality and safe recording arrangements will be considered.
- The schools will maintain clear arrangements for safeguarding cover during out-of-hours or out-of-term activities. These arrangements will set out how concerns are received, monitored, recorded and acted on without delay.
- The DSL is the central point of contact for safeguarding concerns. The DSL will manage child protection referrals, oversee safeguarding training, promote awareness of safeguarding policies and ensure that staff, volunteers, temporary staff and contractors understand and follow the school's procedures.
- The DSL will maintain a confidential safeguarding recording system and ensure that child protection records are accurate, secure, up to date and shared appropriately when a child moves setting.
- The DSL will work with the Designated Teacher and the Virtual School Head to promote the educational achievement, attendance and welfare of children who are looked after, previously looked after, in kinship care, or have or have had a social worker.
- The DSL will ensure the school is appropriately represented at inter-agency safeguarding meetings, including strategy discussions, child protection conferences, core groups and Team Around the Child meetings, and that reports or updates are provided when required.
- The DSL, or a deputy DSL, will help coordinate early support for children who do not meet the threshold for statutory services but would benefit from additional help.

Additional responsibilities for the DSL

- lead online safety, including oversight of filtering and monitoring and an annual review of their effectiveness;
- work with mental health leads where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health or emotional wellbeing;
- promote constructive engagement with parents and carers, while recognising that consent is not required to share information.
- promote the educational outcomes of children who need or have needed a social worker, including by supporting high aspirations, reasonable adjustments, attendance, and timely sharing of safeguarding information with relevant staff.
- work with the Headteacher and relevant strategic leads to ensure appropriate information sharing, including the secure transfer of child protection files within statutory timescales when a child moves school;
- ensure staff understand vulnerability, specific harms, the impact of trauma and adversity, and the importance of trusted relationships that help children communicate concerns;
- support staff to identify and respond to children who may have additional safeguarding needs, including children with disabilities, health needs, caring responsibilities, attendance concerns or other vulnerabilities.

Staff and Volunteers

- Staff and volunteers have regular contact with children and are well placed to notice signs that a child may need help or protection. All staff will maintain an attitude of "it could happen here", act in the best interests of the child and report concerns to the DSL without delay. Staff are not expected to investigate, assess or diagnose abuse or neglect.
- All staff will help provide a safe learning environment and support children to recognise risk, seek help, build resilience and stay safe, including online.
- All staff will understand the local Early Family Help process and know how to identify children who may need help, support or protection. Concerns should be recorded and shared with the DSL in line with this policy.

- All staff and volunteers are responsible for knowing what to do if a child discloses abuse or neglect, or if they have a concern about a child. Staff will listen, reassure, record accurately and share concerns with the DSL. Staff must not promise confidentiality, as information may need to be shared to keep a child safe.

Children

- Children will be supported, in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and needs, to:
  - understand how the school helps keep them safe;
  - contribute to safeguarding and child protection policies where appropriate;
  - seek help from a trusted adult if they are worried about themselves or someone else; and
  - develop safe, respectful and responsible behaviours, including online.

Parents and Carers

- Parents and carers are important partners in keeping children safe. We will work with them in an open and constructive way unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm.
  - talk with their children about safety, including online safety, and reinforce safe and respectful behaviour at home;
  - tell the school about changes or concerns that may affect their child's safety, wellbeing or attendance;
  - seek help from the school or other appropriate agencies if they or their child have safeguarding concerns; and
  - contribute to the development and review of safeguarding policies where appropriate.

Information on the school's safeguarding duties and responsibilities will be available through the schools' website, prospectus or other parent communications. Parents and carers can request a copy of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and related policies and can view them on the schools' website at Home - The Bridge Trust Academy – The Bridge MAT Family of Schools

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and exploitation are rarely standalone issues and often overlap. Harm may happen inside or outside the home, online or offline, and may be caused by adults or by other children. Children may also experience multiple harms at the same time. Staff must maintain professional curiosity and report any concern to the DSL in line with this policy.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can be committed by adults or by other children and can take place wholly online, wholly offline, or through a combination of both. All staff must read and understand Part one of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

1. **Sexual abuse**: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or producing, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, grooming a child in preparation for abuse, or using technology to facilitate abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult

males; women and other children can also sexually abuse children. Child-on-child sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence are specific safeguarding issues in education and must be responded to in line with this policy and Part five of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

The school will use evidence-based resources, including CSA Centre materials for education settings, to support staff confidence in recognising and responding to concerns about child sexual abuse – see Appendix 3.

Signs that may indicate Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour, attendance, engagement or academic performance
- Sexualised language, behaviour or knowledge that appears developmentally inappropriate
- Withdrawal, anxiety, low mood, self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Alluding to secrets, feeling unsafe, or being worried about a person, place or online contact
- Unexplained gifts, money, devices, travel or contact with older individuals or groups
- Fear of undressing for PE, avoiding changing areas, or reporting genital or anal pain, soreness, bleeding or sexually transmitted infection
- Creating, sharing or being pressured to share sexual images or messages, including online or AI-generated/manipulated images

2. **Physical abuse**: a form of 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.

Signs that may indicate physical abuse

- Frequent, unexplained or unusual injuries, including bruises, cuts, burns, scalds, bite marks or fractures
- Injuries in unusual places, patterns or stages of healing, including marks to the face, mouth, ears, neck, torso, soft tissue areas or both sides of the body
- Explanations for injuries that are absent, inconsistent, implausible or change over time
- Delay in seeking medical help or repeated presentations for injury or illness
- Covering arms or legs in hot weather, flinching, fearfulness, withdrawal, aggression or severe distress

3. **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, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs. It may include verbal abuse, intimidation, humiliation, persistent criticism or name-calling; 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 involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, serious bullying including cyberbullying, exploitation or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

Signs that may indicate emotional abuse

- Low self-esteem, lack of confidence, withdrawal, anxiety or low mood
- Extreme passivity, aggression, compliance, people-pleasing or fear of making mistakes
- Sudden changes in speech, communication, eating, sleeping or behaviour
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts, eating difficulties or harmful use of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- Fear of parents or carers being contacted, excessive need for approval, or reluctance to go home

- Difficulties with play, relationships, emotional regulation or peer interaction

4. **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of parental substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision, including safe care arrangements; ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; provide suitable education; or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that may indicate neglect

- Persistent hunger, poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing or constant tiredness
- Untreated medical, dental, developmental or mental health needs
- Frequent absence, lateness, missing from education, or missed medical appointments
- Poor growth, weight loss, being underweight or other signs of inadequate nutrition
- Being left alone, poorly supervised, or cared for by unsuitable people
- Poor relationships with peers, low self-esteem, withdrawal, scavenging, stealing or running away

These indicators are not exhaustive. The presence of one or more indicator does not prove abuse, neglect or exploitation, but concerns must never be ignored. Staff should record and report any concern to the DSL as soon as possible and should not investigate concerns themselves.

Appendix 2: Keeping children and yourself safe when responding to disclosures

Staff are encouraged to be professionally curious as it is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect. They should try to understand the daily life of the child and explore any indicators of abuse and neglect to fully assess any potential risk by having a holistic view and understanding and this means not taking things at face value by exercising respectful uncertainty.

1. **Receive**
   - Keep calm
   - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
   - Take what is being said to you seriously

2. **Respond**
   - Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing in talking to you
   - Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep e.g. "It will be alright now"
   - Do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer
   - Reassure and alleviate guilt if the pupil refers to it e.g. "you're not to blame"
   - Reassure the child that information will only be shared with those who need to know

3. **React**
   - React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
   - Do not ask leading questions; "Did he/she….?" Such questions can invalidate evidence.
   - Do ask open "TED" questions; Tell, explain, describe
   - Do not criticise the child who harmed; the pupil may have affection for him/her
   - Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff
   - Explain what you must do next and who you must talk to

4. **Record**
   - Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
   - Do not destroy your original notes
   - Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. Always ensure that as far as possible you have recorded the actual words used by the child.
   - Record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions

5. **Remember**
   - Contact the DSL
   - The DSL may be required to make appropriate records available to other agencies

6. **Relax**
   - Get some support for yourself, dealing with disclosures can be traumatic for professionals.

Appendix 3: Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse, Violence and Harassment

NB – this is a framework that will need to be adapted to fit the age and developmental stage and understanding of your pupil group. Additional areas for consideration can be found Part 5 of KCSIE 2025 and the ISCP Protocol for Managing Child-on-Child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

Policy Statement and Context

Each school recognises that children can abuse, harm or exploit other children. Child-on-child sexual abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour may occur online or offline, inside or outside school, and within peer groups, intimate relationships or the wider community. Every school takes a zero-tolerance approach: concerns will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to in a proportionate, child-centred and safeguarding-led way. They will never be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “having a laugh” or “boys being boys”.

Reports will be managed by the DSL or deputy DSL in line with this policy, Part five of *Keeping children safe in education*, and Essex safeguarding procedures.

Prevention and Whole-School Culture

The schools will minimise risk through a whole-school approach to safeguarding, respectful relationships, equality and online safety. This includes staff training; an age-appropriate RSHE curriculum on healthy relationships, consent, boundaries, online safety, equality and respect; clear reporting routes for children, parents, carers and staff; and a culture where sexism, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, harmful gender stereotypes and sexualised language or behaviour are challenged. The schools recognises that abuse may be taking place even where no report has been made.

This section should be read alongside the behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, online safety policy, RSHE policy, complaints policy, staff behaviour/code of conduct, low-level concerns policy and procedures for allegations against adults working with children.

Recognising Concerns

Concerns may include sexual violence, sexual assault, unwanted sexual touching, sexual harassment, sexualised bullying, sexual name-calling, coercion, exploitation, upskirting, sharing sexual images without consent, harmful sexual behaviour, online sexual abuse and abuse facilitated through technology. Staff should recognise that sexual behaviour exists on a continuum from developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent behaviour.

Concerns must be considered in context, including age, development, SEND, disability, vulnerability, trauma, power imbalance, coercion, exploitation, online activity and wider contextual risks.

Reporting and Local Referral Route

All reports or concerns must be recorded and shared with the DSL or deputy DSL as soon as possible. Staff must listen carefully, avoid leading questions, reassure the child that they are being taken seriously, explain that information will be shared to keep children safe, and must not promise confidentiality or investigate the concern themselves.

Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, has been harmed, or may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL will make a referral to children's social care and, where appropriate, the police. For children living outside Essex, the DSL should contact the relevant local authority children's social care service.

Parents or carers will normally be informed unless this would increase risk to a child, prejudice a police investigation or conflict with advice from children's social care or the police. Where there is an online element, staff will follow relevant guidance on searching, screening, confiscation, preservation of evidence and online safety. Staff must not view, forward or print sexual images unless this is unavoidable, necessary and in line with safeguarding procedures.

DSL Decision-Making, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis and consider the wishes of the child who has been harmed, the seriousness of the incident, whether a crime may have been committed, the children's ages and development, any power imbalance, coercion, grooming, exploitation, previous incidents, wider patterns and advice from children's social care, police or other professionals. The DSL will consider whether the concern can be managed internally with safeguarding, pastoral and behaviour support; whether advice or referral is needed for Family Help, child in need or child protection support; whether specialist harmful sexual behaviour assessment or intervention is required; and whether police involvement is needed.

Following a report, the DSL will complete and record an immediate risk and needs assessment and, where appropriate, a written safety plan. This should consider the safety, wishes and support needs of the child who has been harmed; the needs, safety and supervision of the child who has displayed the behaviour; any other affected children; shared classes, spaces, transport, online platforms or community locations; and any previous concerns, contextual risks or online risks. Safety plans may include supervision, movement around the site, contact restrictions, online safety measures, communication arrangements, support, review dates and named responsibilities.

Support, Police Investigations and Record Keeping

Each school will provide appropriate support for the child who has been harmed, the child who has displayed the behaviour and any witnesses or other affected children. Support may include a trusted adult, pastoral support, safety planning, timetable or routine adjustments, counselling or therapeutic input, specialist advice, curriculum work, behaviour support and multi-agency involvement. The child who has been harmed should not be expected to change school or provision because they have disclosed abuse. Children who display harmful sexual behaviour may also have safeguarding needs and may require support, education, accountability and intervention. Sanctions will be considered alongside safeguarding and support needs and applied in line with the behaviour policy.

Where there is a police investigation into rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or another serious offence, the school will carefully consider how to keep the child who has been harmed and the child alleged to have displayed the behaviour apart, including in classes, social spaces, transport and online spaces, while maintaining suitable education and support for both children. Any school investigation or behaviour response will take account of safeguarding advice and must not interfere with police or children's social care enquiries.

The school will maintain clear, detailed and secure records of concerns, disclosures, decisions, referrals, advice received, risk assessments, safety plans, multi-agency discussions, actions, outcomes and review dates. Child-on-child abuse may

also include physical assaults, initiation violence, hazing-type behaviour, prejudice-based abuse, bullying, coercive or controlling behaviour, exploitation or online abuse. These will be responded to as safeguarding concerns and, where relevant, under the behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

Appendix 4

This appendix provides staff, governors and volunteers with quick access to key local and national safeguarding contacts, support services and statutory guidance. It should be used alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, local safeguarding procedures and professional judgement. In an emergency, or where a child is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.

Staff support and professional advice

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline (POSH): www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- Teachers' Standards

Support for children and young people

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Home - Kooth
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- NSPCC: Harmful Sexual Behaviour https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/sexual-behaviour
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- Shore Space: www.shorespace.org.uk
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Support for parents, carers and adults

- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Advice re children who display Harmful Sexual Behaviour: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/2685/responding-to-children-who-display-sexualised-behaviour-guide.pdf
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support for children and adults with learning disabilities or additional needs

- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Respond: www.respond.org.uk

Safeguarding Guidance and Statutory Links

- Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools
- Child abuse linked to faith or belief: national action plan

- Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners
- DfE Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners

- Data Protection Toolkit for Schools
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022 :
- Information Sharing advice May 2024)
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)
- Mental health and behaviour in Schools - Publications - GOV.UK
- Missing Children and Adults
- Preventing bullying - GOV.UK
- Promoting children and young people's emotional wellbeing
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK
- Statutory Guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- The right to choose: Forced Marriage multi-agency statutory guidance
- What to do if you're worried a Child is being Abused
- Whistleblowing Helpline NSPCC 0800 028 0285 email help@nspcc.org.uk
- Working together to safeguard children 2026
- Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Legislation

- Education Act 2002
- Equalities Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Crime and Policing Act 2026

Keeping children safe in education and other settings

- After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff
- Children missing education
- County Lines guidance
- CSA Centre: Safety planning in education: A guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of harmful sexual behaviour
- Drugs: advice for Schools
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (2025)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education.
- Help, Protection, Education: Concluding the Children in Need Review
- Home Office Serious Violence Strategy
- Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection
- Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)
- Providing Remote Education Advice for Schools and settings
- Safer Recruitment Consortium
- Serious Violence Duty
- Supervision of activity with children (includes removal of supervision exemption)
- Teaching about relationships, sex and health gov one stop hub
- Youth Endowment Fund

Safeguarding children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities

- Anna Freud Mentally Healthy Schools guidance and hub
- MENCAP
- promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children and young people | NSPCC Learning
- Safeguarding disabled children
- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions

Runaway and homeless children

- Children who run away or go missing from home or care
- Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation

Cross-border child protection

- Action Against Abduction
- Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery
- Clever Never Goes.
- Cross-border child protection cases: the 1996 Hague Convention
- Find help to get your child back from abroad or arrange contact
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked

Domestic abuse and specialist support

- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline 24 hours a day 0808 2000 247.
- Operation Encompass Helpline: 0204 513 9990
- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk telephone 0808 2000 247
- Statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk

Honour-based abuse, forced marriage and FGM

- Forced Marriage Unit: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM: Summary of Mandatory FGM reporting duty
- Karma Nirvana

Sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour

- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Stop it Now!: www.stopitnow.org.uk

Online safety

- CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk
- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Education for a Connected World (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- filtering and monitoring arrangements
- Get safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes
- Help for early years providers: screen use
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- National Cyber Security Centre cyber security training
- Net Aware: www.net-aware.org.uk
- ParentPort: www.parentport.org.uk
- Parents Info: www.parentinfo.org
- Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Teaching online safety in Schools
- The Oak National Academy free teacher resources
- The UKCIS external visitors guidance
- UK Safer Internet Centre guidance on managing images and videos on school websites and social media
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Online Safety Audits: 360safe or https://onlinesafetyaudit.lgfl.net/

The Prevent Duty, Radicalisation, Extremism and Hate Crime

- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Home Office Prevent Training and WRAP for Schools
- New definition of extremism (2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK
- Prevent risk assessment
- Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk (hate crime)

Appendix 5

CPOMS checklist

Heading	What to include
Date	• Ensure it is the date and time that the incident occurred.
Incident	• **Recording on CPOMS must not replace reporting. Serious safeguarding concerns must be raised through a conversation with a member of the school's safeguarding team as soon as possible. There may be occasions where it is not safe for a child to return home and the DSL may need to seek advice from children's social care well before the end of the school day.**

	• The concern should be recorded by the person raising the concern with as much detail as possible. For example: • What happened? • Where did it happen? • When did it happen? • Who was involved? • Why did this behaviour concern you? • Ensure that you include all staff and pupils that were present/ witnessed. • Make sure you use the exact words spoken by the child. If they say 'Daddy' do not write 'Their Father'. Please use speech marks. For example, "XX said Daddy did it." • Use staff member's full name and in the case of an external visitor, also their employer i.e. Sally Smith from Nelson's Journey. • Please do not presume. Records must be factual. • What action have you taken? Have you called home/ spoken with parents? Add this information accordingly. • Remember to describe the appearance of an injury, bruise, or mark, including size, colour and location. • Avoid using initials. This can make identifying pupils, parents, staff, or other professionals difficult. • **If you have a concern about the actions of a member of staff, or you become aware of an allegation against a member of staff, inform the Headteacher. Concerns/ allegations about members of staff, including supply staff and visitors, are not recorded on CPOMS.**
Body map	• Ensure that all injuries are clearly marked on the body map and referenced in the incident description. • Do not mark staff injuries on the map.
Categories	• Add the categories you feel are appropriate. Please do not tick a box if you are unsure, the safeguarding team can update as needed.
Linked student	• Link students where appropriate i.e. siblings.
Status	• **This must always be left active, only a DSL or Deputy DSL may close cases.**
Assign to	• **The DSL or most appropriate member of the safeguarding team where key stages/ classes are assigned. Ensure that you assign the case or it may not be actioned.**
Files	• Add any saved documents.

	• Any emails should be added as an attachment, not copied and pasted. To save emails, go to the last entry, click on the 3 dots in the top right hand corner of the message, press print, drop the print option to 'save as PDF' and attach.
Alert staff members	• The safeguarding team are all automatically alerted to every safeguarding concern. • If the entry is of a safeguarding nature, do not alert anyone else in the school. • If the entry is communication, please alert the form tutor, admin staff, and others as appropriate.
Agencies involved	• If you were part of a meeting when a safeguarding matter was raised, please indicate which agencies/ professionals were present.
Add to planner	• This is useful if you have mentioned a meeting or a check needs to be completed in a certain amount of time.