Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Approved: September 2026

Updated: September 2026

Approved by: Management Board

Next Review: August 2027

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CONTACTS

Key Safeguarding Contacts at Heathcote School

Safeguarding Director	Nadine Solsberg	01245 223131 n.solsberg@heathcoteschool.co.uk
DSL	Georgina Deed	01245 223131 g.deed@heathcoteschool.co.uk
Deputy DSL	Samantha Scott	01245 223131 s.scott@heathcoteschool.co.uk
Deputy/EYFS DSL	Kelly Collins	01245 223131 k.collins@heathcoteschool.co.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Samantha Scott	01245 223131 s.scott@heathcoteschool.co.uk

Key External Safeguarding Contacts

Local Authority Designated Lead Officer (LADO)		03330 139 797
Family Operations Hub	Out of hours	0345 603 7627 0845 606 1212 0300 123 0779
Local Safeguarding Advisor	Jo Barclay	0331 0113 1078 Jo.barclay@essex.gov.uk
Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB)		0333 013 8936
Police Central Referral Unit (FGM concerns)	Police Central Referral Unit	101 (0800 028 3550 – helpline) 0800 555 111 – Crimestoppers 0300 333 444 – Essex Police
Police – PREVENT (extremism)	Police Central Referral Unit	Emergency: 999/101 Non Emergency: 0207 340 7264 Staff advice: counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk 0800 789 321 – Prevent Anti-Terrorist Hotline

Operation Encompass Advice Line (children affected by domestic abuse)	Refer to page 15. Staff do not report to Operation Encompass. Advice Line is for the DSL. Police will contact the DSL if/when appropriate.	0204 513 9990 www.operationencompass.org
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line		0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Childline		0800 11 11
Teaching Regulation Agency		0207 5935393 misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk
Disclosure and Barring Service		01325953795 dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then contact the Police on *999*

Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, directors, volunteers and the wider school community. It is available to all interested parties on the public area of the school website, www.heathcoteschool.co.uk and a hard copy is available on request from the school office. This policy forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and nursery and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- the safeguarding response to children missing or absent from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

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

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

Heathcote school has a whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents / carers, directors and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in Working Together (DfE, 2026) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB, 2026). The statutory safeguarding partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB).

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

In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures (SET, 2026). Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance *(this is not an exhaustive list)*:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education *(DfE, September 2026) ("KCSIE")*
    - *Disqualification under the Childcare Act (DfE, 2006, last updated 31st August 2018)*
    - *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (DfE, March 2015)*
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
    - *Information sharing: advice for practitioners (DfE, May 2024).*
- Revised Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2023)
    - *Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (DfE, 2015). See also Prevent duty guidance (2023) for updated expectations.*
    - *The use of social media for online radicalisation (DfE, July 2015)*
- Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (DfE, July 2025).
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings (UKCIS/DfE, December 2020)
- Domestic Abuse Act *(2021)*
- Education Act *(2002)*
- Essex Effective Support
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act *(HMG, 2015)*
- Serious Crime Act 2015 *(Home Office, 2015)*
- Children and Social Work Act *(2017)*
- Children and Schools: Children Missing Education *(DfE, 2025).*
- Sexual Offences Act *(2003)*
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations *(2006)*
- Data Protection Act *(2018)*
- Searching, screening and confiscation *(DfE, 2022, last updated July 2023)*
- Children Act *(1989)*
- Children Act *(2004)*
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying *(DfE, 2017)*
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

- Generative AI in education (2025)
- Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (DfE, 2025)
- Independent Schools Standards Regulations (2014)
- Independent School Standards Guidance (DfE, 2026)
- *Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People: Statutory Guidance (DfE, September 2026)*

- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 *(S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)*
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges *(DfE, 2021, last updated 2026)*
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement *(Home Office, 2015)*
- Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance *(Home Office, 2018)*
- Teaching online safety in schools *(DfE, 2019, last updated 2023)*
- Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice *(ECC, 2018)*
- Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - good practice for schools *(ECC, 2021)*

Roles and responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown in the Key Safeguarding Contents section at the beginning of this policy document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually and should be updated whenever needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt.

The director for safeguarding arrangements is named in the Key Safeguarding Contacts list at the beginning of this document. This director takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The Board of Directors ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named in the Key Safeguarding contacts list at the beginning of this policy document).

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

The Board of Directors ensure that all staff in our school who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The Board of Directors ensure our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make Relationships Education for primary age pupils mandatory.

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

All of our Directors have had basic Safeguarding training and attend Governor forums which enables them to contribute to the strategic oversight and monitoring of Safeguarding in our school and provide challenge around the effectiveness of our Policies and Procedures.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Directors are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes:

- managing child protection referrals,
- working with other agencies,
- ensuring all staff are appropriately trained
- raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times.
- act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters)
- ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures (SET, 2026).
- work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The deputy designated safeguarding leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the DSL is unavailable, the DDSL will act in their absence.

All school staff

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

All staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2026) describes abuse in the following way:

"Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse"

Keeping Children Safe in Education refers to four categories of abuse:

- **Physical** *(hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, fabricated or induced illness, misuse of restraint; unexplained injuries, inconsistent explanations, fear of physical contact)*
- **Emotional** *(persistent emotional maltreatment, humiliation, criticism, rejection, intimidation, controlling behaviour; low self-esteem, over-compliance, excessive anxiety, developmental delay)*
- **Sexual** *(sexual activity, exploitation, grooming, inappropriate touching, exposure to sexual content, online sexual harm, AI-generated intimate images; sexualised behaviour, secrecy, distress, knowledge inappropriate for age)*
- **Neglect** *(persistent failure to meet basic physical or emotional needs; inadequate supervision, poor hygiene, untreated medical issues, chronic hunger, unsafe home conditions; frequent absence, tiredness, developmental delay)*

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse / victims of abuse that they are taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are causing a problem. Staff are made aware in their safeguarding training of potential barriers to children speaking to a trusted adult or making disclosures. Staff are trained in how to listen, reassure and record any disclosures from children and the appropriate route of reporting concerns and disclosures.

All staff in our school are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). All staff understand that safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation and that multiple issues may overlap.

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, mental health deterioration, harmful online behaviour, or sharing intimate images may indicate a child is at risk.

Mental health

Mental health difficulties may be indicators of abuse or neglect. Staff must recognise signs such as self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders or severe emotional distress as safeguarding concerns requiring DSL involvement

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

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

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

At Heathcote School we have 3 trained Mental Health First Aiders. Staff re aware that if they have any concerns about a child's mental health they can discuss their concerns with these staff. They may then raise the issue with the DSL.

Child on Child abuse

Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and that this may happen inside or outside of school or online. Any incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. *Any* concerns of Child on Child Abuse will be reported to the DSL. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

Our school recognises that, even though child on child abuse / harmful sexual abuse may not reported, it is likely that it is occurring and we are clear there is a zero tolerance to inappropriate or abusive behaviour. We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- Abuse in personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse (which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling),
- sexual violence / sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour
- up-skirting,
- sexting (consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos)
- initiation / hazing type violence and rituals
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- harassment
- violence
- digital coercion including online bullying and harassment, and use of AI-generated content with intent to cause harm

We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they arise. We do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated. Abuse will never be passed off as 'banter', 'boys being boys', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh', or misogynistic attitudes or comments, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and creates an unsafe environment for children. Staff are alert to behaviours linked to serious violence, including threats of harm, carrying or using a weapon or imitation weapon, intimidation, coercion, stalking, financial exploitation, bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying such as racism or faith-based prejudice), upskirting, and abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (including physical, sexual and emotional abuse). Staff are also aware of risks linked to criminal exploitation or grooming by peer groups or organised networks.

Sharing of nude or semi-nude images (including self-generated intimate images and AI-generated images such as deepfakes) is treated as a safeguarding concern; staff must not view, copy, forward or investigate any images and must report concerns to the DSL immediately. We recognise indicators such as disrupted or reduced education, sudden changes in friendships, unexplained absences, secrecy, fearfulness, new possessions that cannot be explained, or association with older peers or unknown adults. Staff must report any concern that a child is carrying, using, or intending to use a weapon, or is being groomed, exploited, bullied or harmed by peers. The DSL will assess risk promptly and take appropriate, evidence-based action, including early intervention and referral to Essex Children's Social Care or the police where necessary.

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Children can leave messages for the DSL in the school 'worry box' if they are unable to speak to someone and there is an online worry box on our website where they can also send an email. In this instance the DSL will discretely meet with the child as soon as is practicable.

Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse but all child on child abuse is unacceptable, comes in many forms, can happen anywhere inside and outside of school including online, and will be taken seriously. We will support both the victim

and perpetrator appropriately with the best interests of the children at heart, as these are a safeguarding issue for both victim and perpetrator. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. We will consider potential barriers to disclosures and understand how to support children emotionally and mentally throughout.

Any allegations of child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated by the DSL, Head Teacher and these records will be form part of the Safeguarding Committee termly review: See our Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

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

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. CCE can also involve financial exploitation, including coercion to hand over money, debt bondage or extortion. Children can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. CCE/CSE can involve peer networks, organized youth exploitation groups and grooming gangs.

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

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

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. Staff are aware that child sexual exploitation can occur online through AI-generated grooming, digital coercion, online recruitment, misogynistic/incel-linked grooming and weapon-related online threats. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate. This one page process map sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Serious Violence includes threats, weapon-related behaviour, gang association or exploitation. Children may be at risk through peer networks, online contact or local community factors. Misogyny and incel-linked harm involve attitudes or behaviours that degrade, target or threaten women and girls. Exposure to online extremist communities can escalate risk of harassment, sexual harm or violence.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development, and ability to learn. (ref. Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

Child-to-parent abuse includes physical, emotional or financial harm directed towards parents or carers. It often occurs alongside wider family stress, unmet needs or coercive dynamics.

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

Operation Encompass

Our school takes part in Operation Encompass, a national partnership between police and education settings that supports children who may have been affected by domestic abuse. Through this scheme, the police notify the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), before the start of the next school day if a child has been involved in or exposed to a domestic abuse incident. This enables the school to offer appropriate support and care at the earliest opportunity while maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity at all times.

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

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

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

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

Trafficking and Modern Slavery

Modern slavery includes exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and trafficking. Children may be controlled through threats, coercion, deception or debt, and may not recognise themselves as victims. Modern slavery can occur within families, peer networks, organised criminal groups or online environments.

Modern slavery may involve children being:

- recruited, moved or transported for the purpose of exploitation (including county lines, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation or domestic servitude)
- forced to work in homes, businesses, cannabis factories, nail bars, car washes or informal labour settings
- coerced into criminal activity, including shoplifting, pickpocketing, begging, drug distribution or financial fraud
- controlled through violence, intimidation, debt bondage or threats to themselves or their family
- isolated from peers, prevented from attending school, or monitored closely by controlling

adults

- exploited online, including being groomed, advertised or coerced through digital platforms

Staff should be alert to indicators such as:

- children who go missing from home, care or education
- unexplained absences, sudden changes in behaviour or new peer groups
- children who appear fearful, withdrawn, anxious or controlled
- children who show signs of physical neglect, exhaustion or untreated injuries
- children who are reluctant to talk about where they live, work or spend time
- children who have limited freedom of movement, or are always accompanied by an adult
- children who display poor school attendance, sudden decline in performance or disengagement
- children who have new possessions, money or items they cannot explain
- children who appear to be working long hours, doing tasks inappropriate for their age, or supporting family income

Trafficking and modern slavery are forms of child abuse. Any concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately. Staff must not attempt to investigate or question the child about their movements or work arrangements. The DSL will follow SET Procedures, including referral to children's social care and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) where appropriate.

Prevent / Radicalisation

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

The Prevent duty requires schools to:

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

Staff are aware that radicalisation and extremism can occur online or offline, and that children may be exposed to extremist content, misogyny/incel-linked communities, or individuals seeking to groom or influence them through digital platforms.

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

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

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

It requires schools to:

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

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

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

Online safety

We recognise that children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive opportunities, but also significant challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on age, developmental stage, additional needs or personal circumstances. Online harm can occur both online and offline simultaneously, and online behaviour can facilitate offline abuse, exploitation or serious violence.

Our aim is to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly, and to recognise when something online makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

The range of online risks can be categorised using the 4 Cs:

- **Content**: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material such as pornography, suicide content, misogynistic or misandrist content, racist content, extremist or radicalising material, or AI-generated harmful content.
- **Contact**: harmful interaction with others online, including peer pressure, commercial advertising, adults posing as children, grooming for sexual, criminal or financial exploitation, or coercive online relationships.
- **Conduct**: behaviour that increases the likelihood of harm, including making, sending or receiving explicit images, online bullying, harassment, or engaging in risky online challenges.
- **Commerce**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, scams, financial exploitation or fraudulent activity.

Staff are trained to understand evolving online risks including misogyny and incel-linked harm, exposure to extremist communities, digital coercion, and AI-generated intimate images (deepfakes). Digital coercion may involve pressure, threats or manipulation using online platforms, images or messages, including demands for sexual content or sharing intimate images. AI-generated intimate images are treated as sexual abuse, and staff must not investigate or view further; concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Our school operates robust filtering and monitoring systems to help protect pupils from harmful or inappropriate online content. Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our E-Safety Policy.

We are a mobile-free school. Pupils who require a mobile phone for travel must hand it in at the office each morning and collect it when leaving the school site. Smart watches are not permitted.

Staff understand that online harm is a safeguarding concern and must report any worries to the DSL without delay, including concerns relating to online sexual harm, digital coercion, extremist content, online bullying, financial exploitation or AI-generated harm.

Children absent or missing from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, serious violence, exploitation or involvement with harmful peer networks, and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children absent from education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, including online harm, digital coercion, AI-generated grooming, extremist content and misogynistic/incel-linked online communities, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. All concerns about absence or missing education are reported to the DSL and recorded as safeguarding concerns. Staff are also aware that children who go missing from home or care, as these episodes may indicate exploitation, trafficking, CCE/CSE or serious violence.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral

may be made to another appropriate agency (Education Access Team, Essex Children's Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Additionally, we inform the local authority if a child misses 15 sessions or more across the school year (these do not need to be consecutive). We also report any pupils on a part time timetable to the local authority (with data return half termly while they are still on this timetable).

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (see our Lost or Missing Child Policy), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing (see Appendix A).

The law requires us to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils are placed on both registers.

We inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (as amended). This assists the local authority to:

- Fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are absent from education
- Follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect, radicalisation, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, peer exploitation and serious violence.

School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. The safeguarding team (DSL, DDSLs and Safeguarding Director) meet termly to review attendance data, first aid records, safeguarding logs, emerging concerns and behaviour incidents as part of our holistic approach to triangulate information in safeguarding children and identifying potential patterns early.

Action should be taken in accordance with this Policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about his/her welfare.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school environment. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and understand that wider environmental influences present in a child's life may pose risks to their safety and welfare. These external contexts may include peer groups, community locations, online spaces, transport routes, neighbourhoods and other settings in which children spend time.

Staff recognise that risks outside school, such as child-on-child abuse, serious violence, county lines activity, peer exploitation, AI-generated grooming, digital coercion, misogynistic/incel-linked online communities, and weapon-related threats, may be influencing a child's behaviour or increasing their vulnerability. These factors are considered when assessing any concern or incident.

When responding to safeguarding concerns, staff take into account home, school, community and

online environments. Relevant contextual information is shared with the DSL, who works with external agencies to build a holistic understanding of the child's circumstances and to ensure that safeguarding responses address risks both inside and outside the school.

Children potentially at risk of greater harm

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

Family Help

Our school recognises that some children may require early help to prevent issues from escalating into statutory intervention. Early help includes universal services, community based early help, and targeted early help through Family Help. Children may need early help for a range of reasons, including persistent absence, mental health difficulties, housing or financial instability, family stress, emerging SEND needs, or concerns about exploitation or online harm. Early help may also be required for children who are repeatedly removed from the classroom, on a part time timetable, or whose education is disrupted or reduced. Where early help is appropriate, the DSL will work with the child, family and relevant agencies to ensure they receive the right support at the right time, in line with KCSIE and Essex Family Help pathways.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEND) and/or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood or injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying)
- being disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing signs
- communication difficulties which may make it harder to disclose abuse

Children with medical conditions may also face additional safeguarding risks linked to health needs, medication or reliance on adults. Clear communication and multi-agency coordination are essential.

Looked after children

Mrs Samantha Scott (Headteacher) has been appointed to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after. She will ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked-after status and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with

parental responsibility. They will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them. The DSL will have details of the child's Social Worker and the name of the Virtual School Head in the authority that looks after the child.

Children with family members in prison

We are aware that children with a parent or family member who is in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Children in the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. We recognise that the government publication Young Witness booklet for 5–11 year olds provides a child-friendly, age-appropriate explanation of what to expect. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. The school may refer some parents and carers to this service where appropriate.

Children at risk of exploitation and violence

Children may be at increased risk of exploitation or violence due to peer networks, online contact, family circumstances or wider community factors. Exploitation can take many forms, including criminal exploitation, financial exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, coercion or grooming. Children may also be at risk of serious violence, including threats of harm, intimidation, weapon-related behaviour or involvement with older individuals or organised networks. Staff are alert to indicators such as unexplained injuries, new possessions that cannot be accounted for, changes in friendships, reduced or disrupted education, persistent absence, secrecy, fearfulness, or association with older peers or unknown adults. Children may not recognise themselves as victims and may be controlled through threats, coercion or debt. Any concerns relating to exploitation or serious violence must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will work with appropriate agencies to ensure the child's safety and access to early help or statutory intervention where required.

Homelessness

Our local housing authority provides support and guidance for families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Where a child is in this risk category, we will contact the ESCB and work with relevant agencies to ensure appropriate support.

Young Carers

Young carers may experience increased vulnerability due to caring responsibilities, family stress or reduced access to support. Staff must be alert to signs of hidden harm.

Children Requiring Mental Health Support

Children experiencing mental health difficulties may be at risk of harm or neglect. Staff recognise concerns early and involve the DSL where safeguarding thresholds may be met.

Children who are LGBT or Gender-Questioning

Children who are LGBT or gender-questioning may face discrimination, bullying or barriers to seeking help. The school takes a cautious, supportive approach and involves parents in most cases unless doing so increases risk.

Procedures

Heathcote School works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support (through a Child in Need or a Child Protection Plan).

Disclosure or concern about a child

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

All staff are trained to manage a report of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment. Staff understand how to respond sensitively, record accurately, avoid asking leading questions, and follow the school's reporting procedures in line with KCSIE (2026).

All staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines (2026)
- Essex Effective Support
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (2024)
- PREVENT Duty (HMG, 2015, updated 2023)

The DSL and DDSL fulfil all responsibilities set out in KCSIE Annex B, including managing referrals, working with statutory agencies, overseeing early help, maintaining detailed records, ensuring staff training, leading safeguarding policy development, supporting staff, supporting children, information sharing, safer recruitment involvement, and oversight of filtering and monitoring and online safety. The DSL ensures appropriate cover arrangements are in place when they are unavailable. These responsibilities are reflected in the DSL and DDSL job descriptions.

The School recognises its responsibilities under the Information Sharing Duty (Section 16LA Children Act 2004) and will share relevant information with appropriate safeguarding partners where this may assist in safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child, in accordance with statutory guidance.

When new staff, volunteers, peripatetic staff or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are given a copy of our Safeguarding Policy (including appendices) to read, informed who our DSLs are and how to share concerns with them. New staff, volunteers and peripatetic staff are required to sign to confirm they have received, read and understood these documents.

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the DSL or DDSL. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred via the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via Essex Effective Support. The school may also seek advice from Essex Children's Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Essex Children's Social Care, with parents or carers.

However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for another agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers. If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re- consideration of the case with the DSL

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

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are given a Safeguarding Advice and Information leaflet and informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the DSL (and DDSL's) and how to share concerns with them. Additionally, there are posters around the school, including in the entrance lobby, to identify the members of our Safeguarding Team.

For children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the school follows the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework, including safer recruitment, staff ratios, supervision, mobile phone and camera restrictions, and procedures for responding to concerns. The DSL ensures that EYFS safeguarding practice is fully aligned with KCSIE and local authority guidance.

Allegations involving a member of staff

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct. Heathcote school follows DfE statutory guidance and the ESCB's SET procedures (2026) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity) and applies when staff (including volunteers) have (or are alleged to have):

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a pupil, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated that they may pose a risk of harm if they were to work regularly or closely with children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that may have happened outside of school.

Allegations that do not meet the above harms test should be dealt with using the School's procedure for handling low level concerns set out below.

The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Headteacher (or the Safeguarding Director in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Headteacher (or Safeguarding Director) will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Safeguarding Director.

The SET procedures (SET, 2026) require that, where an allegation indicates that a person who works with children may have: –

- harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against a child
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- behaved in a way in their personal life that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children

the Headteacher (or Safeguarding Director if the allegation concerns the Headteacher) will contact the LADO immediately, and always within one working day.

The LADO will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

The school will inform the Teaching Regulation Agency and DBS promptly (and definitely within 30 days) if they have reason to dismiss someone with regard to Safeguarding, or if someone leaves during an investigation.

For further information please see our Managing Allegations against Staff, Volunteers or Contractors Policy, and referral routes at the end of this policy.

Staffing matters are confidential and the school operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

Safer Recruitment

Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children. All members of staff taking part in regulated activity at the school, including volunteers, part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, will have an enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), a check of the DBS Children's barred List, Prohibition from Teaching and Prohibition from Management (where appropriate) before starting work. The school will seek assurances that visiting professionals such as sports coaches have had appropriate checks by their employing organisation. Our checks involve verifying identity, address, employment history and their right to work in the UK. References from previous employers are taken up and qualifications also verified. We may also carry out our own Social Media checks via Facebook/Instagram.

All staff at Heathcote must read KCSIE **Part 1 in whole** (no longer Annex A), on joining the School and at the start of the academic year. They will also be required to complete a knowledge check of this document and sign to ensure they have understood their obligations and duty to safeguard children. This includes every member of staff whether they are working directly with children or not.

We ensure that at least one member of the interview panel has undergone training in the safer recruitment processes.

In line with KCSIE (2026): Any member of staff that cares for children under 8 years old will be required to complete a suitability declaration to ensure that they are not disqualified from working with children, (Childcare Act 2006, Feb 2015).

As required under KCSIE 2026, the school will check a person's prohibition status via the government's 'Check a teacher's record' service on GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-a-teachers-record (rather than via the former TRA Employer Access Service).

This applies to:

- All staff engaged in teaching work (however defined)
- Members of staff in management positions who are not in regulated activity

The school also carries out Section 128 checks to identify whether an individual is prohibited from taking part in the management or governance of a school. This is completed via the GOV.UK service "Individuals prohibited from managing or governing schools."

The outcome and date of each prohibition and Section 128 check is recorded on the school's Single Central Record in line with statutory requirements.

Previous references in this policy to the Employer Access Service or Employer Secure Access have been removed, as these systems are no longer in use.

Employment Practices Code (Updated in line with KCSIE 2026)

The school processes personal data relating to staff, volunteers, and applicants in accordance with data protection legislation and guidance. This includes adherence to the Information Commissioner's *Employment Practices Code*,

which sets out how employers should handle personal information in recruitment and employment.

References in this policy to the former "Employment Practices Code and supplementary guidance" have been amended to reflect this update.

Our Recruitment policies are reviewed by Directors annually.

For further information please see our Recruitment Policy

Induction and Training

The DSL (and DDSL's) undertake Level 3 safeguarding training at least every two years to ensure knowledge and training is up to date and effective in safeguarding children. All staff members and directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding and child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and directors.

The school ensures that the DSL (and DDSL's) also undertake training in inter-agency working, Prevent and other matters as appropriate by attending termly local authority safeguarding update/training forums. The Directors also undergo Safeguarding training annually, including safer recruitment, oversight of safeguarding culture and low-level concerns.

Every new member of staff, including part-time, temporary, visiting and contract staff working in school, receives basic safeguarding training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher. Training in safeguarding is an important part of the induction process and is ongoing throughout the year in staff meetings. All new members of staff are given a copy of our current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. We ensure that all staff receive level 2 safeguarding training at the beginning of every academic year. This training is conducted by the DSL in person and is updated throughout the year through termly staff meetings. This regular in-person training is supplemented with training and reminders sent via email in the form of e-bulletins to reflect safeguarding updates and raise awareness of current safeguarding topics.

All staff will be made aware of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures including the code of conduct of staff, the identity of the Designated Person and are given a copy of part 1 in whole of KCSIE (September 2026) for those working directly with children. During induction they will also be given the following policies:

- Staff Code of Conduct

- Whistleblowing policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy (cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Behaviour Policy
- CME Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Online safety policy
- Mental Health Policy
- All members of staff must read Part One in full of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2026) - *no longer Annex A.*

They are made aware of the SET Procedures (2026) and our obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015, updated 2023) ensuring they have the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, to challenge extreme ideas and to promote traditional British values. Furthermore, regular updates are given regarding online safety to staff, pupils and parents to cover ever-changing and increasing online risks, including generative AI, deepfakes, exposure to extreme ideologies, exploitation and online bullying and harassment. Safeguarding updates for staff include online safety, serious violence, AI-generated harm, sending of nudes and semi-nudes including images created with AI and Prevent updates. Staff are required to sign to confirm their full understanding and awareness of our safeguarding policies and procedures and other accompanying policies.

All staff working within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) receive safeguarding training at least every two years, in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, 3.30–3.32 (DfE, 2024). This includes training on child protection, responding to concerns, safer working practice, supervision, online safety, use of mobile phones and cameras, and safer eating procedures. EYFS staff also receive regular updates and ongoing supervision to ensure their safeguarding knowledge remains current and effective.

Safer Eating and Choking Prevention (EYFS)

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children must be supervised at all times during meals and snack times in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (3.62–3.70). Staff ensure that food provided is safe, appropriately prepared and suitable for children's individual dietary needs. Children are supported to eat safely, including sitting down while eating, avoiding foods that present choking hazards, and being encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Staff remain alert to any signs of distress or difficulty and respond immediately. All incidents or concerns relating to eating or choking are recorded and reviewed to ensure safe practice is maintained.

Staff Code of Conduct & Low Level Concerns

New members of staff, Directors and volunteers are given copies of the school's policy on *Staff Code of Conduct.* Discussion of the procedures set out in that document forms a vital part of our induction procedures. As well as this document, staff are also given copies of our Whistleblowing policy, Low Level Concerns Policy and Acceptable use of ICT. The Safeguarding Procedures at the end of this document also provide guidance for teachers and other members of staff when faced with handling any issue relating to child abuse. It is not intended to be a substitute for proper training.

Georgina Deed, our designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in her absence Mrs Samantha Scott (DDSL & Headteacher), who have received specialist training in this topic, should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns.

A low-level concern is any behaviour by a staff member, volunteer, supply teacher or contractor that does not meet the threshold for harm but may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct or professional expectations. Examples include:

- being overly friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a 1:1 basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating or belittling children

The purpose of the low-level concerns process is to maintain a safe, transparent and professional culture, enable early identification of concerning behaviour, protect children, and protect staff from false or misplaced allegations. All staff must share any concern, no matter how small, with the Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Concerns about supply staff or contractors will also be shared with their employer or agency so that potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

When a low-level concern is raised, the Headteacher will:

- gather as much evidence as possible
- speak to the person who raised the concern (noting their name and respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible)
- speak to the individual involved
- speak to any witnesses
- review relevant records or contextual information

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, stored securely and regularly reviewed to identify any patterns. If repeated low-level concerns indicate a pattern of behaviour, the school will take appropriate action. This may include:

- internal disciplinary procedures
- referral to the **LADO**
- reviewing whether wider cultural issues enabled the behaviour
- updating policies or procedures
- providing additional staff training

A clear written **rationale** will be recorded for all decisions made in response to low-level concerns.

Raising Awareness with Pupils

Heathcote School prides itself on its culture of open and effective communication between staff and pupils, and on its excellent pastoral support structures. We prepare all of our pupils to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions. Time is allocated in PSHRE for discussion of child abuse, including recognising child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, digital coercion and online harm, in an age and topic appropriate way. Staff develop pupils confidence to recognise abuse and know how to stay safe, including who they can speak to and different ways in which they can communicate with trusted adults such as online worry log via the school website, physical worry boxes in classrooms and online safety worry box in the IT suite.

Our curriculum and pastoral systems are designed to foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils. All our teaching staff play a vital role in this process, helping to ensure that all of our pupils relate well to one another and feel safe and comfortable within the school. We expect all staff to lead by example, and to play a full part in promoting an awareness that is appropriate to their age amongst all our pupils on issues relating to health, safety and well-being. All the staff, including all non-teaching staff, have an important role in insisting that our pupils always adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in our behaviour policy and in enforcing our anti- bullying policy.

Time is allocated in PSHRE and assemblies to discussions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and on why bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory bullying, and lack of respect for others is never right. Assemblies, drama and CRE lessons are used to promote tolerance and mutual respect and understanding. We use opportunities when they arise, such as current news stories to teach about the unacceptability of bullying and abusive behaviour. We have a Wellbeing Ambassador in each class and school council reps who meet termly. This gives our pupils a voice and empowers them to support peers and raise awareness.

Heathcote recognises that abuse can take place wholly online or through technology which may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Safe, responsible and respectful use of the internet, mobile phones and digital technology is explicitly taught through our curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2, including PSHRE, Computing and assemblies. Pupils learn age-appropriate awareness of online risks such as harmful content, online contact, digital conduct and commercial exploitation, as well as emerging risks including AI-generated harm, deepfakes, self-generated intimate images, digital coercion, misogynistic and incel-linked online harm, and weapon-related online threats. Visiting speakers and workshops provide further support and reinforce safe online behaviours.

The school uses robust filtering and monitoring systems to help protect pupils from harmful or inappropriate material online, including extremist, terrorist or radicalising content. Pupils are taught how to seek help, report concerns and recognise when online behaviour makes them feel unsafe. Online safety is woven throughout our wider safeguarding culture to ensure children understand how to stay safe both in school and beyond.

Professional confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils) or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the DSL and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL (DDSL) with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

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

Any records relating to child protection and safeguarding are recorded and stored on our electronic system, Hubmis, where access is only granted to DSL and relevant DDSLs/staff. Any paper records of safeguarding concerns from previous schools that pupils have attended, are stored in a locked office on premises. Child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting, they are transferred in full to a child's new school upon leaving, directly to the new DSL, either by hand delivery or recorded post (in line with ECC policy).

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving

school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the DSL may also make contact with the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

Where a pupil joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

Interagency working

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

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

Early Help

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the Foundation Years upwards. In the first instance, staff should discuss Early Help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the DDSL and they will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. All staff should be aware of identifying emerging problems. If Early Help and or other support is appropriate the case should be kept under constant review and consideration given to referral to Essex Children's Social care if the child's situation does not appear to be improving. The school will make prompt contact with Essex children's social care services or Channel where there are concerns a child may be in need of help or at risk.

Arrangements for Reviewing Policies and Procedures

The Board of Directors formally considers safeguarding issues at termly Board Meetings, with day to day issues being delegated to the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. An annual review of the school's Safeguarding policies and procedures and their implementation is also undertaken during the Autumn Board Meeting. That Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing the procedures for and the efficiency with which the safeguarding duties have been discharged.
- Ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay.
- Approving amendments to safeguarding arrangements in the light of changing Regulations or recommended best practice.
- Ensuring that we work within the statutory guidance outlines at the start of this policy

The DSL and DDSLs meet termly (or sooner if the need arises) to review any information and concerns regarding safeguarding issues. They consider behaviour logs, worry logs, HSB logs, attendance and punctuality data, and refer to wellbeing notes to see if there are any worrying indications of abuse or neglect or if any behaviours are more common in children with protected characteristics. They also ensure that this policy is fit for purpose and being adhered to. The DSL requests feedback about Safeguarding in the curriculum and also meets with the ICT Co-ordinator to ensure that e-safety is being taught effectively across the school.

This Policy is also updated with any safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learned.

The DSL and Headteacher carry out spot checks in classrooms and with the children to ensure they know who to go to if they have concern.

Promotion of Welfare

The ethos of Heathcote School is to promote social and moral well-being, to teach pupils to take care of and to value themselves, and to think in terms of making a positive contribution to society as adults. All our pupils take part in a large number of charitable activities. We see this as making an important contribution towards the development of the whole person, who grows up to value society and to expect to make a personal contribution towards the general.

Use of reasonable force

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

Mobile Phones and Cameras

Pupils are not allowed phones or internet devices in school. Members of staff are permitted to access their personal mobiles during break or lunchtimes when in the staffroom or when the children are not present. A school iPad is used to take photos of the children to record information and observations for 'Tapestry'.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the use of mobile phones, cameras and any electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities is strictly controlled in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (3.6). Personal mobile phones must not be used in EYFS areas by staff, visitors or contractors. Only school-owned devices may be used to take photographs or recordings of children, and all images must be stored and shared in accordance with school policy and data protection requirements. No device may be used in a way that compromises children's safety, privacy or dignity. *For further information please see EYFS Mobile Phone and Camera Policy*

Parents and visitors are reminded to ensure their phones are kept in their bags for the duration of their visit, unless specific permission has been granted to take a photo of their own child and not to share recordings/ images.

Members of staff must not bring their own cameras or video recorders into the setting.

Photographs and recordings of children are only taken on equipment belonging to the School.

Any phones brought in by a child must be presented and stored securely in the office in the morning and collected after 3.30pm

School Mobile Phone

- The school operates a designated school mobile phone for operational and safeguarding purposes, including wrap-around care and educational visits and residential trips in Prep.
- The school mobile phone is held by a nominated member of staff and used only for school purposes and emergency communication.

- Photographs or recordings taken on the school mobile phone follow the school's photo consent protocols and data protection procedures, are transferred securely to school systems, and are deleted from the device.

Pupil Use of Mobile Phones

- Pupils do not routinely bring mobile phones to school, and the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment for pupils.
- In pre-agreed circumstances (e.g. arrangements made for Year 6 pupils walking home or when living between different households), mobile phones must be handed to the school office on arrival and stored securely throughout the school day.
- Pupils do not have access to mobile phones at any point during the school day. Devices are returned only at the end of the day when the pupil leaves school and this is handed over by office staff/the pupil's form tutor directly to the pupil.

Wearable Technology and Smart Devices

• The School recognises that technological developments now include wearable devices capable of taking photographs, recording audio or video, livestreaming, or transmitting information via the internet, including smart glasses (e.g. Meta/Ray-Ban glasses), smart watches, body-worn cameras and similar devices.
• Staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and parents must not use wearable technology with recording, photography, video or livestreaming capabilities whilst on school premises or whilst engaged in school activities involving pupils, unless expressly authorised by the Headteacher or DSL for a specific educational or safeguarding purpose.
• Any device capable of recording images, audio or video will be treated in the same way as a mobile phone or camera under this policy. No images, recordings or livestreams of pupils may be created, stored, shared or sent via personal devices.
• Where there is any uncertainty about whether a device has recording capabilities, staff should seek guidance from the DSL or Headteacher before bringing or using the device in school.

Visitors to the School

All visitors will be checked as suitable whether they are invited by staff or pupils including through a

Google search. All visitors to the school may be asked to bring formal identification with them at the time of their visit. They must follow the procedure below:

- Once on site, all visitors must report to reception first. No visitor is permitted to enter the school via any other entrance under any circumstances.
- At reception, all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them. They should be ready to produce formal identification upon request.
- All visitors will be asked to sign the Visitors Record Book which is kept in reception at all times making note of their name, organisation, who they are visiting, time of arrival. They must read the fire evacuation notice and be given the visitors booklet which details information regarding our Safeguarding procedures.
- All visitors will be required to wear an identification badge – the badge must remain visible throughout their visit.

Whistleblowing

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

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Low Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any behaviour by a staff member, volunteer, supply teacher or contractor that does not meet the threshold for harm but may be inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct or professional expectations. Examples include:

- being overly friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a 1:1 basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating or belittling children

The purpose of the low-level concerns process is to maintain a safe and transparent culture, enable early identification of concerning behaviour, protect children, and protect staff from false or misplaced allegations. It is essential that all staff share any concern, no matter how small, with the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher).

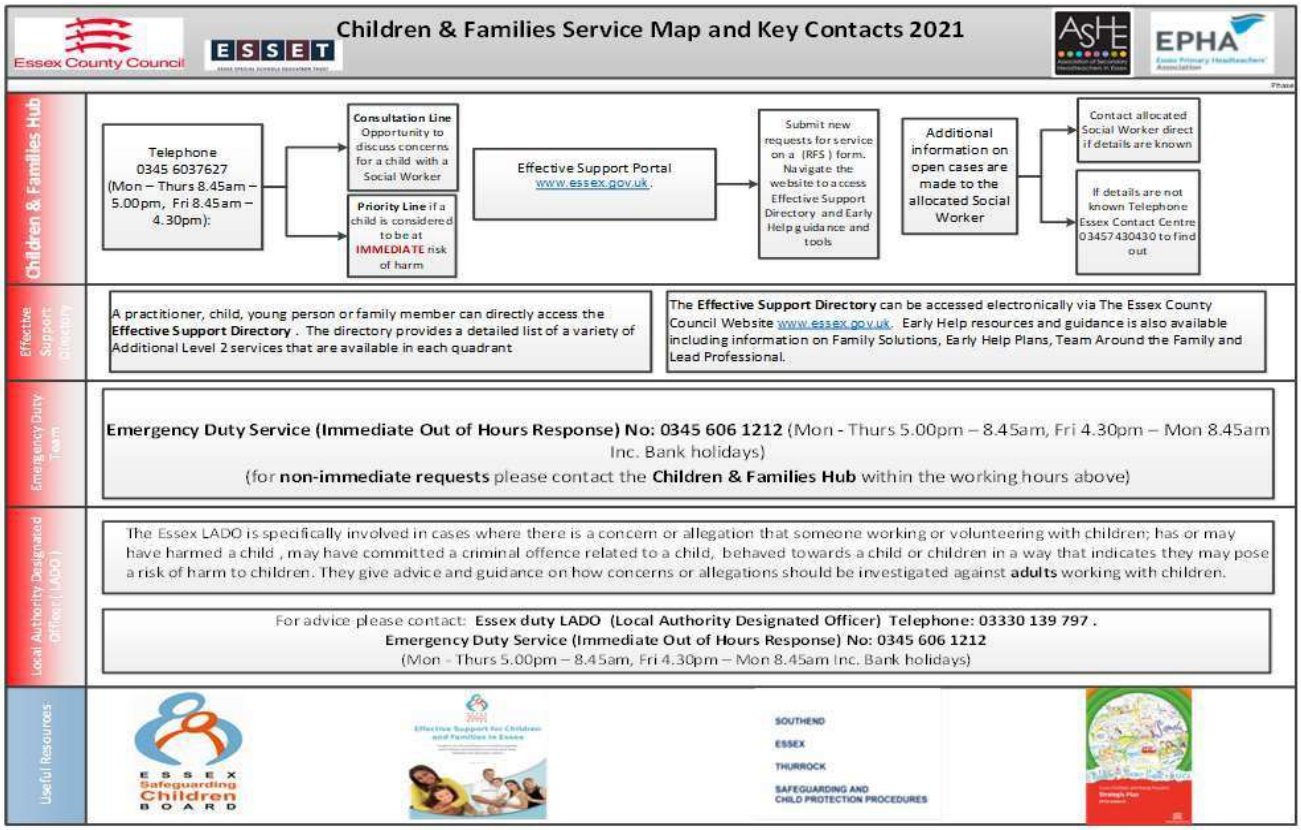
Concerns about supply staff or contractors will also be shared with their employer or agency so that potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

When a low-level concern is raised, the Headteacher will gather as much evidence as possible. This may include speaking to the person who raised the concern (noting their name and respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible), the individual involved, and any witnesses. All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and regularly reviewed to identify any patterns.

If a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school will take appropriate action. This may include internal disciplinary procedures or referral to the LADO. The Headteacher will also consider whether wider cultural issues enabled the behaviour to occur and whether policies or training need to be revised to prevent recurrence.

A clear written rationale will be recorded for all decisions made in response to low-level concerns.

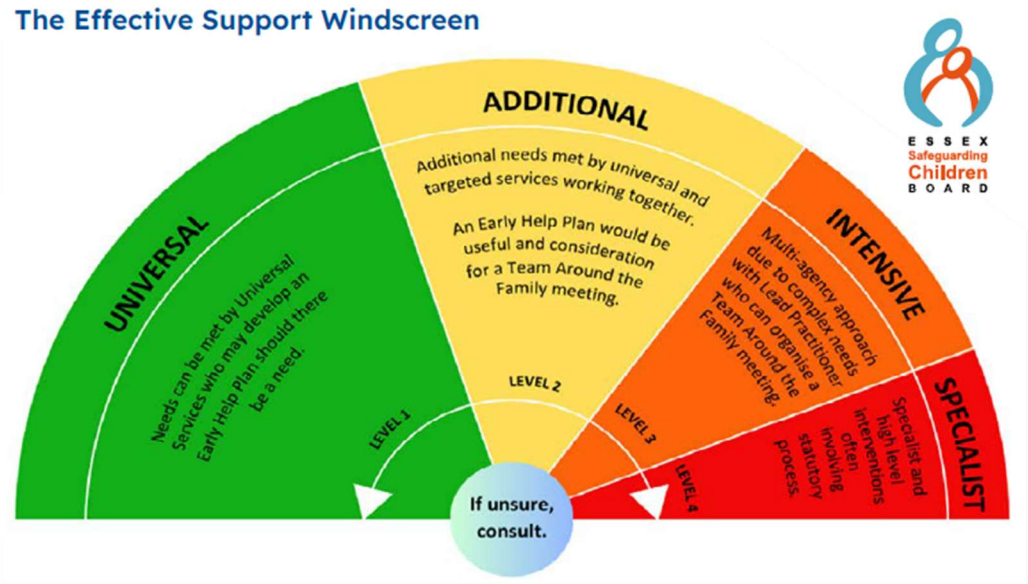
Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts (reviewed 2025)



This service map was originally produced by Essex County Council in 2021.
The school has reviewed the content in 2025 and confirmed that the safeguarding pathways, roles and contact routes remain current at the time of review.

This appendix provides an overview of local Children and Families safeguarding pathways and escalation routes.
It is not an exhaustive list of contacts.
Up-to-date safeguarding contact details are provided at the front of this policy and are reviewed annually.

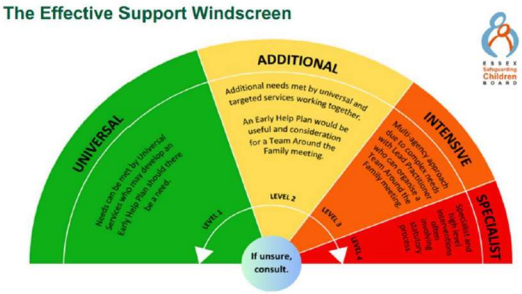
Appendix B: Essex Effective Support Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of CYP is the responsibility of everyone in Essex who works or has contact with CYP and their families. Partners and professionals who work with CYP and their families should consult one another, share information and work together to ensure that the child and their family get the most appropriate and effective support.

From Effective Support for CYP and Families in Essex (ESCB, 2024)

Essex Effective Support Windscreen



The Children and Families Hub – the front door into children's social care

Welcome to the Children and Families Hub

Universal Level 1

All children who live in the area have core needs such as parenting, health and education – children are supported by their family and in universal services to meet all their needs

Additional Level 2

Children and families with additional needs who would benefit from or who require extra help to improve education, parenting and / or behaviour, or to meet specific health or emotional needs or to improve material situation

Intensive Level 3

Vulnerable children and their families with multiple needs or whose needs are more complex, such as children and families who, have a disability resulting in complex needs exhibit anti-social or challenging behaviour suffer neglect or poor family relationships, have poor engagement with key services, are not in education or work long term

Specialist Level 4

Children or young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect

Children with significant impairment of function / learning and / or life limiting illness

Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them

Families involved in crime / misuse of drugs at a significant level

Families with significant mental or physical health needs

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

Arrangements for children who go missing during the school day

Definition of Missing

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

Introduction

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other educational settings, hereafter referred to as educational settings.

Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational settings; when this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with the educational setting's Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures, 2026).

- Essex Schools Infolink – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board – for the SET Procedures and other resources

A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, a child going missing frequently could be an indicator of underlying exploitation or other forms of child abuse.

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

Where children are absent or missing frequently are open to Essex Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the educational setting may be

set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a child goes missing

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

Staff at the educational setting must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where there is a Social Worker allocated to the child, they should also be informed.

After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the child is found

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

Essex Police

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

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

Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be

facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.

Useful contacts:

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

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

Appendix D – Quick Reference

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

What to do if a child reports abuse

Confidentiality

Pupils who have a problem may speak to someone whom they trust. It is important that the member of staff sets the boundaries firmly at the outset of such a conversation, making it clear that **no one** can offer absolute confidentiality. A pupil who is insistent upon confidentiality should be referred to an external source such as Childline. If the pupil is only prepared to speak if absolute confidentiality is guaranteed, the member of staff should terminate the conversation at that point. The adult should provide the DSL with a written account of what has transpired as a matter of urgency.

If the pupil decides to speak to a member of staff about the fact that he or she or a pupil known to them is being bullied, harassed or abused the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully
- React professionally and remember that they are not carrying out an investigation.
- Take what the child said seriously and calmly without becoming emotionally involved.
- Make it clear why unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered.
- Explain that any adult member of staff is obliged to inform the DSL, if child protection and safeguarding issues are involved in order that specialist help can be arranged.
- Encourage the pupil to speak directly to the DSL.
- Explain that only those who have a professional 'need-to-know' will be told, and, if appropriate, measures will be set up to protect the pupil from retaliation and further abuse.
- Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell, that their complaint/allegation will be taken seriously, and that he or she is not to blame for having been bullied or abused.
- Allow the child to tell his or her own story **without asking detailed or leading questions.**

- Record what has been said in writing.

- Inform the DSL or the Headteacher as soon as possible - at least by the end of the morning or afternoon session of that day.

- Inform the Headteacher immediately in cases where abuse from a member of staff is alleged, or if the incident happened inside the school or on a school trip. If the Headteacher is unavailable the Safeguarding Director should be telephoned immediately. (See contact details at the front of this policy booklet).

- Where there are evident signs of physical injury, that may or may not be the result of abuse or bullying, medical help should be summoned, or the pupil should be taken to the medical room. In serious cases the Police should be informed from the outset

- The DSL or Headteacher will contact the Local Area Designated Person (LADO) at the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board for advice on how to proceed in any instance of the report of abuse.

- Where the allegation relates to harmful sexual behaviours, if possible the disclosure should be managed with two members of staff (preferably one of them being the DSL or their deputy).

- Allegations will be discussed with the LADO considering their nature, content and context and a course of action including any involvement with the police will be decided.

- The school will take into account the views of the LADO, KCSIE (September 2026) and Working Together (2026) when making a decision such as a suspension.

- GDPR cannot be allowed to stand in the way of any safeguarding issue.

All parents and staff should feel able to raise any concerns about a child. We encourage staff to log a minor concern in the 'worry logs' in the staffroom to help build a picture of that child.

Any member of staff can make a referral to external agencies - the contact details can be found at the front of this document and are displayed in the staff room.

If there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Essex children's safeguarding board immediately.

Action to protect the child

Information about possible abuse may come to a member of staff in several ways such as direct allegation from a child that has been abused, through a friend, a relative or other child, through a child's behaviour or through observation of an injury to the child.

In the case of an allegation being made by the child concerned or by a third party it is important to remember that:

- Defendants have been acquitted where leading questioning or inappropriate investigation has been proven
- It is vital that subsequent enquiries should not be prejudiced by detailed questioning in school

The DSL and/or the Headteacher will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, carers, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LCSB) or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

Child on Child Abuse

In the event of a disclosure of pupil on pupil abuse, all children involved whether perpetrator of victim would be treated as being 'at risk.' If we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm this abuse will also be referred to the ESCB.

What to do if you are concerned about a child

If a teacher or other member of staff has concerns about any pupil or incident that touches upon safeguarding issues, he or she should report them as soon as possible to the DSL or the Headteacher.

We encourage staff who have concerns, no matter how minor they think they may be, to log their concerns on a child concern log form or a worry Log to help the DSL build a picture of circumstances.

If a member of staff suspects abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil and have reasonable cause to suspect that child is suffering or likely to suffer serious harm, they should be reported to the Headteacher or DSL immediately. They will consider the circumstances and will contact the ESCB for advice.

Parents

In general, we believe at Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery that parents should be informed about any concerns regarding their children. It is important that we are honest and open in our dealings with them. However, any concerns relating to parents must be referred to the DSL or the Headteacher. In very few cases it may not be right to inform parents of our concerns immediately, as that action could prejudice any investigation or place the child at further risk. In such cases advice will be sought from the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB).

Remember

Your aim should be to establish as quickly and accurately as possible the details of the injury or abuse. Questioning should be brief and gentle using open rather than closed questions such as "How did it happen?" rather than "Did …hit you.?" Keep a note of what you heard and saw.

Better still

With care and sensitivity pass the pupil concern to the DSL or Headteacher immediately.

Child protection is always our top priority

Safeguarding Checklist for Staff

Safeguarding Is Everyone's Responsibility

Anyone Can Make A Referral

IF

- You suspect a child may have been abused
- A child discloses abuse
- A third party expresses concerns to you

YOU SHOULD

LISTEN, OBSERVE, RECORD AND REPORT

R **R**espond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock, or disbelief

Reassure the child that he or she is not to blame

E **E**nquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset

C **C**onfidentiality **should not** be promised to children or to adults

O **O**bserve carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the child or the person expressing concern

R **R**ecord in detail what you have seen and heard; avoid being judgemental

D **D**o not interrogate or enter into detailed conversation; rather encourage the child to say what he or she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate. Affirm the child's feelings as expressed.

And then REPORT to the DSL

HEATHCOTE
Preparatory School & Nursery

SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL ROUTES

EARLY HELP/ EMERGING CONCERNS

Emerging Concern / Early Help / Child in Need

STAFF

↓

RECORD CONCERN (COMPLETE WORRY LOG ON THE HUB)

↓

INFORM DSL/ DDSL TO RAISE CONCERN

↓

DSL / DDSL SEEK EARLY HELP / ESSEX CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB CONSULTATION

↓

CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB REFERRAL IF THRESHOLD IS MET

SAFEGUARDING / RISK OF HARM

Safeguarding Risk / At Risk of Harm

STAFF

↓

RECORD IMMEDIATELY (SAFEGUARDING LOG ON THE HUB)

↓

REPORT TO DSL/ DDSL IMMEDIATELY

↓

DSL DECISION MAKING TO CONTACT APPROPRIATE SUPPORT AGENCY

↓

CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB / CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REFERRAL OR POLICE / C&FH PRIORITY LINE

In the event of immediate danger, ring police (999), report to the DSL immediately, contact Children & Families Hub priority line

HEATHCOTE
Preparatory School & Nursery
REPORTING ALLEGATIONS
ALLEGATION AGAINST
STAFF / VOLUNTEER / DSL / DDSL / VISITOR OR CONTRACTOR
REPORT TO HEADTEACHER
HEADTEACHER WILL REPORT TO LADO
FOLLOW LADO ADVICE
CALL 999 / SOCIAL CARE / HR / REGULATORY BODIES IF ADVISED BY LADO
ALLEGATION AGAINST
HEADTEACHER
REPORT TO SAFEGUARDING DIRECTOR
SAFEGUARDING DIRECTOR WILL REPORT TO LADO
FOLLOW LADO ADVICE
CALL 999 / SOCIAL CARE / HR / REGULATORY BODIES IF ADVISED BY LADO
In the event of immediate danger, ring police (999), report to the DSL immediately, contact Children & Families Hub priority line