

Woodlands Schools



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

This policy includes EYFS, Little Acorns and Wraparound care

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Key Safeguarding Contacts at Woodlands Schools

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EYFS Safeguarding Lead	Karen Archer	karen.archer@woodlandsschools.co.uk
Looked After Children Safeguarding Lead HM	Samantha Lott, Head Teacher	samantha.lott@woodlandsschools.co.uk Ext 596
Mental Health Lead HM	Karen Archer	Karen.archer@woodlandsschools.co.uk
Filtering and Monitoring Lead HM	Samantha Lott, Head Teacher	samantha.lott@woodlandsschools.co.uk Ext 596
DDSL Little Acorns	Janet Lee, Nursery Lead	Janet.lee@woodlands-littleacorns.co.uk Ext 379
DWL Mental Health Lead Little Acorns	Janet Lee, Nursery Lead	Janet.lee@woodlands-littleacorns.co.uk Ext 379
DDSL Little Acorns HM	Ella Wiggins, Room based Deputy	Janet.lee@woodlands-littleacorns.co.uk Ext 379
Looked After Children EYFS Safeguarding Lead	Janet Lee, Nursery Lead	Janet.lee@woodlands-littleacorns.co.uk Ext 379
Chief Executive Director	Ken Lewis	ken.lewis@woodlandsschools.co.uk Ext 581
CEO Director for Child Protection and Safeguarding	Cheralyn Lewis	cheralyn.lewis@woodlandsschools.co.uk Tel: 07785 611911
LADO	Essex	03330 139797
	Havering	01708 431 653
	Southend	01702 534539
	Thurrock	01375 652921
Police contact	Brentwood	07773 538081
Family Operations Hub	0345 603 7627	
Out of Hours	0345 603 7627 or 0345 606 1212	

Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB)	0345 603 7627 escb@essex.gov.uk www.escb.co.uk www.shapingthurrock.org.uk/safeguard
Essex Police Prevent	prevent@essex.pnn.police.uk 0800 011 3764

National Contacts

NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline	0800 800 5000
Childline	0800 11 11
National Children's Commissioner	0800 528 0731

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 forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and nursery. It is available on our website and on request.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- the School Behaviour policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- the safeguarding response to children missing 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 within or outside the home, including online
- 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
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Woodlands Schools (WSL) take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. This policy applies to all pupils, staff (including peripatetic), parents, directors (hereby referred to as 'the Board') volunteers, students and visitors to our school

All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, are required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026). Staff working directly with children must also be familiar with the additional safeguarding information relevant to their role.

For the purposes of this policy 'staff' shall mean all staff whether full time or part time, trainee teachers, permanent or temporary including peripatetic.

This policy applies whenever staff or volunteers are working with pupils, including where this is away from the School, for example at another institution, on school visits and trips, as well as sporting and cultural activities.

We recognise that for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help to prevent abuse.

The School recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership in a Family Help Model, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, child sexual abuse responses, domestic abuse, multiple harms and multi-agency assessment to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board \(ESCB\)](#). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Care Boards covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (Section 157 for Independent schools) places a statutory responsibility on the directors 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 safeguarding and child protection procedures Apr 26](#), [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex Jun 26](#), [Essex Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements \(MASA\) 26-27](#), [SET Procedures \(Southend Essex & Thurrock\)](#). Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2026\)](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE, 2026\)](#)

Education Act (2011)

[Effective Support \(2021\)](#)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(DFE, 2015\)](#)

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)

Children and Social Work Act (2017)

[Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(DFE, 2022\)](#)

Data Protecting Laws

- Data Protection Act (2018)
- UK GDPR – Data *Use and Access) Act 2025

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (DFE, 2015)

[Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (DfE, 2022)

Children Act (1989)

Children Act (2004)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) (Home Office, 2015)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance](#) (Home Office, 2018)

[Teaching on-line safety in schools](#) (DfE, 2019)

Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice (ECC, 2018)

Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - good practice for schools and (ECC 2021)

Behaviour in Schools (DfE 2023)

Suspension and permanent exclusion in schools, academies and PRUs, including pupil movement (DfE 2023)

Searching, screening and confiscation (DfE 2022)

Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide (ESCB 2022)

Relationships, Education, Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)

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 – DSL, and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - DDSL) are shown in the Key Safeguarding Contacts 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 ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our school and nursery are effective, complying 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 the Annual Review where it is presented to the Board.
- 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 and nursery.
- The Board ensure that WSL 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 ensure that all staff members, including trainee teachers, undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually and regularly in staff meetings, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.
- The Board ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and that our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety and when accessing remote learning) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education for our pupils mandatory.
- The Board and Senior Management 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 WSL's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

Directors are aware of their duties under the Human Rights Act and Equality Act, particularly for those children with SEND.

The Director of Safeguarding:

- meets with the DSL on a weekly basis; Director updates are discussed at the half-termly Child Protection meetings.
- reviews all policies associated with safeguarding using KCSIE as a reference where appropriate.
- presents the annual audit to the Board of Directors with the Head Teacher.
- reports to the Board of Directors on the above at each Board Meeting.

The Head Teacher, EYFS Safeguarding lead and Nursery Lead

The Head Teacher, Nursery Lead at Hutton Manor and EYFS Safeguarding Leads are the school's Designated Lead and Designated Deputy Safeguarding Leads and work in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are followed by staff and are overseen, reviewed and adopted by the Board of Directors. The Head Teacher also presents an annual audit for safeguarding and child protection to the Board.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding Leads have ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). 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
- acting 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 (Appendix D)
- working 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 Leads. Where the DSL is unavailable, the school will maintain a clear, reliable and known arrangement for staff to raise safeguarding concerns without delay. This will include access to a trained deputy DSLs and, where appropriate, a confidential safeguarding mailbox or equivalent mechanism.

All School Staff

Everyone at WSL has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our children can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues (including online safety as well as their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) that can put children at risk of harm, so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. We

understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, missing education and consensual/non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk. In addition, we recognize that any child may benefit from additional help and all staff members are aware of the Universal and Community-based early help and where appropriate, targeted early help through Family Help and our role in it.

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 Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, perhaps because they are embarrassed or they may not always recognize that they are being abused. We recognise there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We also understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely "stand-alone" events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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.

Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) describes abuse as a form of maltreatment. It sets out that:

"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 abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious

bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, such as acts of penetration, whether that is with part of a person's body or an object (e.g., rape or assault by penetration) and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching over clothing. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online as well as offline, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting and are more likely to know their abuser than not. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

All staff in our school are aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation 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). We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Our lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

Children and 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.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children who have a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children 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.

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing from school or home and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;
- have been the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime), as well as the victim;
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory

labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crimes include;

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal ‘hacking’), for example accessing a school’s computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

The setting is responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate level of security and filtering protection in place provided and monitored by external agencies, including how generative AI is used safely in education. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

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

Both CCE and CES are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group take 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 through the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

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

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, 2021) 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. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate. The [one page process map](#) sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

Children absent from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that (i) absent pupils (on school roll but not attending) and a child frequently missing education/going missing from education, home or care (not on school roll or being educated elsewhere) is a vital warning sign of potential abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence, children absent from education and also unexplainable and/or persistent absences and (ii) a child who has experienced multiple suspensions is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, including missing education in the future, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). 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, is cumulative or continuous days of illness, or irregular attendance and persistent absence.

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 2006 (as amended). This assists the local authority to:

- Fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education; and
- Follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. 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. We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day to ensure we have an appropriate response (see Appendix A). The setting will work with child services where absence indicates a safeguarding concern.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

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. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. This includes where they see, hear or experience its effects' in relation to domestic abuse. 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.

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

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

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

As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of 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. Since February 2023 it is a crime for anyone under 18 to be forced into marriage even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

Children Requiring Mental Health Support

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. The school recognises that mental health and safeguarding are closely connected and that mental health difficulties, including self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide, may sometimes indicate or develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff should remain alert to significant changes in a child's behaviour,

mood, attendance, presentation or wellbeing. Staff should not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions but should listen, provide appropriate support and report concerns promptly to the DSL or deputy DSLs where there is a risk of harm or a possible link to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The school will work with its Mental Health Lead, pastoral staff, SENDCO, parents/carers and relevant external services to ensure appropriate support is provided. Mental health support does not replace safeguarding action; where safeguarding concerns arise, the DSL will assess the risk and make appropriate referrals in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and local arrangements. The child's views, wishes and feelings will be considered throughout.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Woodlands Schools aim 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.

See Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Online safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world. Online safety, including filtering and monitoring processes, is the responsibility of the DSL.

The school recognises that, while all children must be safeguarded, some may be potentially at greater risk of harm, both online and offline. This may include children with SEND or health conditions, mental health needs, children with a social worker, looked-after or previously looked-after children, young carers, pregnant children and young parents, and children affected by domestic abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, FGM, Forced Marriage, parental offending, serious violence, criminal behaviour or disrupted education. This list is not exhaustive, and vulnerabilities may overlap or change over time.

Staff should exercise professional curiosity, consider the child's individual circumstances and listen to their views, wishes and feelings. Concerns should be reported promptly to the DSL or deputy DSL, who will coordinate an appropriate response with parents/carers and relevant agencies, including children's social care, Family Help, health services or the police where appropriate. Particular consideration will be given to the additional safeguarding barriers experienced by children with SEND and/or health conditions.

The school will have regard to section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Children Act 1989, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, where applicable, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and local safeguarding arrangements.

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views, conspiracy theories and misinformation;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes such as sextortion;
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams
- **AI-enabled safeguarding risks:** The school recognises that generative AI and other AI-enabled technologies can create additional safeguarding risks, including harmful or inappropriate content, manipulation, grooming, impersonation, bullying, harassment, misinformation and breaches of privacy. This includes AI-generated or digitally altered nudes and semi-nudes, including deepfakes and deep nudes.

Any concern that a child has created, received, been threatened with, or had sexual imagery shared about them must be reported promptly to the DSL or deputy DSLs and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant guidance on nudes and semi-nudes. Staff must not view, copy, download, save or forward sexual images of children.

The school will provide age-appropriate education on the safe and responsible use of AI. AI tools used within school must comply with the school's safeguarding, data protection and information security requirements, and personal, sensitive or confidential information must not be entered into AI tools unless authorised and appropriately protected. The school will have regard to relevant Department for Education guidance on the safe and effective use of generative AI in education.

Our school is aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways. Amongst other things this will reflect that many children now have unlimited unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e., 3G, 4G and 5G), which some of them may abuse to sexually harass their peers, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Our children are taught how to keep themselves safe when accessing the internet and during online learning (including remote) through the following ways: specific theme related assemblies; our PSHEE, Computing and RSE curriculum; bespoke arranged training, e.g. 'Two Johns'. Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our E-Safety Policy and in our RSE Policy.

The filtering and monitoring system is checked frequently by Utilize, Cheralyn Lewis (CEO) and the Head Teacher by accessing reports and listening to staff feedback to ensure the system is working.

Screen time within the EYFS

The UK Department for Education provides official guidance in relation to screen time in the EYFS. Children aged 2 to 5 years should be limited to a maximum of one hour per day, and less if

possible. Children will use screens within the classroom with adult co-engagement, for an intentional use to aid learning. Staff will ensure content quality for their age and screens will remain off in the background and during mealtimes.

Child on child abuse

Our staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers (including online) and that it is their responsibility to be clear in the understanding of our procedures and policy regarding 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.

We minimise the risk in controllable areas including monitoring toilet areas, supervision of pupils at all times and monitoring changing areas for swimming and clubs.

Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. 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 need to be reported to Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

KCSIE 2026 adds that:

- child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator;
- it is preventable;
- it may involve serious physical harm;
- it can involve threats involving weapons;
- online abuse can include misogynistic and misandrist abuse.

Our school recognises that, even though child-on-child abuse / harmful sexual abuse may not be 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 and present in different forms such as:

This may include:

- bullying (including cyberbullying – prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying related to protected characteristics)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- physical abuse which can include biting, hair-pulling, hitting, kicking, shaking, or other abuse that causes physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence / sexual harassment (this will be responded to in accordance with the detailed guidance in part 5 of KCSIE)
- Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes explicitly includes photographs, videos, livestreams, digitally altered images, AI-generated images and deepfakes/ deep nudes. All incidents

involving sharing nudes or semi-nudes require a safeguarding response, whether consensual or non-consensual.

- ‘up-skirting’ which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). / hazing type violence and rituals.
- Racism
- Derogatory behaviour
- Physical violence
- conflict

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any of the above listed abuses or any harmful behaviour in school, and it is never passed off as ‘just banter’ or ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’ or ‘boys being boys’ as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Child-on-child abuse can include misogynistic or misandrist abuse, serious physical harm and threats involving weapons. Such abuse is preventable and must not be normalised or dismissed as “banter”.

Listening to children is of paramount importance. We ensure that children know that they can approach any adult or that concerns can be placed in worry boxes in classrooms or in the reception area of the school.

We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but that all ‘child-on-child’ abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously, including misogynistic, misandrist and other gender-based abuse or harassment. We have systems in place and take swift action to intervene where abuse occurs and challenge inappropriate behaviours. We do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated.

As well as supporting victims and any other children affected by ‘child-on-child’ abuse we recognise the alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must also address their needs. Further support is also available through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation’s [Shore Space Service](#).

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. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse.

We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so (Anti Bullying Policy and Policy for Promoting Good Behaviour).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

We understand that children’s sexual behaviours exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate/developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that

harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, either in person or online. We recognise that children who display harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and we will support them accordingly. Definition of causing someone to engage in a sexual act without consent : a person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

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

We seek to teach our pupils about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe (on and offline).

Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(DFE, 2015\)](#) 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 susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Our school works in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. We assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism and identify who may be at risk of radicalisation. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to Social Care and / or the Channel Panel. (Any referral must be made with the individual's consent).

Serious violence

The school recognises that children may be at risk of serious violence, including as victims, perpetrators or through criminal exploitation. Staff should remain alert to indicators such as persistent absence, changes in friendships or associations, unexplained gifts or new belongings, declining engagement, suspension or exclusion, unexplained injuries or possessions, self-harm, offending or anti-social behaviour, and signs of coercion, control or exploitation.

Any concern that a child may be at risk of serious violence, criminal exploitation, gang involvement or county lines must be reported promptly to the DSL or deputy DSLs. Where there is concern that a child may be carrying or intending to carry a weapon, this must be reported to the DSL without

delay. Staff must not investigate or confront a child about a suspected weapon. Where there is an immediate threat to life or serious injury, the emergency services should be contacted without delay.

The school will take a preventative and contextual approach, considering risks within peer groups, the community and online. We will work with children, parents/carers and relevant agencies, including children's social care and the police, to reduce risk and provide appropriate support. A child involved in serious violence or offending may themselves be a victim of abuse, exploitation or coercion and concerns will therefore not be treated solely as a disciplinary matter.

Children who have a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending

We are aware that children with a parent, carer or other family members in custody or in prison can become at risk through poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We recognise that the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders can provide support and strategies to help such children.

Children and the court system

Children can sometimes experience the justice system by having to appear in court, either for crimes they have witnessed or crimes that have been committed against them. We recognise that the government publication Young witness booklet for 5 – 11 year olds, 'Going to Court' provides a child friendly, age appropriate explanation of what to expect.

The Ministry of Justice also provides important information for parents and carers with their 'child arrangements information tool'.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/housing>

Recognising Signs of Abuse

All staff should be concerned if they observe a child with any of the following possible signs of abuse or neglect. Whilst these signs may not be evidence themselves, they may be a warning, particularly if a child is exhibiting several signs or a pattern emerges. (There may be other reasons for a child showing such signs).

- any injury which is not typical of the bumps, scrapes or marks usually associated with an accidental injury.
- unexplained injuries on a regular basis.
- frequently has injuries (even where an apparently reasonable explanation is provided).
- gives confused or conflicting explanations about how an injury/injuries were sustained.
- exhibits significant changes in behaviour, academic performance, attitude, demeanour, becomes withdrawn etc.

- indulges in, or talks about, sexual behaviour which is unusually or inappropriately explicit for their age/stage of development.
- has an indication of possible self-harm, for example recurrent cuts, scratches or other marks on the arm.
- has an indication of mental strain, for example stress, depression, lack of motivation which is out of character, extreme tiredness, uncharacteristic outbursts of anger, frequently over emotional.
- disclosures of an incident or incidents in which they may have been significantly harmed.
- any other cause to believe they may be suffering harm.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

Possible signs that FGM may have taken place include long periods away from school, longer than usual time spent in the toilet, difficulty walking, sitting, standing or running, reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations, recurring urinary tract infections, prolonged absences with a change in behaviour, change in manner/mode of dress, requiring to be excused from PE without support of GP, eating disorders, self harming or suicide attempts, disclosure.

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)

Possible signs and vulnerabilities may include low self-esteem/confidence, learning disabilities, chaotic/dysfunctional household, history of abuse, recent bereavement or loss, change in physical appearance, physical injuries, receipt of gifts from unknown sources, self harm, poor mental health, estranged from family, absence from school, evidence of sexual bullying/vulnerability through internet/social media sites.

Radicalisation, Extremism and Terrorism

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimizing support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

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

Possible signs may include: General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy, changes of friends and mode of dress, use of inappropriate language, possession of violent extremist literature, the expression of extremist views, advocating violent actions and means, association with known extremists, seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Child in Need

The School also recognises that, in addition to children who are being abused or at risk of serious harm, there may be children in need who require support and help.

These children may include those:

- who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development

- coping with a disability
- undergoing certain medical treatments
- parental illness/disability
- family in acute stress
- family dysfunction
- poor body image
- who are disabled

These lists are by no means exhaustive. Further information is available within KCSIE, on the ESCB www.escb.co.uk and NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk websites.

Supporting Pupils At Risk

Our school is committed to ensuring that pupils receive the right help at the right time. Being a young carer can create additional safeguarding and support needs. We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

We will endeavour to support all pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage our pupils to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school's behaviour management and anti-bullying policies.
- A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families.
- A commitment to develop open and honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child's best interest as paramount.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in all matters of child protection.
- Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse, and that staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are also vulnerable and may be in need of support or protection.

Barriers Experienced by Children with SEND

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to recognising, disclosing and responding to abuse, neglect and exploitation. These may include:

Barrier	Safeguarding consideration
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Assumptions about presentation	Behaviour, mood or injuries may be attributed to a child's SEND or medical condition without further exploration.
Isolation and bullying	Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to peer isolation, bullying and prejudice-based bullying.
Limited outward signs	A child may be disproportionately affected by bullying or abuse without displaying obvious or recognised signs of distress.
Communication difficulties	Speech, language, communication or other difficulties may make it harder for a child to understand, disclose or report what is happening.
Understanding of abuse	A child may not recognise that what is happening to them constitutes abuse or that they have the right to seek help.
Dependence on adults	Children who require intimate or personal care, or who are more dependent on adults, may experience additional vulnerability.
Cognitive understanding	Some children may have difficulty distinguishing fact from fiction online or understanding the consequences of online content or behaviours.

The school will therefore maintain professional curiosity, avoid making assumptions based on a child's SEND, ensure appropriate communication support is available and provide additional pastoral and safeguarding support where required. Any safeguarding concern involving a child with SEND will be considered carefully by the DSL in liaison with the SENDCO or appropriate SEND lead.

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 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.

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

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- Cognitive understanding – to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school, or the consequences of doing so.

LGB and Gender-Questioning Children

These children are considered separately from, and alongside, wider pastoral or equality considerations. The school recognises that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) children and children who are questioning their gender may face particular safeguarding, wellbeing, bullying, harassment or discrimination risks. Any concerns will be considered on an individual, child-centred basis, with the child's welfare and best interests at the centre of decision-making. Staff should remain alert to signs of bullying, abuse, distress, self-harm, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns and report these promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school will respond to children who are questioning their gender sensitively and carefully, taking account of the individual circumstances of the child and, where appropriate, involving parents/carers and relevant professional or clinical advice. Decisions and support arrangements will be considered in accordance with KCSIE 2026, the school's Equality Policy, Behaviour Policy, RSE/RSHE Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and pastoral arrangements, and any other relevant statutory guidance. The school will not make assumptions about a child's circumstances and will ensure that safeguarding concerns

Procedures

WSL 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).

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 action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2022)
- Essex Effective Support
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (DFE, 2015)

When new staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, peripatetic staff or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. Induction training for new staff includes providing a copy of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, including procedures for dealing with child-on-child abuse, the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, the whistleblowing policy, pupil behaviour policy and anti-bullying (cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), safeguarding response to those children who go missing from education, mental health policy, the identity and function of the DSL and DDSLs, a copy of Part 1 if working directly with children, and E-Safety policy (including roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring). They are given a copy of our Schools' Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (including appendices) to read, told who our DSL is and informed how to share concerns with them. New staff, volunteers and peripatetic staff are required to sign to confirm they have received and read these documents.

Any staff member or visitor to WSL must refer any concerns to the DSL or DDSLs. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred immediately by telephone to 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 the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The school may also seek advice from 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 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. We do not require parental consent for referrals. 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.

Where the DSL is unavailable, the school will maintain a clear, reliable and known arrangement for staff to raise safeguarding concerns without delay. This will include access to a trained deputy DSLs and, where appropriate, a confidential safeguarding mailbox or equivalent mechanism.

When new staff, trainee teachers, 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 DDSLs) and how to share concerns with them.

Use of School Premises by External Organisations

Where the school premises are used by external organisations, clubs, community groups, sports associations or other providers to deliver activities involving children, the school will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect children. The school will undertake appropriate due diligence and risk assessment and will ensure that arrangements for safeguarding, supervision, safer recruitment and responding to concerns are clearly established before activities commence. External organisations and individuals using the premises will be expected to comply with relevant safeguarding requirements and to report any safeguarding concern or allegation arising during their activities in accordance with the school's procedures. Where an allegation relates to an individual or organisation using the school premises, the school will follow its safeguarding and allegations management procedures, including consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

Safeguarding in Sport and Sporting Activities

The school recognises that sporting activities can provide significant benefits for children but may also present safeguarding risks, including inappropriate behaviour, bullying, abuse, exploitation, injuries, inappropriate physical contact or concerns arising in changing, showering, travel or residential arrangements. The school will ensure that safeguarding responsibilities apply consistently to sport and physical activity delivered by school staff, visiting coaches, sports clubs, external providers and other organisations or individuals working with children on the school's behalf.

All staff, coaches and providers must comply with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, staff code of conduct and relevant safer working practices. The school will ensure that appropriate safer recruitment and safeguarding checks are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements and the nature of the role. Any safeguarding concern arising during a sporting activity, including concerns about a child, another participant, coach, volunteer or external provider, must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSLs. Where sport is

delivered by an external organisation, appropriate safeguarding expectations, reporting arrangements and responsibilities will be established before the activity takes place and monitored throughout the provision.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

Anyone can make a referral. Staff should respond to safeguarding concerns calmly, sensitively and respectfully, creating a safe environment in which the child feels listened to and taken seriously. Staff should listen carefully, allow the child to speak in their own words, avoid interrupting or asking leading or investigative questions, and use only open, non-leading questions where necessary to clarify what the child is saying. Staff should not investigate the concern themselves or ask the child to repeat their account unnecessarily.

If a child is reporting sexual violence, two members of staff should be present during the disclosure.

Where a child discloses a concern, staff should reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling a trusted adult, that the information will be taken seriously, and that they will be supported. Staff must not promise confidentiality but should explain sensitively that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe. Staff should avoid expressing disbelief, shock or judgement, and should not make promises about what will happen next.

Any safeguarding concern or disclosure must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL and recorded accurately, using the child's own words wherever possible. Staff should record what was observed or disclosed, including relevant dates and times, and should clearly distinguish fact from opinion or interpretation. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must take immediate action in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and should not delay in seeking appropriate assistance.

Training

The DSL (and DDSLs) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Head Teachers, all staff members and directors receive regular child protection training which includes Prevent awareness and how to identify children and young people at risk, and online safety, 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 child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and directors.

The school ensures that the DSL (and DDSLs) also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate by attending termly local authority safeguarding update/training forums.

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 designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL (or 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. WSL 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 Laws place 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.

Data protection is not a reason to withhold information where safeguarding requires information sharing.

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. This is then presented to the DSL (or DDSL), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

The DSL and the Deputy DSLs responsible at each setting meet regularly to review any information and concerns regarding safeguarding issues. The DSL and DDSLs meet half termly at the Child Protection Committee Meeting.

Documentation and file notes are kept either in a confidential file in chronological order (which is separate to pupil files) and stored in a secure fire-proof cabinet or on a secure, password protected and backed up server which only the DSL/Headteacher have access to. The only keys for this filing cabinet are held by the DSL. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be 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).

Transfer of Child Protection and Safeguarding Records

Child protection and safeguarding records will be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file when a child moves school. For in-year transfers, records will be transferred within five school days of the school being informed of the move; for end-of-year transfers, within the first five school days of the new term.

Where a child joins the school, the school will request safeguarding records from the previous setting where these have not been received.

Records will include a clear summary of current safeguarding concerns, significant history, actions taken, professional involvement and ongoing support or protection arrangements. The DSL will ensure that relevant information and outstanding actions are shared appropriately with the receiving school.

The school will obtain confirmation that records have been received and securely dispose of copies held by the school in accordance with its data protection and records retention procedures. Where appropriate, the DSL will liaise with the receiving setting in advance to support continuity of safeguarding and provision.

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 DSL will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the DSL will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at 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.

At WSL we follow the guidance as given in KCSIE Sept 2026, with regards to our duties under early help where the DSL or DDSLs will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. See Appendix D for the Family Help referral pathways.

Allegations involving a member of staff

All staff members (including trainee teachers) are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Code of Conduct. The WSL works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Allegations about staff are to be reported to the Head Teacher who will contact LADO.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, volunteer, contractor, governor, trustee or any other adult working with children that they have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, the school will follow its allegations management procedures and consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and within the timescales set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The school will not undertake its own investigation before seeking appropriate advice from the LADO where the allegation may meet the relevant threshold. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Head Teacher (or Deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

The LADO will advise on whether the criteria for a formal allegations management process are met and on the appropriate next steps, including any involvement from children's social care, the police or other agencies. All allegations will be handled promptly, fairly, confidentially and in accordance with KCSIE 2026, local safeguarding partnership procedures and relevant employment and

disciplinary processes. Where the concern involves the Head Teacher, it should be reported directly to Cheralyn Lewis (CEO), without informing the Head.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received (including external organisations of individuals using school premises), the Head Teacher or the Board must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they 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 has a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the individual's dismissal because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning all members of staff are made by the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is involved, the report is made by the Chair of the Board.

Where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he or she not resigned), the Head Teacher will decide whether to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). This may be due to unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that brings the profession into disrepute or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence, for example.

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

Low Level Concerns

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. *A low level concern is any worry or sense of unease about an adult working in a school that does not meet the harm threshold for a Formal Referral, but still goes against expected professional conduct.*

A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern. This will be recorded and filed in accordance with our GDPR and Data Protection Policies (See Staff Code of Conduct). This ensures that the Head Teacher can monitor occurrences, identify potential patterns of behaviour and take appropriate action. The Head Teacher will gather evidence, speak to the staff member(s) whilst keeping the reporting staff member anonymous. Low level concern is any concern that an adult working in, or on behalf of the School including supply staff and contractors, may have acted in a way that:

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

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage (including Little Acorns)

This Policy applies to the School's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, if there is an allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children in our EYFS or elsewhere, or any other abuse on the premises a report will be made to Ofsted within 14 days.

The School's policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting is clearly outlined in the Mobile Phone and Camera Policy (Little Acorns) and the Schools' E-Safety Policy. All Staff in the EYFS adhere to the restrictions placed on the use of mobile phones and cameras as specified in the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Any adults wearing a smart watch must ensure that the watch is set to airplane mode at all times when in the vicinity of EYFS children. This includes, but is not limited to, during lessons, whilst supervising children at break and lunchtimes, during assemblies or whilst administering first aid.

Safeguarding training for the staff in the EYFS will include guidance on identifying the signs of possible abuse, neglect and exploitation (such as significant changes in a pupil's behaviour, deterioration in wellbeing, physical indications, or comments which give cause for concern), and on how to respond in a timely and appropriate way to such signs or to inappropriate behaviour in other members of staff or any other person working with children.

Use of reasonable force

In relation to the restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools guidance (DfE Apr 26). We recognise that we may have some pupils whose needs require additional support and a more personalised approach and we always consider all behaviour, and our response to it, in the context of safeguarding.

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children and young people for a variety of reasons, this may include:

- To comfort a child or young person in distress (appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment);
- To direct a child or young person;
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Music, Drama etc);
- In an emergency, to avert danger to the child or young person or others;
- Causing injury to themselves or others;
- Damaging property
- Committing a criminal offence

The guidance produced by the Department for Education Use of Reasonable Force (DfE, 2013) states that:

*“Schools **should** not have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a child or young person or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a child or young person causing harm.”*

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 as outlined in the government’s new restrictive intervention guidance (Apr 26) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force

The school recognises that, in exceptional circumstances, a restrictive intervention, including reasonable force, may be necessary to protect a pupil, member of staff or other person from harm, prevent an offence or damage to property, or prevent serious disorder.

The school will comply with the Department for Education statutory guidance *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools*, which came into effect on 1 April 2026 and replaced the 2013 guidance. The school will also comply with statutory requirements for recording and reporting significant uses of force under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and requirements concerning the recording and reporting of seclusion and restraint under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

Principles

Restrictive intervention will always be a last resort. The school will seek to minimise its use through effective prevention, positive relationships, reasonable adjustments, appropriate support and de-escalation.

Where intervention is necessary, staff will use the least restrictive intervention, minimum force and shortest duration necessary to reduce the risk. Staff must consider the pupil's individual circumstances, including age, size, SEND, medical needs, vulnerabilities and relevant equality considerations.

Force must never be used as punishment. Restraint must not affect a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation, including through pressure to the neck, abdomen, mouth or nose.

Seclusion may only be used as a safety measure where a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and there is a risk of harm to others. The pupil must be supervised, the environment must be safe and non-threatening, and they must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk has reduced. Seclusion must not be used as a disciplinary response.

Where restrictive intervention is an identified or foreseeable risk, the school will use appropriate risk assessments, staff training, preventative strategies and, where appropriate, an individual behaviour support plan. These will be reviewed following significant incidents.

Recording and Reporting

The school will maintain a written record of:

- each significant incident involving the use of force by a member of staff on a pupil; and

- every incident of seclusion or restraint, including restraint without direct physical contact.

Records must be completed as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, on the same day. This requirement applies even where the intervention has been anticipated or agreed with parents/carers as part of a behaviour support plan.

Records will include, as appropriate:

- the pupil and staff involved;
- relevant pupil needs or circumstances, including SEND/SEN status;
- date, time, location and approximate duration;
- events preceding and during the incident, including known or potential triggers;
- preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted;
- the type and degree of force or restrictive intervention used;
- why the intervention was necessary;
- injuries sustained; and
- post-incident support or medical treatment.

The school will also record relevant witness and pupil accounts, when parents/carers were notified, and any subsequent follow-up or review.

Each significant use of force, and every incident of seclusion or restraint, must be reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, no later than the same day. Written information will be provided by email following a telephone discussion and will include the date, time, location and duration, why the intervention was necessary, the type and degree of force used and any physical injuries sustained. See Appendix E.

Where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, the school will follow the significant use of force reporting procedure without unnecessarily duplicating the report.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be offered a follow-up discussion to consider triggers, warning signs, de-escalation strategies, implementation of existing support plans and any changes required.

Following an Incident

Following any restrictive intervention, the school will consider the welfare of the pupil and staff involved. Injuries will receive prompt medical assessment and treatment where required and will be recorded and reported in accordance with health and safety procedures.

The school will undertake an appropriate debrief, involving the pupil and staff member separately where appropriate, to understand what happened, identify triggers and preventative strategies, consider the impact on those involved, repair relationships and identify any changes required to practice or individual support plans. Witnesses, including pupils affected or distressed by the incident, will be offered appropriate support where necessary.

Safeguarding, Allegations and Complaints

Any concern or allegation that restrictive intervention has been used inappropriately, unlawfully or in a way that may have caused harm will be treated as a safeguarding matter. Allegations against staff will be managed in accordance with the school's procedures and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Complaints will be dealt with under the school's complaints procedure.

The school will regularly review restrictive intervention records and patterns to identify repeated triggers, training needs, potential disproportionality and opportunities to strengthen prevention and de-escalation. Where appropriate, findings will inform safeguarding, behaviour, SEND and school improvement arrangements. The Board of Directors will be notified of any restrictive intervention records and an immediate review will take place between them and the Head Teacher.

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](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/whistleblowing) 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.

E-Safety, Mobile Phones and Cameras

The school has adequate, robust systems for filtering and monitoring of usage to keep children safe when accessing the internet at school. All staff must have a working understanding of the use of the E-Safety policy (main School) and the Mobile Phone and Camera Policy (Little Acorns).

The EYFS does not allow the use of mobile phones, any image recording device, or personal technical equipment such as lap tops, Ipads etc to be used in the setting without prior permission of the EYFS Lead.

- We do not allow the use of mobile phones, on the premises either indoors or in the outdoor play area in the EYFS.
- Staff are asked to keep their mobile phones with their personal belongings while children are on the premises, they may of course use their phones during their lunch break in the school staff room or away from the EYFS classrooms.
- In case of emergency, staff are advised that they may give the School phone number 01277 245585 to immediate family and schools etc to be contacted on.
- Parents and visitors will be asked to ensure their phones are kept in their bags for the duration of their visit.
- If parents or visitors need to use their mobile phone they will be asked to leave the premises in order to do so.
- 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 setting
- Camera and video use is monitored by the EYFS Lead.

- Where children have access to devices on site they are provided access to secure networked connection only and have no 3G or 4G access on school site.
- Filtering and Monitoring is in place on all school devices and these are regularly reviewed by the Head Teacher and Director of Safeguarding.

Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

To support effective safeguarding, protect the privacy and dignity of children and adults, and reduce the risk of inappropriate recording, photography, filming or communication, the school operates a no mobile phone approach on site.

This applies to all children and all adults on the school site, including, but not limited to:

- pupils and students;
- all school staff;
- supply and agency staff;
- contractors and visiting professionals;
- peripatetic teachers and therapists;
- volunteers and governors;
- parents and carers;
- visitors;
- work experience students and placement students; and
- any other person working in, visiting or providing services to the school.

Personal mobile phones and other personal recording or communication devices must not be used on the school premises. This includes smart watches which must be disabled from receiving or sending messages, making or receiving calls and must be kept in airplane mode to ensure it is not using a mobile network.

Trips, Visits and Residential

When staff accompany pupils on educational visits, trips or residential activities, the school will provide an appropriate school device to enable staff to maintain necessary communication with the school.

This device may be used to:

- maintain contact with the school office or designated school contact;
- communicate with parents/carers where this is necessary and authorised;
- contact emergency services or other appropriate services where required; and
- manage safeguarding or other emergencies arising during the visit.

Communication must take place through the school's approved channels and in accordance with the school's safeguarding, data protection and acceptable-use requirements.

Emergency Lockdown Communication

In the event of a lockdown or other serious emergency on the school site, staff may use the school's secure Emergency Lockdown communication channel to communicate their location and the presence and welfare of the children in their care.

This channel is an authorised, secure and monitored safeguarding and emergency communication system and is intended to support the school in establishing:

- the location of staff and pupils;
- which pupils are in a staff member's care;
- whether staff and pupils are safe;
- whether assistance is required;
- to notify staff when it is safe to end their lockdown, and
- any other essential information needed to support the school's emergency response.

Safeguarding Expectations

Any deliberate breach of the school's arrangements concerning personal mobile phones or recording devices will be considered in accordance with the circumstances of the incident and may be managed through the school's behaviour, staff conduct, safeguarding or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

Any concern that a mobile phone or other device has been used to photograph, film, record, contact or communicate with a child inappropriately must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school's no mobile phone approach is intended to provide a consistent safeguarding environment for children while ensuring that staff retain access to appropriate, secure and controlled communication arrangements when communication is necessary for safeguarding, emergency response or the safe supervision of pupils.

Safer Employment Practices

Woodlands Schools follow the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children, set out in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" Sept 2026. All staff at Woodlands Schools Ltd **must** read KCSIE Part 1 on joining and at the start of each academic year. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, and all directors are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting work. The School checks the DBSs of all adults not employed by the school who work with or supervise our pupils off site, for example on residential trips. Visiting speakers are also checked in terms of their suitability e.g. referencing, internet search and they will also be supervised by another member of staff whilst on site.

The regulated-activity threshold now means that a person volunteering in a role involving teaching, training, instructing or supervising children more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight is within regulated activity.

In addition to the DBS checks, a check on prohibition is carried out on anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work. Prohibition checks are carried out on staff employed within management roles from September 2015.

Staff who are employed by another organisation and not directly by Woodlands Schools (e.g. agency staff in Little Acorns and maintenance contractors) are required to provide evidence of identity and, if applicable, DBS status on arrival and prior to commencing their work here. They are required to sign in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge or tabard at all times. Agencies must provide proof that all necessary checks have been carried out.

Where staff or services are provided by a third-party organisation, Woodlands Schools and the organisation share responsibility for safeguarding. The school will ensure that concerns about individuals supplied by third parties are communicated and managed promptly in accordance with KCSIE, local safeguarding procedures and the relevant contractual arrangements.

All members of Staff involved in school recruitment have attended safer recruitment training. Please refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy where the Safer Recruitment Flowchart is outlined.

Appendix A

Procedures to be followed for a missing child or in the event of a child not being collected by a Parent/Guardian

When a parent/guardian fails to appear when expected to collect their child the following actions are taken:

After 10 minutes

- the parent/guardian is contacted
- if that call is unanswered, the second authorised person is contacted
- if that call is unsuccessful, the given 'emergency' number is contacted
- within the schools, in the rare event of none of these calls being fruitful, we would call the parents of friends from the child's age group who may be able to give further information, or may have details of grandparents or other family members or alternatively may go round to the pupil's home
- should all these measures prove fruitless within 30 minutes, the appropriate authority would be contacted i.e. police within the school, social care within Little Acorns. This contact will be made once the Head Teacher/Nursery Lead deems sufficient time has passed for the parents/guardians to make contact and should not exceed two hours.
- during this procedure, the child would be accompanied and gently reassured by a familiar staff member. An additional authorised member of staff would monitor the telephone. Two members of staff would remain in the settings until the child has been collected. The pupil contact details are kept in the appropriate offices for the setting.
- on trips or activities where the children are to be collected from another location, the same procedures are followed. Contact and medical details are included in the Risk Assessment pack which the Group Leader takes with them

Procedures for when a child is lost

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.

On school premises immediately:

- inform the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher or authorised person
 - inform the Caretakers to stop any vehicles leaving or entering the school and close the main gates to prevent anyone leaving, potentially with the lost child
 - equipped with walkie-talkies or mobile phones, the authorised person will organise a systematic search of the school and grounds and inform the parents
 - authorised person to ensure that all movement around the school ceases until the situation is resolved
- If the child is not located within a time frame not exceeding 15 minutes the police will be called

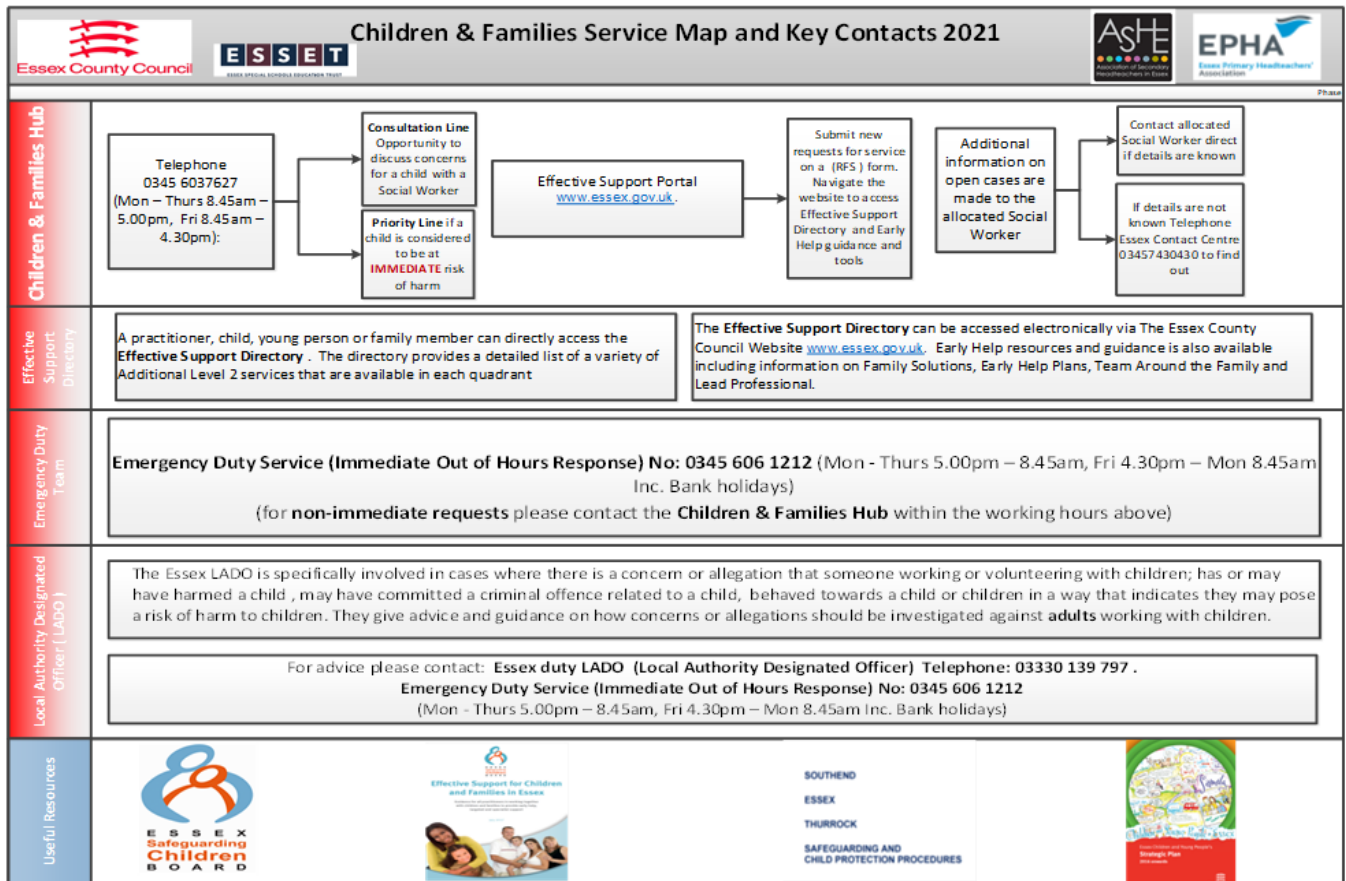
At another location:

- inform staff at location and the Management of the venue
- liaise with venue management with regard to their procedures for a lost child
- the senior member of staff to be responsible for the safeguarding of the group
- inform the Head Teacher
- check with the venue management that they are following their procedures i.e. police have been contacted, however a time frame of 15 minutes should not be exceeded before contacting the police.
- the Head Teacher liaises with the venue, the staff and the parents

Measures to be in place beforehand:

- ensure that every out of school Risk Assessment folder is accompanied by sufficient contact detail lists for every accompanying Teacher
- ensure that the list of contact details is easily accessible in the School Office
- ensure that the Group Leader and a further authorised member of staff remains on site until the last child has been collected
- ensure that walkie-talkies and mobile phones are fully charged at all times
- ensure a copy of the emergency procedures policy has been requested in the case of a visit to a commercial location

Appendix B: Children and Families Hub flow chart



Appendix C: Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Role of the designated safeguarding lead

The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and filtering and monitoring processes). This is explicit in the role holder's job description.

This person has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, advising on the safeguarding board's approach to Prevent duties and taking part in strategy discussions and interagency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and to contributing to the assessment of children.

Deputy designated safeguarding leads

Deputies are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role is explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility is not delegated. The Deputy DSLs will maintain safeguarding standard in the DSLs absence. The Deputy DSLs will maintain safeguarding standard in the DSLs absence.

Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is always available (during school/nursery hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is expected to be available in person, in exceptional circumstances, availability via phone and or Microsoft Teams or other such media is acceptable.

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

Working with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;

- liaise with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult;
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- liaise with all staff (including teachers, pastoral support staff, IT Technicians, mental health leads and special educational needs and disability coordinator (SENDCO) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a 145 referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically;
- liaise with the mental health lead where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school or nursery. This includes:
 - ensure that the school or nursery knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
 - support teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date.

Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of KCSIE 2026.

Where children leave the school or college nursery (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENDCOs are aware as required.

Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school. For example, information that would allow the new school to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Raising Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff;
- ensure the school's child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this;
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements; and,
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school leadership staff.

Training, knowledge and skills

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead should undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements;
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes;
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers;
- understand the importance of information sharing both within the school and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;

- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school;
- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and,
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Providing support to staff

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes; and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.

Understanding the views of children

It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

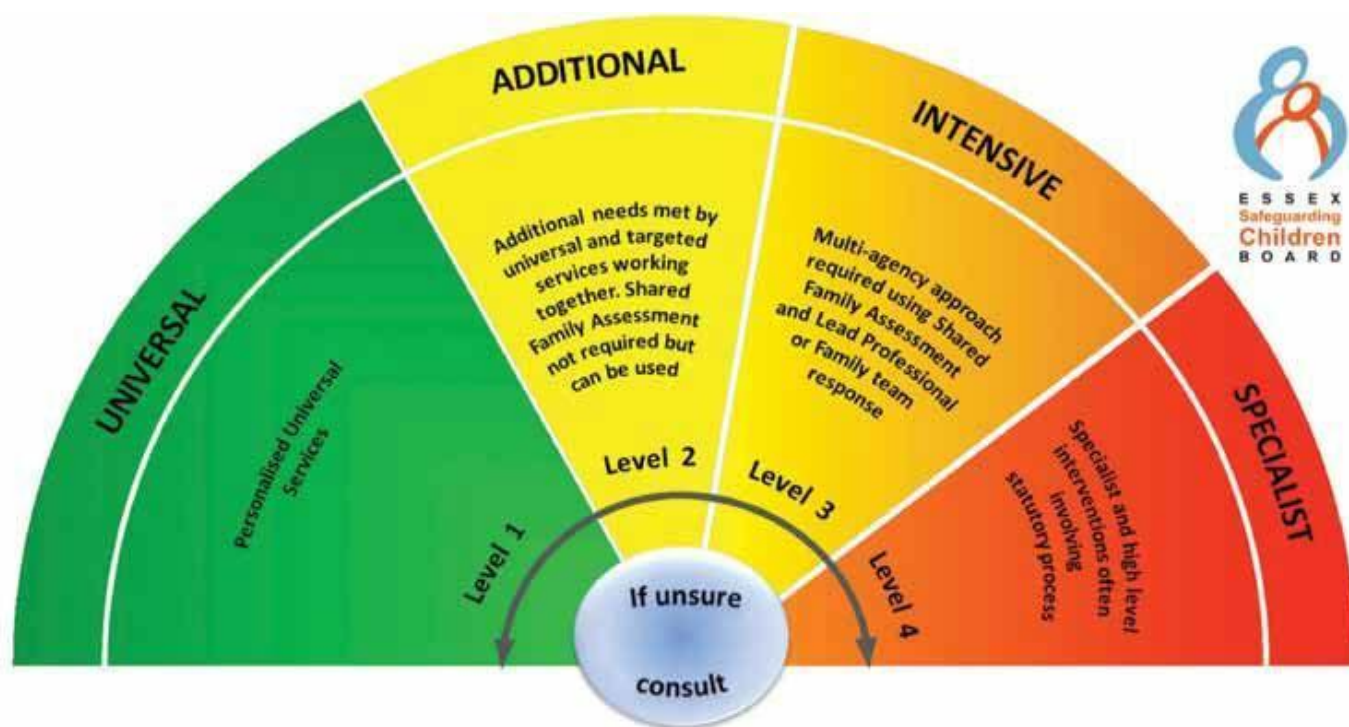
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them; and
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

Holding and sharing information

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of KCSIE 2026, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with other schools on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners;
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Laws (Data Protection Act 2018), UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR); and Data (Use and Access Art 2025)
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

Appendix D: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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

Summary Table: Pathway Shortcuts

Level of Need	Terminology Used	Action / Pathway	Contact
Level (Mild/Moderate)	2 Early Help / Family Hub Support	Self-referral or direct contact via Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service .	0300 247 0022
Level (Complex/Intensive)	3 Family Help / Family Solutions	Submit an online Request for Support .	0345 603 7627
Level 4 (High Risk/Harm)	(High Urgent Protection	Child Call the Priority Line immediately.	0345 603 7627 (999 if immediate danger)

Appendix E



Restrictive Intervention Incident Recording Form

Significant Use of Force / Restraint / Seclusion

School: Woodlands School Hutton Manor

Academic year:

Incident reference:

Date of incident:

Date form completed:

1. Pupil Details

Pupil name:

Year group:

Age:

Gender:

SEN/SEND status:

Relevant needs/circumstances:

Relevant medical information:

Existing support plan:

2. Staff Involved

Staff member leading intervention:

Name:

Role:

Training:

Other staff directly involved:

Name:

Role:

Training:

Other staff present/witnesses:

Senior leader notified:

3. Incident Details

Date:

Time incident began:

Time intervention ended:

Approximate duration:

Location:

Type of incident:

- ☐ Significant use of force
- ☐ Physical restraint
- ☐ Seclusion
- ☐ Other restrictive intervention

Was the incident part of an existing behaviour/support plan?

4. Circumstances Leading to the Incident

5. Preventative and De-escalation Strategies Attempted

The following strategies were attempted before physical intervention:

Response to de-escalation:

6. Reason for Restrictive Intervention

7. Intervention Used

Start of physical intervention: Approximately

End of physical intervention: Approximately

Was force used for punishment or disciplinary purposes?

Was force used to prevent immediate harm?

Was seclusion used?

Was the pupil prevented from leaving the area?

8. Pupil's Presentation During the Incident

9. Injuries / Medical Treatment

Pupil injured:

Staff injured:

Other pupil injured:

Medical treatment required:

First aid required:

Emergency medical assistance required:

Further monitoring required:

10. Pupil's Account

11. Witness Accounts

12. Immediate Actions Following the Incident

Following the intervention:

13. Parent/Carer Notification

Parent/carers notified:

Date:

Time:

Method:

Person making notification:

Information provided:

Parent/carers response:

Written report provided:

Date written report provided:

14. Post-Incident Support and Debrief

Pupil

Staff

The debrief considered:

Other pupils

15. Review of the Individual Support Plan

Review required:

Reason:

Proposed amendments:

Person responsible for review:

Review date:

16. Management Review

Senior leader reviewing incident:

Date reviewed:

Findings:

Further action required:

Actions:

Action responsible	Person	Deadline
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17. Reporting and Record-Keeping Checklist

Requirement	Completed
Significant use of force recorded	☐
Date, time and location recorded	☐
Pupil details recorded	☐
Staff involved recorded	☐

- Relevant SEND/individual circumstances recorded ☐
- Circumstances leading to incident recorded ☐
- Preventative/de-escalation strategies recorded ☐
- Reason intervention was necessary recorded ☐
- Type and degree of intervention recorded ☐
- Duration recorded ☐
- Injuries recorded ☐
- Medical treatment recorded ☐
- Pupil's account obtained ☐
- Staff/witness accounts obtained ☐
- Post-incident support recorded ☐
- Parent/carer notified ☐
- Written information provided ☐
- Individual support plan review initiated ☐
- Senior leadership review completed ☐

18. Signatures / Confirmation

Staff member completing record:

Date:

Senior leader review:

Date:

SENCO review/action:

Date:

Parent/carer notification recorded by:

Date:

Record Status

Incident record:

Parent/carer notification:

Medical follow-up:

Debrief:

Support-plan review:

Further monitoring:

Record retained in accordance with the school's record-management and safeguarding procedures