

ATTAIN ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

September 2025



Attain Academy Partnership

Attain Academy Partnership aims to provide an outstanding education for all children in all schools, relevant to the world in which they live. We would like all members of Attain to become:

- Ambitious, knowledgeable, capable learners who are resilient and independent thinkers
- Enterprising, creative and articulate pupils who have a real love of learning and strive for aspirational goals
- Ethical, informed and responsible citizens who value differences and inclusivity
- Healthy, confident and caring individuals who contribute to a mutually supportive environment

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ATTAIN ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

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Working together towards success for all

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ATTAIN ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

1. 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, 2025)

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is for all staff, parents, trustees, governors, volunteers and the wider academy community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for Attain Academy Partnership (herein referred to as the 'Trust') and our member academies (herein referred to as the academy). It should be read in conjunction with the

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Academy Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visit Policy
- Online Safety Policy and
- Photography Policy.
- Self-Harm Policy
- Lost Child and Missing Child Policy - the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)
- Designated Teacher for Looked-after and previously looked after children Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play. 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.

Safeguarding includes the establishment and implementation of procedures to protect children from deliberate harm, however, safeguarding also encompasses all aspects of pupils' health, safety and wellbeing.

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

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Our academies have a whole-academy approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents / carers, trustees, governors and the wider academy community. We believe that, only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

The Trust Board has agreed this policy and as such, it applies to all academies within the Trust.

For the purpose for this policy, the governing body refers to both the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body and the Headteacher refers to both Head of School and Headteacher.

2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

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

In addition to national statutory guidance, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#). Our academy also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- Education Act 2002
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information Sharing \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#),
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- [Teaching online safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Generative AI: product safety expectations \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour and appendices \(ECC 2025\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)
- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)⁷
- [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2023\)](#)
- [Essex Let's Talk Resources](#), including reducing the risk of suicide, disordered eating and self-harm

3. 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, the Local Authority and other agencies who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our Trust and academy with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on Page 2 sheet of this 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 governing body

The governing body ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our Trust are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on page 2 of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our academy. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on page 2).

The governing body ensures the academy engages with statutory safeguarding partners and 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 governing body ensures that all adults in our academy (including governors / trustees) who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The governing body ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We teach our children how to keep themselves safe and we work in accordance with statutory guidance to help children recognise and respond to risk and to prevent them from coming to harm. We comply with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The governing body has specific duties around online safety and ensures the academy has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to keep or children safe online.

The governing body, and academy leadership team, are responsible for ensuring that adults in our schools are suitable – this is done by:

- Ensuring we have in place safer recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.
- Ensuring we meet statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and have recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the Trust's **'safer recruitment' policy** for further information).
- Ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised in the academy.
- Online safety (including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this)

The Headteacher

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Headteacher works in accordance with all statutory

requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)

The designated safeguarding lead in each academy has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards) and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that any referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made in a timely way and in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The deputy designated safeguarding lead / leads is / are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead / leads **is able to** act in their absence.

The Designated Teacher

The designated teacher is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

The designated teacher works with the Virtual School Head, to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked-after children in the academy to meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan and to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

The designated teacher ensures that they have the appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.

The Mental Health Lead

The mental health lead is responsible for creating a whole-school approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing by:

- Developing a whole-school approach to support mental wellbeing.
- Promoting good mental health and emotional wellbeing for pupils and staff.
- Ensuring clear processes to report mental health concerns.
- Ensuring clear processes for managing mental health concerns.
- Delivering appropriate training.
- Liaising with the DSL where a mental health problem could indicate that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

All academy staff

Everyone in our academy has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues 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 recognise that any child may benefit from additional help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it.

All staff members are aware of and follow academy safeguarding 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.

All staff members are aware of systems in the academy which support safeguarding and ensure that these are explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes:

- Behaviour policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Missing Child Procedures
- Role of the DSL (including identity of the DSL and deputies)
- Health and Safety

Our staff understand that children may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. This may be because they are embarrassed, scared or do not always recognise that they are experiencing abuse. We understand there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety, and we also understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues rarely occur in isolation 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.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education defines abuse as 'a form of maltreatment of a child'. It sets out that:

"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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 another child or children"

The guidance refers to four categories of abuse:

- **Physical:** a form of abuse causing physical harm to a child – this includes where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child
- **Emotional:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development
- **Sexual:** forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities (through actual physical or online contact)
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely

In addition, Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains important information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Some of these, and our approach to them, are explained here:

a. **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

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

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. 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. In Essex, the definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

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

CSE does not always involve physical contact, it can occur through the use of technology without a child's immediate recognition and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. Victims are often groomed through social networking sites and mobile phones with internet access.

We recognise that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our academy 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 will work with other agencies as appropriate.

b. Child on child abuse (including sexualised behaviours)

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways and, although not exhaustive, can involve:

- **Bullying:** This may include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking physically/verbally or for a particular reason (i.e. size, hair colour, gender etc.) and excluding someone from a group on purpose. In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include an imbalance of power and repetition.
- **Cyber bullying:** This is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons above. It can take many forms, such as abusive/threatening texts, emails or messages, posting abusive comments on social media sites, sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else, stealing someone's online identity, spreading rumours online, trolling (i.e. sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games), developing hate sites about another person, prank calls or messages, group bullying or exclusion online, anonymous messaging, encouraging a young person to self-harm, pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations.
- **Physical abuse:** This may include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- **Harmful sexual violence / Sexual harassment:** This may include inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, sexual touching or sexual assault/abuse. This form of abuse must always be referred to the Designated Safeguarding lead.
- **Gender-related abuse:** This includes harm or threats of harm, committed against a person based on actual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.
- **Up-skirting:** This involves taking a picture or video under a person's clothing without their permission.
- **Sexting:** Also known as youth produced sexual imagery, this includes the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content and upskirting. Incidents of sexting must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding lead
- **Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals:** This is a form of initiation ceremony to induct newcomers into a group and may involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.
- **Prejudiced behaviour (including):** this includes a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society.

We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur. We do not normalise abuse, and it is not tolerated in our setting. Our culture is very much one of kindness, compassion, hope, connection and belonging.

Any incidents of child on child (formerly peer on peer abuse) will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and we will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as necessary and ensure that appropriate agencies are involved when required.

Our academy recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in the academy, or outside of it. We understand there are many factors which may lead a child to display abusive behaviours towards other children, and that these matters are sensitive and often complex. We recognise our academy may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of some children who have experienced harm and trauma. We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, it is in the context of providing appropriate support to all children in our school where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will, at all times, take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour.

We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these. We use lessons and assemblies to teach children about healthy, positive relationships, how to report concerns, and to help them understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is. We aim to provide children with the language to report abuse and to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so. We never assume, if abuse is not being reported, that it is not occurring in our academy – we are vigilant to signs of abuse and promote a culture of safety and understanding.

The academy's policies on bullying, online safety, cybersecurity, behaviour, and equality outline the procedures and actions to be taken should an incident of bullying (including child on child abuse) or prejudice-related incidents be reported. These policies ensure a consistent approach throughout the academy. All reported incidents are logged.

c. Children who are **absent from education (CME)**

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. We recognise that good attendance begins with our academy being somewhere our children want to be, and also that some children find it harder to attend school for a range of reasons. We will always try to understand underlying reasons for absence and will work collaboratively with other partners to support children to attend the academy and to ensure that they receive the right help at the right time.

A child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and we follow the academy procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. We believe that early intervention to address absence from school is vital, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school and remove any barriers to them accessing their education.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. **Where this does not happen, we will attempt contact with parents/carers** (parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the academy, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to). Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our academy must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (see Appendix C), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing. The academy's **Lost Child and Missing Child Policy** outlines the procedures and actions to be taken should a child fail to attend the academy. This policy ensures that the academy works in accordance with the [Essex Protocol](#) for children who go missing during the school day.

d. Risk in the Community (RIC)

RIC is the Essex partnership approach to tackling criminal and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside a child's home or our academy. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and we are therefore mindful of whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. We will always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and will share it with other agencies when appropriate to support better understanding of a child and their family. This is to ensure that our children and families receive the right help at the right time.

e. Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can involve a wide range of behaviours and can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, and that it can take place inside or outside of the home.

Our academies recognise that exposure to domestic abuse (either by witnessing or experiencing it) can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and we receive / 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.

As part of our safeguarding arrangements and our work with safeguarding partners, our school has signed up to [Operation Encompass](#). Operation Encompass is a national initiative which aims to provide support to children who have experienced domestic abuse. It means the Police inform us if they have attended an incident of domestic abuse which involves a child on our roll, so that appropriate support can be put in place. Any information in relation to this will be held on the child's child protection file, as with any other safeguarding information.

f. Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour by children and young people includes a range of behaviours in a variety of situations and can be defined as: – “Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult” (Hackett 2014).

Harmful sexual behaviour sits within the wider context of child sexual exploitation and child-on-child sexual abuse. Each of these describes a wide range of behaviours and experiences, which are not easily defined or differentiated.

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.

Our academies have 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).

In line with the Trust's **Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy** (Appendix E), the academies will always act swiftly to any allegation of harmful sexual behaviour with a process of investigation, communication and action. Staff will consider each case and each individual in their own right before taking action. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed immediately in all cases where a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

g. Mental health

We recognise that good mental health for all our pupils and staff is very important, and we understand the part our school plays in this. Our academy aims to develop

the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

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

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents/carers to support the well-being of our pupils. We expect parents/carers, if they have any concerns about the wellbeing of their child, to share this with us, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

h. Online safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. Whilst this presents many positive and exciting opportunities, we recognise it also presents challenges and risks in the form of:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, child on child pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults 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
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

All staff in our academy are aware of the risks to children online. We understand any child can be vulnerable online, and that their vulnerability can vary according to age, developmental stage and personal circumstances. We aim to equip our pupils with the knowledge they need to use the internet and technology safely, and we want to work with parents to support them to keep their children safe online.

We have systems in the academy to filter information and block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. These systems are monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective, and all staff are trained in online safety and

how to report concerns. The Trust have reviewed the [Department of Education filtering and monitoring standards](#) and [Cyber Security standards for Schools and Colleges](#) and ensured that what needs to be done to meet this standard has been implemented.

Further information about our approach to online safety is available in our **Online Safety Policy**.

i. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

The academy recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI also has the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g., through bullying and grooming), allowing for false accusations to be made against other pupils or staff (e.g., through the use of 'deepfakes') and/or expose pupils to harmful content. We will respond to any misuse of AI in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

All staff must be aware of the risks and capabilities of using AI tools and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. For further information on our approach to AI is available in our **Artificial Intelligence Policy**.

j. Prevention of radicalisation

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

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

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

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. If a child on roll at our academies is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from that

academy may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

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

The academy has a **Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy** which sets out our beliefs, strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised or exposed to extremist views, by identifying who they are and promptly providing them with support. This policy links into policies on child protection, equality and anti-bullying. All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

k. **Serious violence**

All staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

As with other safeguarding issues, we work with other relevant agencies to share information and address concerns, to help safeguard all children.

(See Trust's **Managing violence in school's policy**)

l. **Self-harm**

Self-harm is a coping mechanism and can be a way for a child to show they are feeling a lot of pain and hurt or in some cases to attract attention. There are many reasons why children might harm themselves - although the need to self-harm usually comes from emotions they find difficult to manage. The emotions could relate to any number of things, such as bullying, abuse or neglect or indicate other safeguarding concerns.

There may be no warning signs, and often those who self-harm go to great lengths to conceal their injuries. Our staff are aware of the risk factors and potential warning signs that may indicate a child is experiencing difficulties and therefore at increased risk of harm.

The Trust's **Self-Harm Policy** (Appendix F) outlines the procedures and actions to be taken should a child be considered at risk of self-harming. This policy supplements the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Our academy will operate in accordance with the statutory safeguarding requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing local safeguarding procedures.

m. 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 academy will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing local safeguarding procedures.

The Trust’s **Female Genital Mutilation Policy** (Appendix G) outlines the procedures and actions to be taken should a child be considered at risk of FGM.

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

n. Remote education

Where children are being asked to learn online at home, the academy will use the information provided by DfE, NSPCC and PSHE Association to do so safely. Regular communications with parents and carers will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and we will help them understand what systems the academy is using to filter and monitor online use. We will ensure that parents and carers are aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the academy (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Safeguarding is a broad concept encompassing various aspects of protecting individuals from harm. It is not just about responding to incidents of abuse but also about proactively preventing harm from occurring in the first place. Appendix D summarises further arrangements and policies at the academy, which seek to provide an environment where individuals can feel safe and supported.

5. Procedures

Our academy 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 designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

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, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the academy must refer concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred 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 academy 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 the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for another agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

All staff understand that, if they continue to have concerns about a child or feel a concern is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, they should raise this with the designated safeguarding lead.

Where an immediate response is required, and if, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the academy to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to urgent safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our academy they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy / deputies) and how to share concerns with them. We also provide information on

safeguarding to any visitor to our academy, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

6. 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 academy understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This 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 barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including Prevent and online safety, which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction, which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our academies receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

The academy ensures that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate

8. Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our academy is signed up to the [Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol](#) which includes information sharing for safeguarding purposes. This protocol enables us to share and receive information with the Local Authority in a legal, safe and secure way, to support our work in keeping children safe.

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

A member of staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including parents / carers or pupils), about a safeguarding concern nor 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.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to share information on individual child protection cases 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.

Information sharing can help to ensure that a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address.

9. Child protection records

Accurate records are essential to good child protection practice. Our academy is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our academy, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

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 via the online safeguarding platform CPOMS. All records will be dated and signed within the system and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS, they should email the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to ensure that the concern is received.

Any records related to child protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another academy / educational setting.

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our academy to another academy / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be

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

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

10. Interagency working

It is important that agencies work together to keep children safe, and there is a legal requirement to do so.

We work with other relevant agencies, such as Social Care, the Virtual School, Police and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our academy (or who was previously known to us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the academy is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called. 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 academy has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will have oversight of their academy attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation, linking with the Essex Virtual School, which has strategic oversight of this group of children. Where the academy is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the academy is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. We will report on the child's progress in the academy, and any concerns about them shared at the meeting, unless to do so would place them at risk of harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead would speak with the child's key worker immediately outside of the meeting and as soon as there is a concern.

11. Allegations about members of the workforce

All staff members (including agency staff) are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Handbook / Code of Conduct. All staff are regularly reminded of this through updates and training and are also informed about our **Whistleblowing Policy**.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2025) set out the procedures in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). These procedures should be followed where an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The academy works in accordance with the statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2025) as detailed in the Trust's '**Procedure for dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults in the academy**'.

The academy has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about an adult in our setting should be referred to the Headteacher or the designated safeguarding lead (or their deputies in their absence) who will then decide how to take this forward. In some cases, it might not be clear whether an incident constitutes an allegation. If this is the case, it will be necessary for us to explore the concerns to establish some facts – this initial fact-finding is not an investigation, it is to clarify information and to direct our response to the concern raised.

Where an allegation against a member of staff is received, and it is felt that any of the above criteria apply, the SET procedures (ESCB, 2025) require this to be reported to the Essex Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@essex.gov.uk. This should be done by the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or the Chair of Governors within one working day (or sooner via 03330 139797 if **immediate safeguarding is required**). We will not carry out any investigation before a Workforce Allegations Team referral has been made.

In the event of an allegation relating to the conduct and behaviour of an agency member of staff, the Headteacher (or deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process, to facilitate a joint investigation or enable the agency to move this forward.

Any concern relating to the Headteacher, or members of the central team should be reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer (or Chair of Governors in their absence), who will refer the matter to the Workforce Allegations Team.

Where the concern involves the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), it should be reported direct to the Chair of Trustees, who will refer the matter to the Workforce Allegations Team.

Staffing matters are confidential and the academy operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection. We do not share information about any individual staff member with anyone other than any appropriate statutory agency.

12. Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

Our **Behaviour Policy** sets out our approach to behaviour for all children and also for those with more difficult or harmful behaviour. We recognise there are some children who have needs that 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

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 academy works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (see section 2) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

13. Whistleblowing

All members of staff and the wider academy community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the academy leadership team. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place and these are available in the Trust’s **Whistleblowing Policy**. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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

14. Review

All child protection and safeguarding concerns are reviewed regularly, to ensure that everything has been fully addressed, that actions are completed, and to consider whether the individual involved need any further support. We will continue to work with parents and carers and other agencies as appropriate, and risk assessments will be reviewed and updated as required

15. Document Version Control

Version	Date Issued	Author	Update Information
2025-1	September 2025	K Ellwood	First issue of the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. Policy combines the former child protection, safeguarding, self-harm, FGM and harmful sexual policies into one document. It takes the KSCIE 2025 and the Essex Child Protection model policy into account.

Concern for a child or young person and their family As concerns emerge

- ✓ In agency/organisation/education setting based meeting with the family

Consultation opportunities

- ✓ Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead
- ✓ TAFSO@essex.gov.uk
- ✓ [Early Help Drop-ins](#) – (link will take you to days, time and joining info)
- ✓ SET CAMHS Professional Consultation Line available Mon-Thurs 10am-midday. Tel: 0300 300 1996 - professionals only

*** Always record your concern and outcome of any consultation ***

Further resources

- ✓ Review your concerns against the [Indicators of need](#) (within the Effective Support document)
- ✓ Find a service in the [Essex Directory of Services](#) or [Frontline](#)
- ✓ SEND needs [Essex Local Offer](#) or SEND [Information, Advice & Support](#)
- ✓ [Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service](#)
- ✓ [Early Help plan template](#)

Safeguarding concerns for child, young person and

Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding Consultation with the Children & Families Hub 0345 603 7627.

Submission of a [Request for Support](#) to the Children & Families Hub or use the Priority Line for most urgent child protection concerns (call 0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line).

The Children and Families Hub triage the information shared and make a decision about level of need.

For those Requests for Support that do not require a Family Solutions or Children's Social Care intervention, the referrer will receive feedback explaining the rationale for the decision.

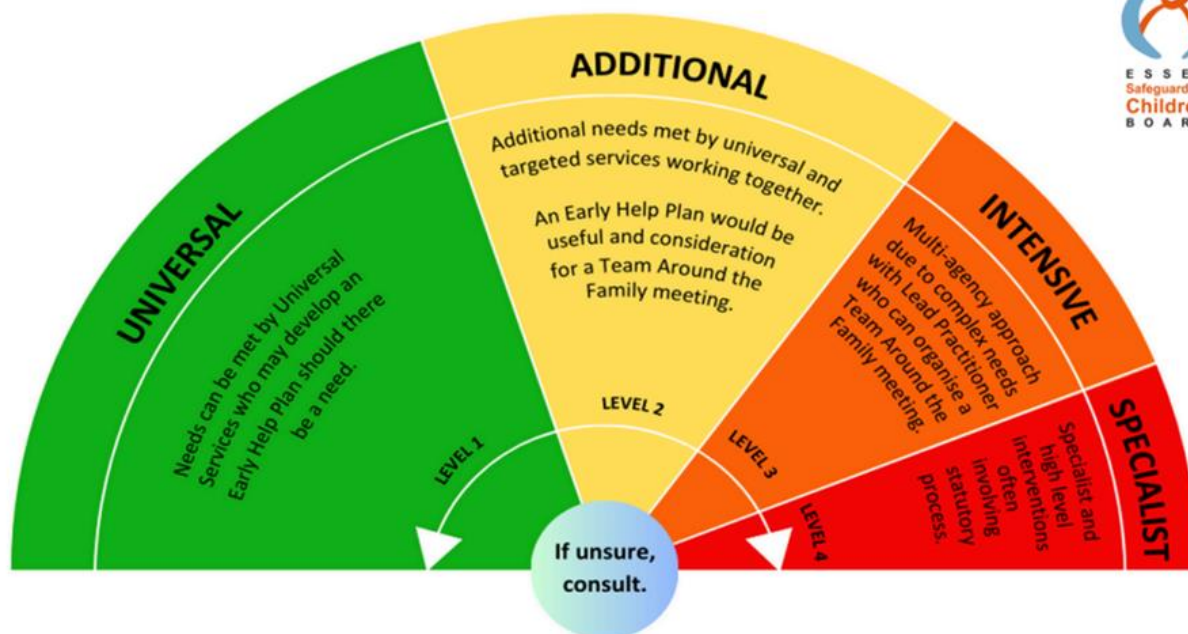
Early Help

Family Solutions

Children's Social Care

Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention

The Effective Support Windscreen



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

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

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

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

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol - Arrangements for children who **have missing episodes**

Definition of Missing

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

1. Introduction

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

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools and other educational settings, hereafter referred to as educational settings. Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational settings; when this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with the academy’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Lost Child and Missing Child Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures, [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)). Further resources can be found on

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

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

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

2. When a child goes missing

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

checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

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

3. When the child is found

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

4. Essex Police

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

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

5. Missing Chats

Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.

6. Useful contacts:

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk
Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk

Appendix D: Academy safeguarding arrangements and associated policies

Area	Description
1. Attendance Relevant Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Policy Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy Lost Child & Missing Child Policy 	<p>Excellent attendance is expected of all children, but when children are unwell parents / carers are expected to confirm absence by telephone. If there is no notification the academy has a policy of phoning home to ascertain each child's whereabouts (First Day Calling). The academy works closely with the Local Authority whenever a child's attendance and punctuality causes concern. Attendance rates are reported each term to the Local Authority, daily to the government and to all parents / carers. Positive measures are in place to encourage children to attend regularly and punctually, and the academy is aware of its right to take legal action against parents / carers who do not ensure good attendance and punctuality.</p>
2. Behaviour Relevant Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour Policy Physical Intervention Policy Managing Violence in Schools Policy 	<p>Good behaviour is essential in any community and at the academy we have high expectations for this. Although the emphasis is always on the positive there are also times when children have to be disciplined in order to maintain the safety and security of all children. There are numerous rewards available to children across the Trust, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House points Showing another teacher good work Certificates / stickers Headteacher's award certificates Postcards home Special privileges. <p>Whilst the sanctions range from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reminder, warning, last chance then 'Time Out' Referral to senior teacher Loss of playtime and/or lunchtime play A letter home Internal suspension External suspension Exclusion <p>Staff are discouraged from handling children, except when they deem it is safest to do so. Some members of staff assigned to specific children are trained in Positive Handling so that they do not harm either themselves or others.</p> <p>All behavioural incidents, including prejudice-related incidents are recorded centrally using CPOMS.</p>
3. Safeguarding Curriculum	<p>The academy plays a crucial role in preventative education, in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain.</p>

<p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Policy and subject handbooks such as RSE, PSHEE, Computing and PE • Educational Visits Policy • Sports Fixtures Policy • Visitors Management Policy 	<p>The academy teaches the children about safeguarding, including online safety and healthy relationships, and recognises that effective education is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse and child with special educational needs or disabilities.</p> <p>The safeguarding curriculum is considered as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, including covering relevant issues for academies through Relationships Education and Health Education.</p> <p>The curriculum will be used to build resilience, help pupils to keep themselves safe and to know how to ask for help if their safety is threatened. The curriculum, in subjects such as Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), covers relevant issues with the children, such as bullying / cyberbullying, drugs, sex and relationships, road safety and stranger danger. The curriculum is also designed so that safety issues within the subject are discussed and safe practices taught, such as using equipment properly in PE and Design and Technology, and online safety in Computing.</p> <p>Appropriate staffing levels will be maintained at all times, including when the curriculum is taken out of the academy. The lead adult on off-site activities always assesses visits as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Headteacher.</p> <p>External organisations and / or visitors speakers are always welcome into the academy to enrich our safeguarding curriculum. We ensure that we review the educational value and age appropriateness of what they will deliver.</p>
<p>4. Equality</p> <p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Policy • Policy on Equal Opportunities • SEND Policy • Administration of Medicines and Management of Children's Illness Policy 	<p>Characteristics such as age, disability, race, religion, maternity, gender, sexual orientation are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The academy aims to ensure that all children are able to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life and to prepare them for life in a diverse society. The academy will work hard to promote equality and harmony by preventing and challenging prejudice-related incidents, such as racism, homophobia, and by helping the children to respect and appreciate diversity.</p> <p>Equality is tackled across the curriculum, notably within the RE and PSHEE curricula. The children take part in discussions designed to raise awareness and address prejudices.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School. 	<p>Children with disabilities or chronic illnesses must be able to take a full and active part in lessons and every measure will be taken to ensure this.</p> <p>If anyone ever feels unjustly treated then the academy welcomes and values a response. All prejudice-related incidents are reported to the Local Authority and Governing Body.</p>
<p>5. First Aid</p> <p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Policy Administration of Medicines and Management of Children's Illnesses Policy Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy Intimate Care Policy 	<p>The academy has trained members of staff who volunteer to oversee first aid. There are a number of first aid stations situated around academy. When a child is poorly, or has suffered an accident in the academy or on the playground there is a protocol for staff to follow:</p> <p>A trained first aider is consulted The incident is recorded Accident form / book for minor incidents (Level 1) Accident and Investigation Form (Level 2) and / or RIDDOR (HSE) for serious incidents If there is any doubt at all a parent is contacted.</p> <p>Members of staff will only give medicines when the parent has completed and signed the appropriate form requesting that staff administer medicine; the decision to meet the request is at the discretion of the Headteacher. For the majority of medicines, however, a dose before and after attending the academy is perfectly adequate. Naturally the parents / carers should consult doctors before giving any form of medication.</p> <p>Care plans (such as EHCP, IHP), developed in partnership with parents and relevant healthcare professionals, will be in place to support those children with additional medical needs.</p> <p>For matters of an intimate nature staff are informed to deal with a child with utmost sensitivity and always to seek guidance from the Headteacher, SENDCo, or assistant headteachers. In almost all situations the parents / carers will be asked to come into the academy immediately so that they are part of the decision making process for such matters. In rare circumstances the school nurse will be contacted as a matter of utmost urgency before the parent.</p>
<p>6. Health and Safety</p> <p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Premises Policy Educational Visits Policy Sports Fixtures Policy 	<p>The Trust has a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, which is monitored regularly by the board of trustees to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The policy reflects the considerations the academy gives to the protection of our staff and pupils within the academy environment and when away from the academy on school trips and visits.</p>

	<p>The Headteacher, the health & safety coordinator, and governors oversee the policy. Any concerns from staff are reported to any of the above who carries out an initial examination, assessing what remedial action needs to take place. The academy has a critical incidents plan that details what staff, visitors and parents / carers should do in the case of emergencies. Emergency evacuation procedures for the academy are practised termly.</p>
<p>7. Photography</p> <p>Relevant Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography Policy • Data Protection Policy 	<p>There has been a lot of controversy about adults photographing and filming young people. The concerns are genuine; however we have taken a sensible, balanced approach, which allows authorised adults to photograph and film providing they follow certain guidelines:</p> <p>Parents consent to the academy taking and using photographs/videos by completing and submitting the digital or paper consent form. Academy photographs that are for use outside of school are anonymous unless specific permission has been received from parents.</p> <p>Parents may only take photographic or video images of pupils in academy-organised activities with the prior consent of the academy and then only in designated areas. Where consent is given, parents are requested not to publish the photographs or video images on social media.</p>
<p>8. Restrictive Physical Intervention</p> <p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Policy • Physical Intervention Policy • Behaviour Policy • Complaints Policy • Procedure for dealing with allegations against adults policy • Whistleblowing Policy 	<p>The academy follows DfE guidelines which asserts that restrictive physical intervention may be used if there is the possibility that a child may be about to cause harm to him/herself or to another. It also asserts that on no occasion should such physical contact be used as a punishment.</p> <p>All teachers, LSAs and MDAs have received training on behaviour management and de-escalation techniques. Key members of staff within the academy have also received training in the use of positive handling and/or restrictive physical intervention (such as 'PRICE').</p> <p>Behaviour management at the academy aims to de-escalate a situation before a crisis occurs and, where a crisis occurs, to adopt techniques to reduce the risk of harm. Restricted physical intervention is only used where an individual displays dangerous behaviour, either to themselves or others.</p> <p>All allegations of abuse by or complaints of a teacher will be dealt with following the Local Safeguarding Board procedures. For any complaints about the Headteacher or member of the central team, the CEO should be contacted directly or in their absence the chair of governors. Where the complaint is against the CEO, the chair of trustees should be contacted.</p>

<p>9. Safer recruitment and safe working practices</p> <p>Relevant policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Policy • Induction Policy • Early Careers Teachers statutory Induction Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Staff Acceptable Use of ICT Policy 	<p>The trustees, local governors and senior leadership teams are responsible for ensuring that the trust and academy follow safer recruitment processes in accordance with government requirements and ESCB procedures including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the Headteacher, trustees, local governors and other staff responsible for recruitment complete safer recruitment training as appropriate • Ensuring the upkeep of a Single Central Record of all staff and regular volunteers and third parties • Adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children • Ensuring the trust/academy follows its procedures regarding online checking of prospective shortlisted candidates for any role • Taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required • Ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised <p>All staff that are appointed to work in the academy have a criminal records search called a DBS check. This search highlights people who have a criminal record or if previous allegations have been made them. If staff are found to have a criminal record the appointment is reconsidered by the Headteacher and the local governing body.</p> <p>The Headteacher or delegated SLT sits on each appointment panel where the candidates are external applicants. The Headteacher, assistant/deputy headteacher, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO, Chief Operations Officer (COO), HR Officer have undertaken training on Safer Recruitment; at least one of these sits on the appointment panel.</p> <p>All staff are subject to the staff code of conduct which is highlighted annually in safeguarding briefings. In addition to the code of conduct, staff are also made aware of the Trust's child protection and safeguarding policy, staff Acceptable Use of ICT Policy, Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies, the Physical Intervention Policy, as well as updates on procedures for reporting concerns about pupils and staff and managing children who are lost or missing in education.</p> <p>New staff are inducted into safeguarding practices which covers all of the above are in detail. Newly appointed staff are assigned a mentor for the induction period. It is the responsibility of the mentors to familiarise new staff with procedures and policy, which affect the health and safety of all at the academy but especially the children.</p>
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<p>10. Site Security</p> <p>Relevant Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Policy • Premises Policy • Lost Child and Missing Child Procedure • Visitors Management Policy • Managing Violence in Schools 	<p>The academy provides a secure site, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people on the site have to adhere to the rules, which govern it. Laxity can cause potential problems to safeguard, therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates should be locked during the school day (including playtimes and lunchtimes). • All exit doors should be closed to prevent intrusion. • Visitors must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the electronic register (Inventry®). They should be given a visitors badge on entry to indicate they have done so. Unidentified visitors will be challenged by staff or reported to the Headteacher or academy office • Children will only be allowed home with adults with parental responsibility or confirmed permission. • Children should never be allowed to leave the academy alone during academy hours, and if collected by an adult, they should be signed out at the office. • Should a child leave the academy premises without permission then staff have been informed never to chase after a child, but rather to report immediately to the office. The parents / carers and police will be informed of the circumstances. Staff may continue to monitor the whereabouts and safety, where reasonably possible, from a safe distance. • Staff and visitors are expected to wear their identity or visitor badges at all times whilst they are on site.
<p>11. Volunteers</p> <p>Relevant policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Policy • Child Protection Policy • Volunteers Helpers Policy 	<p>For a brief activity, such as an academy visit, which does not involve the supervision or close contact of children the volunteers must complete a Self-Disclosure form. For extended contact with children, when children may be left alone with an adult, or when an adult visitor may be in and around the academy building a full DBS search will be conducted. The academy office performs this.</p> <p>Volunteers who do not yet have clearance will under no circumstance be left alone with a child or group of children.</p> <p>All volunteers are provided with information on the academy's safeguarding procedures to ensure they are aware of and follow our procedures.</p>
<p>12. Visitors</p> <p>Relevant policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Management Policy 	<p>Visitors to the academy sign in electronically and wear identification badges to indicate they have done so. Visitors are accompanied during their visit when children are present, unless they have undergone the relevant checks.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Contractors Policy • Volunteer Helpers Policy 	<p>It is assumed that visitors with a professional role i.e. the school nurse or members of the police already have relevant clearance, but the office will endeavour to check this before admittance is granted and a note made of anyone entering without clearance.</p> <p>Contractors who are engaged by or on behalf of the academy to undertake work on the site will be made aware of this policy and the reasons for this. Contractors who work regularly in the academy during term time will be asked to provide their consent for a DBS check to be undertaken.</p> <p>All visitors are provided with information on the academy's safeguarding procedures to ensure they are aware of and follow our procedures. They are made aware of who to speak to if they are worried about a child during their visit on entry via an information poster.</p>
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Appendix E: Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

1. Introduction

It is normal for some children and young people (CYP) to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop. However, sexualised behaviour between peers that has become harmful or abusive is unacceptable and must be addressed.

Our academy recognises that CYP are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers sexually. We consider any allegation of child on child sexual abuse seriously and do not tolerate or pass off harmful sexual behaviour as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. These allegations are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures, including seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

This policy is in line with the safeguarding requirements in [Keeping children safe in education](#), which we must work to; Part 5 of the Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance sets out how schools should manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment.

2. Definition of sexual abuse

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.
(Keeping children safe in education, DfE, 2025)

3. Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.

Our academy also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

CYP can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at the academy, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At the academy, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when CYP are travelling home.

4. How we seek to minimise the risk of harmful sexual behaviour

The principle aim of our approach is to foster the conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. We work to a culture in which the voice of our CYP is central, where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, and that they will not be judged.

4.1 Children and young people

The academy uses relationships, sex and health education (RSE and Health Education curriculum) to help our pupils understand, in an age-appropriate way, what harmful sexual behaviour is, including by peers. We teach them the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We also teach them about the importance of making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a CYP is abused, it is never their fault.

We help our pupils to develop the skills to understand:

- what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour;
- that such behaviour is not acceptable;
- the possible reasons for such behaviour, and vulnerability of perpetrators;
- that they must tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable – and must tell a trusted adult if they witness such behaviour towards others.

We understand our pupils may not always feel able to talk to adults about child-on-child sexual abuse. To help them, we will encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions, respond to their concerns, and respect and listen to them. We want our pupils to feel confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.

4.2 Parents and carers

It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour and reinforce key messages from school at home. We work in partnership with parents to support our pupils and want to help them keep their child/ren safe. Parents and carers should understand:

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour
- the effects of harmful sexual behaviour on CYP
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place
- what to do if it is suspected that child on child sexual abuse has occurred;

Further information to support parents and carers in relation to harmful sexual behaviour is available online, including on the [NSPCC](#) and [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#) websites.

4.3 Staff

Our staff undertake annual safeguarding training where the different types of abuse and neglect are discussed; this includes information about harmful sexual behaviour and our expectations for staff vigilance about this and other potential types of abuse. Staff also receive updates on safeguarding issues throughout the school year, including about the nature and prevalence of harmful sexual behaviour, where appropriate.

Importantly, the training also ensures that our staff know what to do if they receive a report that harmful sexual behaviour may have occurred, including how to support CYP.

5. Our response to an incident / allegation

The wellbeing of our pupils is always central to our response to an allegation or incident of harmful sexual behaviour. Any CYP reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; no CYP will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or made to feel ashamed.

Our staff will never promise confidentiality to the CYP as the concern will need to be shared further. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident and the details may also need to be shared with Children's Social Care / the police and other specialist agencies. We have in place effective working relationships with our safeguarding partners, which are essential to ensuring that concerns are appropriately managed.

We will explain next steps to the CYP so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed. Where the CYP already has Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child In Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

Whilst we establish the facts of the case and start the process of liaising with other agencies as appropriate, we will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises, and where applicable, on transport to and from the school.

Where an incident includes an online element, we will always work in accordance with appropriate guidance, taking advice from other partners as necessary. Our staff will not view an indecent image of a CYP unless absolutely necessary, nor forward it for any reason.

5.1 Recording

It is essential that information relating to allegations about harmful sexual behaviour are recorded within our school, as with any other child protection concern – and in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The record may form part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care or by another agency.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this, will record it as soon as possible in CPOMS, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. The facts will be recorded as the CYP presents them.

The record will then be presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

If a CYP is at immediate risk of harm, staff will speak with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy first, and deal with recording as soon as possible afterwards.

All related concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

5.2 Investigation

The designated safeguarding lead will be responsible for leading investigations, and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate, for example Children's Social Care and the police. They will also be the main point of contact for parents and carers. The designated lead will ensure there are accurate records of each stage of the investigation and that any supporting information is included in the child protection files.

5.3 Risk Assessment

We will complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour, considering all CYP involved in an incident. We will also consider all other pupils at our school and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Where appropriate, the affected CYP and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and review of the risk assessment.

6. Guiding principles

The safety of our pupils is paramount. We will use a proportionate approach, basing our actions on the principle that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns will be considered carefully and on a case by case basis, underpinned by robust risk assessments. Our actions will not be judgemental about the guilt of the alleged perpetrator and will always be taken in the interests of all CYP concerned.

Our approach will help us to ensure that all pupils are protected and supported appropriately. The following principles will guide us:

- the wishes of the CYP in terms of how they want to proceed – the victim will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered

- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed
- the ages and developmental stages of all CYP involved
- consideration of any power imbalance between the CYP – for example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident / does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty
- consideration of whether the alleged incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse
- consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other CYP, or staff
- consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

6.1 Supporting the CYP who has allegedly experienced harmful sexual behaviour

We will assess what short-term and long-term support a CYP may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident, and to recover from what they have experienced. The CYP's existing support network will be central to this work; we will work with other partners as appropriate and in accordance with the CYP's wishes and, wherever appropriate, in discussion with parents / carers.

We will consider what is necessary to support the CYP straightaway, for example by making adaptations to their timetable and in-academy support and taking steps to protect them from attention or peer pressure they may experience due to making a report. This work will be guided by a robust risk assessment process and we will ensure that the CYP and their parents / carers have an opportunity to contribute. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all involved.

It may be necessary to make requests for support to mental health and wellbeing services or for therapeutic intervention. We may also need to link with other agencies to remove inappropriate material from the Internet, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#).

6.2 Supporting the CYP who has allegedly displayed harmful sexual behaviour

We have a duty of care to all pupils and we will protect and support CYP who have displayed abusive or harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering the needs of the CYP, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family. This work will be guided by a robust risk assessment process and we will ensure that the CYP and their parents / carers have an opportunity to contribute. We will also ensure there is regular review of arrangements to be confident they meet the needs of all involved.

Some CYP may not realise they have behaved abusively. We will avoid using language that may make them feel judged or criminalised and ensure that any intervention will be at the least intrusive level required to effectively address the behaviour.

We will consider appropriate sanctions using our **behaviour policy**, and work with the CYP and their support network to consider measures that may help to address the CYP's behaviour.

7. Investigation outcomes

Our investigation of an allegation or incident as set out in this policy will enable us to determine the outcome, working with our safeguarding partners as appropriate. We will always seek to ensure that the outcome of an investigation is appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to the report. Various options are open to us, as set out below:

7.1 Manage internally

In some cases, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the CYP concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other academy policies in addressing matters, for example our behaviour / anti-bullying policies, which can be found on the academy website and the academy intranet (DB Primary).

We will also consider what support the CYP involved may need going forward - for example, pastoral support, counselling services, and ensuring that there is a trusted adult for those affected to speak with if they wish to. We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole setting approach or with the wider academy community.

7.2 Early Help

Where statutory intervention is not required or agreed, we may use early help instead. This means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a CYP's life. We will work with parents and carers and other relevant partners when following this approach, which can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation.

7.3 Requests for support to Children's Social Care

Where a CYP has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a request for support to Children's Social Care. We will generally inform parents and carers of this unless to do so may put a CYP at additional risk. We will seek advice from other partners on such matters.

If we make a request for support, Children's Social Care will consider whether the CYP involved are in need of protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as appropriate. Partnership working helps to ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other CYP that require support.

In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. If a statutory assessment is not considered appropriate by Children's Social Care, we will consider what other support may be required. We will make further requests for support to Children's Social Care if we consider that a CYP remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

7.4 Reporting to the police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, we will report it to the police. We will generally inform parents or carers about reports of sexual abuse, unless to do so may put a CYP at additional risk. We will seek advice from other partners in individual cases.

In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, we will ensure that we support the CYP in any decision we take. This is likely to be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where we have made a report to the police, we will consult with them and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the police and other agencies as appropriate to support all CYP involved (including potential witnesses). This will help to ensure that any actions we take do not jeopardise a police investigation. Sometimes the police will decide that further action is not required. In these circumstances we will continue to engage with other agencies to support the CYP involved.

Appendix F: Self-Harm Policy

1. Introduction

This policy describes the Trust's approach to self-harm. The policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching and those in position of governance.

2. Aim

The academy aims to ensure the positive mental health and well-being of all its children. In keeping with the academy's values, visions and aims this policy seeks to address the issue of self-harm and to provide guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors that enables them to recognise and act swiftly and appropriately to all cases of pupil self-harm.

3. Objectives

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors
- To recognise any form of self-harm or mutilation
- To understand that self-harming is almost always a symptom of some underlying emotional or psychological issue
- To put in place a framework for intervention
- To provide support to staff dealing with pupils who self-harm
- To provide support to pupils who self-harm and their peers and parents/carers
- To be alert to the possibility that self-harm may arise from a history of abuse

4. What is Self-Harm?

Self-harm is a coping mechanism whereby an individual harms their physical self to deal with emotional pain, or to break feelings of numbness by arousing sensation.

Self-harm is any deliberate behaviour where the intent is to cause harm to oneself and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. Self-harm can include:

- Cutting, scratching, biting or scraping themselves
- Picking skin or re-infecting old wounds
- Burning or scalding their body
- Banging and bruising themselves
- Scrubbing or scouring their body
- Deliberate bone-breaking
- Punching themselves
- Sticking things into their body
- Swallowing inappropriate objects or liquids
- Taking too many tablets (overdose) of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Under-medicating (e.g. Insulin)
- Pulling their hair or eye lashes out
- Self-asphyxiation

or they may behave in ways that suggest they do not care whether they live or whether they die.

Less obvious self-harm behaviours also include:

- Controlled eating patterns – anorexia, bulimia, over-eating
- Indulging in risky behaviour / risky sexual behaviour
- Destructive use of drugs or alcohol
- An unhealthy lifestyle
- Getting into fights

Other words that are used to describe self-harm are deliberate self-harm, self-inflicted harm, self-injury and deliberate self-injury. Young children often refer to self-harm as cutting, slashing or burning.

Self-harm is often habitual, chronic and repetitive. It tends to affect people for months and years.

5. Risk Factors

There is not one type of person who self-harms. Some groups are more vulnerable than others but each case is individual. The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm:

Individual factors

- Mental health problems such as depression and anxiety
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Stress
- Poor emotion regulation and/or ineffective emotional regulation coping strategies

Family Factors

- Unreasonable expectations
- Past or present neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Poor parental relationships and arguments
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family
- Times of change e.g. parental separation / divorce, illness / death of family member
- Marked family conflict such as periods in Local Authority Care, parental conflict, domestic violence and parental mental health

Social Factors

- Difficulty in making relationships / loneliness
- Being bullied (including cyberbullying and homophobic bullying) or rejected by peers
- Feeling pressure to conform
- Media influence

Other Factors

- Inappropriate advice or encouragement from internet websites or chat rooms
- Experimentation, 'dares' or bravado, 'copycat' behaviour

6. Possible Reasons / Motives Underlying Self-Harm

It is important to recognise that sometimes none of these risk factors may appear to be present. Some young people who harm themselves may appear well and from highly supportive backgrounds; they suffer internally and resort to harming themselves as a means of coping. Sometimes groups of young people influence each other by discussing self-harm – in a kind of contagion of self-harming behaviour. Each person is unique and will have found the practice of self-harm by their own route, and rely on it at times of stress due to the sense of release, control and relief it offers to them

An estimated 1 in 10 young people will self-harm at some point and it can occur at any age. The reality is that:

- Boys are affected by self-harm as well as girls but are less likely to tell anyone about it. It is more common in girls than boys
- It is not always easy for a young person to stop self-harming behaviour
- Young people from all walks of life can be affected by self-harm, regardless of their social or ethnic background.

Reasons for self-harming vary but may be:

- A way of dealing with intense and painful feelings and provide a sense of relief afterwards. The strong feeling of relief (and even power of overcoming pain) may be a powerful driver to repeat self-harming.
- A way to communicate their distress, especially for young people who lack other routes to express themselves and to have this distress understood, accepted and attended to.
- A way of extracting retaliation or punishment on those close to them, when they are left feeling hurt or unable to resolve negative feelings about others – especially if they feel that others are responsible for their distress. This process may operate unconsciously.
- A way to influence or control others and it may, on occasion, be used to elicit care, affection or confirm love from those close to them. Young people with limited resources for controlling their environment can use self-harm to influence the feelings and actions of others.

As with all behaviours, self-harm may be used to attract attention, but this is not usually the focus of chronic, repetitive injury. If self-harm is being used to gain attention, then one should look to find the reasons as to why someone is in such dire need of attention. It is important to remember that self-harm communicates something that a child or young

person is unable to say through usual means. Understanding this 'communication gone wrong' is likely to go some way in reducing or preventing recurrence

Is there a link between suicide and self-harm?

People often think that self-harm is closely linked to suicide; however the vast majority of people who self-harm are not trying to kill themselves – rather they have some hope that by communicating their distress something will be understood and someone will attend to them. It is a way of coping with strong and painful feelings and circumstances. However, it is not always clear from the severity of the self-harm what the intention of the young person is. Therefore, it is important to explore with them their intentions and what it is that cannot be tolerated with the support of more healthy coping skills.

7. Warning Signs

There may be no warning signs, and often people who self-harm go to great lengths to conceal their injuries, so it can be hard to know for sure if a person is self-harming.

However, if staff, parents / carers and fellow students become aware of warning signs that indicate a pupil is experiencing difficulties that may lead to self-harm or suicide then these warning signs should **always** be taken seriously. Anyone observing any of these should seek further advice from one of the designated persons for safeguarding children.

Possible warning signs may include:

- Visible signs of injury (e.g. scarring)
- A change in dress habit that may be intended to disguise injuries (e.g. an unexpected / sudden change to wearing long sleeved tops)
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits (e.g. pupil may appear overly tired if not sleeping well)
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood e.g. more aggressive or introverted than usual
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Changes in school attendance
- Changes in behaviour or attitude
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Expressing higher levels of distress
- Changes in clothing / image
- Bullying other pupils

Parents or staff may identify that a young person's internet activity is a concern (e.g. accessing self-harm websites or groups). Parents may be the first to pick up on warning signs and they should be encouraged to discuss these with the school.

Those who self-harm are usually suffering emotional or psychological distress and it is vital that all such distress is taken seriously to assist in alleviating that distress or to minimise the risk of increasing distress and potentially suicide.

8. Prevention

The risk of self-harm can be significantly reduced by the creation of a supportive environment in which individual's self-esteem is raised and healthy peer relationships are fostered. This can be achieved through development of good relationships by all members of the academy community and in particular through the PHSEE programme in which peer reporting is included.

Staff awareness of issues leading to self-harm is increased through training and the production of comprehensive policies on safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying and appropriate medical policies.

As well as the designated persons and a robust pastoral system within the academy, pupils have information about Childline.

The academy staff are supported by the senior management in all matters concerned with child protection. Staff are prepared to deal with 'contagion' if self-harming leads to 'copycat' behaviour within the academy. Senior staff have access to external agencies who can offer advice and / or assist with issues including students who self-harm.

9. Academy Procedures for Dealing with Self-Harm

The academy follows the Essex Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) approach to understanding behaviour and supporting well-being. This approach uses the values of compassion, kindness, hope, connection and belonging to support children and is embedded in our academy systems and practices.

Any incident of self-harming at the academy will be dealt with as a matter of urgency as a part of the academy's safeguarding procedures and in line with academy's safeguarding and child protection policies.

Any member of staff who is aware of a pupil engaging in or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm should immediately report their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and the appropriate steps will be taken to safeguard the child in question

Following the report, the designated person will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor, nurse, social services
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Immediately removing the pupil from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- In the case of an acutely distressed pupil, the immediate safety of the pupil is paramount and an adult should remain with the pupil at all times

- If a pupil has self-harmed in the academy a first aider should be called for immediate help
- Undertaking a risk assessment. All risk assessments will be undertaken by or alongside a member of the Safeguarding Team

The designated persons at the academy would work with the child, parents and carers as part of the safeguarding procedures

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Headteacher

Headteachers have a pivotal role to play in developing positive mental health strategies in schools. They recognise the need to develop a whole school awareness of mental health and emotional health issues, including self-harm, and be supported to do so.

The headteacher at the academy will:

- Appoint one or more designated staff to be responsible for self-harm issues. This could be the safeguarding lead and / or pastoral manager
- Ensure that all designated staff receives appropriate training about self-harm and are fully confident with the procedures to follow.
- Provide practical and emotional support for key staff dealing with self-harm.
- Ensure that all staff, including learning support assistants and non-teaching staff, are made aware of, and understand, the self-harm policy.
- Ensure that good procedures are in place for record keeping, audit and evaluation of all activities in relation to self-harm in the academy
- Ensure that the self-harm protocol is followed by all members of staff.
- Ensure that self-harm education / awareness is in the academy curriculum, e.g. academy assemblies and that such awareness does not promote or stigmatise self-harm
- Consider provisions for pupils who do self-harm, e.g. long sleeved uniforms and PE kits, time out cards from lessons when a student is experiencing distress.

10.3 All Staff

Pupils may choose to confide in a member of the academy staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. academy staff may experience a range of feelings in response to self-harm in a pupil such as anger, sadness, shock, disbelief, guilt, helplessness, disgust and rejection. However, in order to offer the best possible support to pupils it is important to maintain a supportive and open attitude – a pupil who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

- Review all self-harm guidance and duty of care documents and be aware of communication processes.
- Make it known to pupils that there are staff available to listen to them (and how they can be accessed).

- Listen to pupils who are experiencing emotional distress in a calm, respectful, sensitive and non-judgemental way.
- Avoid dismissing or belittling a pupil's reasons for distress.
- Encourage pupils to be open with you and reassure them that they can get the help they need if they are willing to talk.
- Endeavour to enable pupils to feel in control by asking what they would like to happen and what help they feel they need etc.
- Do not make promises you can't keep regarding such things as confidentiality. Pupils need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. Reassure the pupil that in order to receive help and to find more helpful ways to cope with problems others may need to know.
- Encourage all pupils to seek health and happiness in their lives every day.
- Discuss and promote healthy coping mechanisms and suggest ways in which pupils can be empowered to make positive changes in their lives. Guide the pupil towards wanting to make positive changes.
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.
- Provide accurate information about self-harming and awareness about associated mental health problems.
- Provide and encourage access to external help and support where possible.
- Monitor the reactions of other pupils who know about the self-harm, and refer on to appropriate staff.
- Avoid asking a pupil to show you their scar or describe their self-harm.
- Avoid asking a pupil to stop self-harming – you may be removing their only coping mechanism.
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first aid if the incident has occurred in the academy.
- Report the self-harm incident to the designated staff member as soon as you become aware of the problem and inform the pupil that you are doing this.

10.4 Designated Staff Member

- Ensure the implementation of the self-harm policy, communicate with each other and report back to the safeguarding lead and/or headteacher at each stage.
- Maintain accurate up to date records of pupils experiencing self-harm, incidents of self-harm and all other concerns surrounding the issue.
- Communicate with the safeguarding lead and/or headteacher and other key staff on a regular basis and keep them informed of all incidents and developments.
- Monitor the help, support and progress of the pupils in your care e.g. school work, general presentation, following the incident and maintain communication with them.
- Liaise with the pupil, teacher or headteacher to decide if any other members of staff who have contact with the pupil should be made aware of the self-harm and underlying concerns.
- Ensure that all first aiders are well informed about self-harm.
- Be aware when it is essential to liaise or share information with other professional bodies such as social services, educational psychologists, GP, Primary Mental health Teams etc.).
- Liaise with local services about help available for young people who self-harm.

- Keep up-to-date information about self-harm, e.g. info leaflets from Young Minds. Ensure you are fully confident in your understanding of self-harm and seek additional information and/or training if you feel it is necessary.
- Report any mention of suicidal feelings or behaviour as a matter of urgency.
- Contact the parents at the appropriate time and liaise with them how best to manage the situation. Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent about the appropriate help and support that is available for their child.
- Take care of your own emotional well-being and seek support as and when necessary.

10.5 Pupils

- When under emotional distress or feeling the urge to self-harm at the academy, talk to a teacher or staff member as soon as possible.
- Never encourage anyone to try self-harm themselves.
- Be aware that the teachers and designated staff are there to help. The more you can talk to them the better able they will be to give the support and help you need.
- Endeavour to seek fun and laughter every day.
- Speak to a teacher for support and guidance if you are worried that a friend or fellow pupil may be in trouble, upset or showing signs of self-harming.
- Recognise that self-harm can be dangerous and that there are times when confidentiality must be broken. By seeking help and advice for a friend they are taking responsible action and being a good friend.

10.6 Parents

- Understand and support your academy's self-harm policy.
- Educate yourself regarding self-harm and discuss the subject with your child.
- If your child is self-harming, work closely with the academy and take an active role in deciding the best course of action for your child.
- Seek professional help offered by the academy and outside agencies.
- Keep the academy informed of any incidents outside of academy that you feel they should know about.
- Take care of yourself and seek any emotional support you may need in dealing with your child's self-harm.

Parents should not feel isolated if they know or suspect that their child (or one of their child's friends) is at risk or is actually self-harming. If a parent has any concerns they should contact the academy immediately for help, support and advice.

11. Recording of Self-Harm Incidents

Any meeting with a pupil, their parents or their peers regarding self-harm should be recorded in the online reporting system, CPOMS (or if unavailable in writing) and should include

- Dates and times
- An action plan
- Concerns raised
- Details of anyone else who has been informed

This information should be stored with the pupil's child protection file.
All incidents of self-harm or concerns raised will be recorded, audited, monitored and evaluated by the Safeguarding Team

12. Useful Resources and Helplines

- **Childline:** 24-hour helpline for children / young people, free confidential advice on a range of problems: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
- **LifeSIGNS (Self Injury Guidance and Network Support):** An online, user-lead voluntary organisation to raise awareness about self-injury and provide information and support to people of all ages affected by self-injury. <https://www.lifesigns.org.uk/>
- **National Self-harm Network:** UK charity offering support, advice and advocacy services for individuals who self-harm, friends and family. 0800 622 6000 www.nshn.co.uk
- **YoungMinds:** A national charity committed to improving the mental health of children and young people. Interactive website for advice and information. 0800 802 5544 www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Samaritans:** A charity offering support and advice for individuals. Their confidential helpline is available 24 hours per day, every day of the year. Free UK helpline number is 116 123 www.samaritans.org
- **NYAS Young People's Safety Net:** A UK charity offering advice, advocacy and legal representation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. 0808 808 1001 (Freephone) www.nyas.net
- **Charlie Waller Trust:** A mental health charity providing training, [resources](#) and consultancy, with a focus on children and young people, for parents and carers, schools and work places. (0) 1635 869754 www.charliewaller.org.

Appendix G: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy

1. Introduction

This policy describes the Trust's approach to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching and those in position of governance.

2. Rationale:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under the academy's **Child Protection and Safeguarding policy**.

The academy recognises that whilst there is not necessarily an intent to harm a girl / young woman through FGM, the practice has serious and long term medical and psychological implications and as an academy we need to work with partner agencies to promote understanding and safeguard pupils who may be at risk of this practice. For further information, see [Multi-agency statutory guidance \(updated July 2020\)](#).

The academy recognises that the practice of FGM in the UK is a criminal offence. The academy aims to work sensitively with community groups where this may be a cultural belief and seek to educate and inform. However, we believe that our first priority is acting in the interest of the rights of the girl / young woman, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

3. Implementing FGM Duty

The academy will ensure all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers have access to safeguarding training to ensure all have an understanding and capability to deal with the risks identified. This will include:

- An understanding of what FGM means
- An understanding of FGM types, including short and long term health effects
- An understanding of FGM risk factors
- An understanding of possible indicators that a child may be vulnerable or has been subject to FGM
- An understanding of FGM legislation
- How to challenge FGM ideology
- How to obtain support from the senior leadership team, the police, local authorities and multi-agency partnerships
- How to share information to ensure a person at risk of FGM obtains appropriate support
- How and when to make a direct FGM referral to the police
- How to record and maintain records to comply with the academy's responsibilities

4. What is FGM?

FGM is a form of child abuse that can lead to extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls.

The academy uses the World Health Organisation definition as written below.

“Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons.”

(World Health Organisation-1997)

The average age for FGM is between 4 – 14 years of age but can happen prior or after that depending on the type of ritual and customs of the local village or region.

FGM is predominantly practised in the African continent, Yemen and Iraq however, following migration, is also practiced amongst immigrant communities in Europe, North & South America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. UK communities that are most at risk of GFM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM include: Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women. FGM is not an Islamic practice. It is a cross-cultural and cross-religious ritual.

The World Health organisation has classified four main types of FGM:

1. 'Clitoridectomy which is the partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals) and, rarely, the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris) as well;
2. Excision which is the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are "the lips" that surround the vagina);
3. Infibulation which is the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, and sometimes outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris;
4. Other types which are all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area' (WHO FGM Fact Sheet, 2008).

Types 1 and 2 are thought to generally account for 80 -85% of all FGM.

5. FGM – Possible Indicators of risk

As with all other aspects of safeguarding possible indicators of risk may form part of a collective picture of concern. There should be a culture of vigilance amongst staff rather than an assumption that the child is not at risk due to ethnicity or age.

Possible risk indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM include:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM and / or information is shared of intention to travel their country of origin.
- In conversation a child may talk about FGM.
- A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony or traditional custom.
- The child may talk or have anxieties about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin.

- Parent/Guardian requests permission for authorised absence for overseas travel or you are aware that absence is required for vaccinations.
- A parent seeks to withdraw their child from learning about FGM in school
- If a woman has already undergone FGM – and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any Child Protection implications e.g. for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to Social Care or the Police if appropriate.

The academy has a robust attendance policy that does not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise. Staff have been made aware that female pupils are at particular risk of FGM during the school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure.

Staff have also been made aware of other times of potential vulnerability; extensions to school holiday times, children missing from education or where a child suddenly leaves the school with no follow-on arrangements offered. We understand that many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM and that we need to be vigilante to indicators of risk.

Staff have been advised of the need to challenge requests from families for extensions to holiday times and to report:

- a. Talk of ceremonies to celebrate the young person becoming a woman
- b. Changes in patterns of behaviour if a child is taken out of the country
- c. Undisclosed health issues where the child is experiencing discomfort in sitting, going to the toilet etc.

6. Health Consequences of FGM

Immediate health consequences of FGM can include

- Fatality as a result of shock, haemorrhage or septicaemia
- Infections
- Transmission of the HIV virus
- Extreme levels of pain, fear, anxiety and discomfort.

Long term physiological, sexual and psychological effects may include:

- Kidney and or recurrent urinary retention / infection
- Genital malformation, cysts, keyloid scar formation
- Delayed menarche (first menstrual cycle)
- Chronic pelvic complications
- Sexual frigidity, pain during sex, lack of pleasurable sensation
- Obstetric complications
- Mental health difficulties, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

7. FGM Legislation

- International legal frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination contain general safeguarding measures, which may be applied to FGM.

- **The Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act (1985):** it is a criminal offense in the UK to:
 - Incise, infibulate or mutilate of the whole or any part of the labia majora, labia minora or clitoris of a person or
 - To aid, abet, counsel or procure another person to carry out this procedure unless deemed a necessary surgical procedure carried out by a registered medical practitioner or midwife.
- **The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003:** this replaced the 1985 Act. Applying to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the 2003 act extends offenses to also include:
 - assisting a girl to carry out FGM on herself
 - extra-territorial offences to deter people from taking girls abroad for mutilation.

The Act makes it illegal to practice FGM in the UK and makes it illegal to take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in that country. The Act makes it illegal to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad and has a penalty of up to 14 years in prison and/or a fine.
- **The Serious Crime Act 2015:** This amended the 2003 Act so that the extra-territorial jurisdiction extends to prohibited acts done outside the UK by a UK national or a person who is resident in the UK. This means that offences of FGM committed abroad by or against those who are at the time habitually resident in the UK irrespective of whether they are subject to immigration restrictions.
- **Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPO):** These were introduced in the 2015 Act to protect a girl against the commission of a genital mutilation offence or protect a girl against whom such an offence has been committed. The FGMPO contains prohibitions, restrictions or other requirements to protect a victim or potential victim of FGM.
- **Other public protection orders:** The following protection orders may also be used to protect girls under 18 years old deemed to be at risk:
 - Police Protection Order
 - Emergency Protection Order
 - Inherent Jurisdiction

8. FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty

From October 2015 education, social care and health professionals in England and Wales have a mandatory duty to report to the police if they know a girl aged under 18 years of age has undergone FGM. The duty requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report. Unlike other safeguarding or child welfare concerns the reporting responsibility cannot be transferred e.g. to a designated named person for safeguarding. The only exception to this is when the professional is aware another individual from their profession has already made a report. In this case there is no requirement to make a second report to the police however concerns will be recorded in line with our safeguarding protocol.

Mandatory direct reporting to the police is required if the professional has:

- Visually confirmed FGM has taken place and there is no reason to believe the act was carried out in relation to physical or mental health purposes or connected to labour or birth;

Or

- Directly experienced a verbal disclosure that FGM has been carried out.

It's important to note that professionals are not required to report directly to the Police in relation to at risk or suspected cases or where the woman is over 18. In these cases our usual safeguarding procedures and reporting protocols will be followed (see Section 8.5 below). However, as with all aspects of Child Protection, where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, the case will be reported immediately to police.

8.1 FGM- Visually Identified Cases

The reporting duty for visually identified cases only applies to cases discovered in the usual course of a professional's work. Where genital examinations are not undertaken in the course of delivering a role, the duty does not change this. In most instances, professionals will visually identify FGM as a secondary result of undertaking another action.

There are no circumstances in which staff should examine a girl. It is possible however that a teacher may see something which appears to show that FGM may have taken place e.g. changing a nappy, assisting toileting, SEN intimate care needs. In such circumstances, the teacher must make a report under the duty but should not conduct any further examination of the child.

8.2 FGM – Verbal Disclosure

As with all safeguarding disclosures, it is not the duty of staff to interrogate or investigate whether FGM has been carried out. Staff should be aware that the girl may use alternative words or references rather than the specific term Female Genital Mutilation or FGM e.g. cut, cutting. To help enable the girl to share information staff should:

- Find a quiet place to talk
- If asked not to tell anyone explain your safeguarding duty
- Maintain a calm appearance and open posture
- Allow time – let the girl talk freely without leading the conversation
- Listen carefully and accurately
- Wherever possible use the girl's description to clarify any disclosure e.g. 'you said "special ceremony"- what did you mean?
- Reassure telling was the right thing to do.

The professional's responsibility to report to the police only applies when the victim makes a direct verbal disclosure. If another person makes an indirect disclosure about a girl the mandatory duty to report to the police does not apply. Such disclosures will be handled in line with our usual processes for safeguarding concerns.

8.3 FGM – Making a Report to the Police

Reports under the mandatory duty will be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, best practice being by the close of the next working day. The legislation requires the professional to report to the police force area within which the girl resides. Reports will usually be made orally by calling the single non-emergency number 101, although written reports are also permitted. The professional will be required to share the following information:

- An explanation of why they are making a report under FGM duty
- Their details- name, place of work, role, contact details and availability
- Contact details of the Headteacher
- The girl's details- name, age, date of birth and address.

The police will issue a reference number which will be recorded in the Safeguarding records. The record will include details of the discussion and any decisions made.

8.4 FGM – Action Following a Report to the Police

In line with safeguarding best practice the girl's parents or carers will be informed that a report has been made to the police **unless this action is deemed to put the girl or anyone else at risk**. This will be discussed with the academy's safeguarding lead. All further action taken will be in line with our general safeguarding responsibilities, which may involve participating in a multi-agency response.

8.5 FGM – Reporting concerns

The academy's usual safeguarding procedures and reporting protocols will be followed when a member of staff has concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM or suspected to have undergone FGM. In these cases the academy will refer to the ESCB guidelines for dealing with FGM and the SET procedures.

The designated child protection officer will refer all concerns re possible or actual FGM to social care via the Family Operations Hub. In the event of information coming to the attention of the designated officer that there is an immediate threat to the child or it is believed there is a flight risk or criminal offence has taken place, the designated officer will refer immediately and directly to the police. If the child has already been taken abroad the designated officer will contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (020 7008 1500)

8.6 FGM – Failure to Comply with the Duty

Staff are aware of their responsibility to escalate any concerns, where they believe a child may be at risk of FGM to the designated lead. Staff are also aware they can refer the matter directly to the police if they believe a criminal act has been committed and a child has been subject to FGM.

Failure to comply with mandatory FGM reporting to the police is dealt with by performance measures in place for each profession and through staff disciplinary procedures.

8.7 Practical tips

These questions and advice are guidance and each case should be dealt with sensitively and considered individually and independently. Using this guidance is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

What can I ask?

- Talk to children about their holiday
- Sensitively and informally ask the family about their planned extended holiday.

Ask questions like

- Where are they going?
- Who is going on the holiday with the child?
- How long they plan to go for?
- Is there a special celebration planned?
- Are they aware that the school cannot keep their child on roll if they are away for a long period?
- Are the family aware that FGM including Sunna is illegal in the UK even if performed abroad?

If there is a concern that a child may be vulnerable to FGM this needs to be reported using the academy's child protection procedures and / or the information passed to the Police.

If you suspect that a child is a victim of FGM you may ask the child

- Your family is originally from a country where girls or women are circumcised – Do you think you have gone through this?
- Has anything been done to you down there or on your bottom?
- Do you want to talk to someone who will understand you better? Would you like support in contacting other agencies for support, help or advice?

Further information on the FGM mandatory reporting duty can be found in the government guidance [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information](#) (2015)

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 The Headteacher will:

- Implement the Trust's FGM policy with the support of the senior leadership team and local governing body
- Ensure there is a collective responsibility for safeguarding and that all staff and volunteers are aware of the FGM policy and related policies, protocols and procedures
- Ensure staff members with named responsibility for child protection have a clear understanding of the academy's policy and receive training in order to support staff and volunteers
- Promote FGM Duty when overseeing the development of the curriculum and other aspects of school life
- Inform the chair of governors and designated safeguarding governor of all FGM Duty concerns/referrals.

9.2 All Staff

- Will be made aware of and have access to the FGM policy, protocols and procedures
- Will attend safeguarding and FGM training, which will include guidance on implementing FGM reporting duties
- Will strive to safeguard pupils in all aspects of the FGM agenda
- Have a responsibility to monitor and, where necessary, guide the practice of volunteers, visitors or contractors working in the academy. Any concerns will be reported to the Headteacher or assistant headteachers.

10. Communicating the academy's FGM Policy

In order to meet statutory requirements the academy will:

- Publish the FGM policy on the Trust and academy website
- Place an electronic copy of the FGM policy in the staff areas on the VLE platform
- Raise FGM Duty awareness through staff meetings and other communications
- Ensure support is offered to parents / guardians where English is a second language to help them understand the content of academy's policy
- Keep an open dialogue on the topic of FGM (ensuring this is done in an age-appropriate way) with pupils and parents from practising communities who may be at risk

The academy believes every pupil should be able to participate in all academy activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at the academy.

This policy has been developed using the following documentation:

- [Essex Safeguarding Children Board \(ESCB\) FGM guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), (DFE)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children, DFE \(2015\)](#) (updated 2022)
- [Serious Crime Act](#) (2015)
- [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information, Home Office](#) (Home Office, Gov.UK, updated 2020)
- [Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation , Home Office](#) (HM Government, 2015, updated 2020)
- [Early Years Inspection Handbook](#), Ofsted (2023)
- [Inspecting schools: Guide for maintained and academy schools](#) (Gov.UK, 2019, updated 2023)
- [Inspecting Safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings, Ofsted](#) (2022)

12. Further Resources

- [National FGM Centre](#)
- [FGM: Resource Pack](#) (Gov.UK)
- [FGM: Essex Police](#)

- [Serious Crime Act \(FGM\) Factsheet](#)
- [FGM risk and safeguarding](#) (Gov.uk, 2016)
- [SET Child Protection Procedure Guidelines](#) (2025)
- [FGM Mandatory Reporting Poster \(NHS\)](#)

For staff use only

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