

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Clarity Independent School

Bridge Barn Farm  
Woodhill Road  
Sandon  
CM2 7SG

**Clarity Independent School is committed to safeguarding...**

*"Our school is committed to our whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies...We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and care-givers to keep children safe."*

Clarity Safeguarding Policy September 2023

<b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL):</b>	<b>Sharyn Ailara, Deputy Headteacher</b>
<b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD(DDSL):</b>	<b>Debbie Hanson, Headteacher, Richard Clow, SENCO</b>
<b>Whistle Blowing:</b>	<b>Debbie Hanson Headteacher</b>

**Written by Debbie Hanson**  
Head Teacher and Proprietor

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**Name: Sharyn Ailara**

## Important contacts

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<b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DDSL):</b>	Debbie Hanson, Headteacher, Richard Clow, SENCO
<b>Whistle Blowing:</b>	Debbie Hanson Headteacher

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## 1. Introduction

Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners 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, 2023)*

This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, Specialists and agencies working within the school, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
- the Behaviour policy;
- the Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

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

Our school has a whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents/carers, the Specialists working with us, and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe. We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and care-givers to keep children safe.

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding

- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

## 2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#).

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. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by the 3 local safeguarding partners for each of the local authorities within which our pupils reside (currently, Essex County Council, Southend County Council and Havering County council).

The arrangements for our school, being based in Essex, 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.

### **This policy is also based on the following legislation:**

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#) (May 2022). Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#) (2021)
- [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 advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [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)
- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\) – last updated March 2023](#)
- [Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2018\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - from September 2023](#)
  
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - good practice for schools \(ECC, 2023\)](#)
- Behaviour in schools (DfE 2022)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

### 3. Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

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

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

## 4. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs

- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and specialists working with, and in, the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
  - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

There are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on page 2 of this document.

### **The Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Safeguarding and child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The Headteacher ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (they are named on the front cover).

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

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

The DSL and DDSL ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make 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 school leadership team are responsible for:

- 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 school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information)
- ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised in school

## **The Headteacher**

The Teachers' Standards 2011 (updated 2021) 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 is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
  - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
  - Are made aware that the school may carry out online checks as part of the due diligence process during the recruitment process for short-listed candidates; and also for existing staff whilst in post.





- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 3)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)**

The designated safeguarding lead in school 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 and raising awareness of all safeguarding (including online safety) 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 DSL also ensures that there are systems in place (which are monitored and reviewed annually) to ensure that filtering and monitoring of internet use across the school effectively safeguards pupils and staff, and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in this (*see our E-safety and Internet Use policy July 2023*).

The deputy designated safeguarding lead is 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 will act in their absence.

## **All school staff**

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our children can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues 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 school processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and report their

concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

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

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse / victims of abuse that they are taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are causing a problem.

## **6. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues**

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 describes abuse as ‘a form of maltreatment of a child’. It sets out that:

*“Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.”*

The guidance refers to four main 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 to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development

In addition, Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains important information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues:

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

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

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

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

*“Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. 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.”*

*“Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology”.*

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

## **Child on child abuse**

We recognise that our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered, harm and trauma. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. Any incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and 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 school understands that even though child on child abuse / harmful sexual abuse may not be reported, it is likely that it is occurring and we are clear there is a zero tolerance approach to inappropriate or abusive behaviour. We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate harmful behaviour of any kind in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur – we do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated.

We use lessons, 1:1 mentoring and focused group discussions to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so.

### **Procedures for Prevention of and response to Child-on-Child abuse:**

Any member of staff who suspects that a pupil is at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of Child-on-child abuse must report their concerns immediately to the Designated/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead using the usual systems in place for reporting all safeguarding concerns (**RED FLAG Notification of Concern form – Appendix D**).

The Designated/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess and action the response to the reported concern in accordance with the SET procedures and guidance.

*For further information, please refer to:*

- *the School's Behaviour policy and Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *the school's E-safety and acceptable use of ICT policy*
- <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

### **Children missing from education**

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and we follow the 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, so we work with parents/carers and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM



- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

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.

### **Contextual safeguarding**

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

### **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 school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse (either by witnessing or experiencing it) can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn. 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.

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This is the procedure where police forces are part of [Operation Encompass](#).

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

## Harmful sexual behaviour

We understand that children's sexual behaviours exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate / developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that harmful sexual behaviour and child on child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, either in person or online. We recognise that children who display harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and we will support them accordingly.

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

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

## Our procedures in response to reports of Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and harassment, including that which happens online:

- Clarity Independent School will ensure there is a robust response to all incidents and will follow the procedures set out in this policy and the government guidance.
- Reported incidents (involving adults or pupils within the school) **must** be immediately reported to the designated safeguarding lead, who will also carry out a risk assessment to look at any continued risk to the victim or other pupils and staff from the alleged perpetrator within the school environment.
- Where the allegation involves material posted online, the school will request that the electronic device is handed over and passed to the DSL/DDSL who will follow the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance'. **Staff will not, however, search through electronic devices or view the alleged material, this will be a matter for the appropriate authorities (Police, Social Care).**

Please refer to the latest guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

- If a student makes a disclosure of online harassment and has images of a sexual nature, **staff should not view, download or forward the images; this is illegal**. If the images have been

viewed by accident, then this should be immediately reported to the DSL. Children **must not** be asked to delete the images.

- Where possible, the incident should be managed with two members of staff present, one of must be the DSL or DDSL.
- The member of staff and designated safeguarding lead will record details of how the disclosure was reported and by whom, details of the content (only if already disclosed by the person reporting – **the content must not be viewed or investigated further**) and how the school will respond to the incident.
- Decisions on responses will be based on the harmful sexual behaviour risk assessment and thresholds set out in the ESBC Harmful sexual behaviour protocol (SET procedures p419-496 for assessing risk and p465 for Thresholds for making referrals). The designated safeguarding lead may take advice from the Essex Children and Families hub before making a decision. Possible outcomes include referral to Early Help Services, Children and Families Hub or the police, or managing the matter internally under school behaviour policies.
- Where a referral will be made to the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB), for the area in which the child resides, or the police under the protocol, the designated safeguarding lead will discuss the issue with the relevant agency and following this discussion a decision will be made on whether and how to inform the alleged perpetrator and their parents.
- Clarity Independent School will take any necessary action to continue to safeguard the victim and other pupils within the school environment based on the level of risk established from the risk assessment, including decisions about the victim and alleged perpetrator sharing classrooms. These decisions will be reviewed in the light of on-going police and LSCB investigations to take account of any changes in the status of investigations and any bail conditions placed on the alleged perpetrator.
- Where necessary and appropriate, the school will consider the support needs of the alleged perpetrator and will make referrals to relevant agencies for support on their behalf under the Harmful sexual behaviour protocol.

Clarity Independent School recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils, including that which happens online, is a serious safeguarding issue and such behaviour will not be tolerated. Clarity Independent School Behaviour management and Anti-bullying policies will reflect our holistic approach to behaviour and safety, and staff and pupils will be made aware of the standard of expected behaviour and the likely responses to any incidents of sexual violence and harassment. This is particularly important to ensure the safety of our pupils in the community. Clarity Independent School will follow the statutory guidance on Sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils and will work with the relevant agencies to safeguard and support victims, take appropriate action against alleged perpetrators and ensure a safe learning environment for all pupils.

Clarity Independent School will also follow the statutory guidance on harmful online challenges and online hoaxes and will work with the relevant agencies to safeguard and support victims, take





appropriate action against alleged perpetrators and ensure a safe learning environment for all pupils.

For more information use the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes>

Clarity Independent School has taken all necessary steps to put in place planned PHSE and RSE curriculums to convey the school policy for preventing harmful sexual behaviour and to promote respectful behaviour between pupils with regards to sexual conduct. This includes pupils learning to manage and regulate sexual feelings and behaviour, including those with significant learning difficulties who do not fully understand the risks to themselves or others.

Clarity Independent School will promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents. Any reports of sexual violence or harassment will be taken seriously and appropriate referrals made to the police and LSCB. This is a very important part of how we safeguard and manage risk in the community.

Clarity Independent School will ensure that staff receive relevant training to help them ensure an effective response to incidents that protects individual victims and safeguards the welfare of all pupils and staff.

Clarity Independent School will ensure staff are able to provide appropriate support to victims and alleged perpetrators that meets their needs and continues to promote their education.

For further information, please refer to:

- The School's behaviour policy
- The RSE policy

## **Mental health**

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

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 wellbeing of our pupils. We expect parents/carers, if they have any concerns about the wellbeing of their child, to share this with us, so we can ensure that appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

### **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 peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- **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 school 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 all 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.

*For further information, please refer to the school's policies below:*

- *Behaviour policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *E-safety and acceptable use of ICT policy*

### **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. It requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion

- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

### Definitions:

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces
- **Terrorism** is an action that:
  - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
  - Causes serious damage to property; or
  - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

### Channel:

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 school is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

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

### 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.

### 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 FGM where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school operates in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. **As of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, it is also now illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.**

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer (LADO)
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk)
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

## **7. Children potentially at risk of greater harm**

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

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

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

## **8. Procedures**

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

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, 2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- '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 school must refer any 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 [Essex Effective Support](#). The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal

investigation. 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 press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

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

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school 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.

## **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of the Head Teacher and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are logged in and out of the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists, specialists and external support agencies, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views of any kind, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## **9. 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 and all staff members receive appropriate child protection training and online safety training 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 school receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors.

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

## **10. 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 school is signed up to the Wider Eastern Information Stakeholder Forum (WEISF), which enables us to share and receive information 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.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) 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.

## **11. Child protection records**

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

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse will record it electronically on the school's **CPOMs** system, as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. A **RED FLAG Notification of Concern form** is then presented **by hand** to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records relating to child protection are kept electronically on CPOMS 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 school / educational setting.

In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new setting via CPOMS (if the receiving school also uses CPOMS) or other secure electronic transfer system. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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



## **12. Interagency working**

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

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

## **13. Allegations about members of the workforce**

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct (in our staff handbook). Our school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

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

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported directly to the duty Essex Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **03330 139 797**.

The SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Headteacher, senior named person or the Chair of Governors must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.



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

## **14. 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 the situation or physically intervene where necessary. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. ‘Reasonable’ means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

## **15. Whistleblowing**

All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the Head Teacher. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where

they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

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

## **Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, 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 they 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 – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

The Headteacher will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO), including if there is any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher.

The Headteacher will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation, the case will be referred directly to our local authority designated officer (LADO) who will act as 'Case manager'. The Deputy Head Teacher can support staff to make a referral to the LADO but cannot be the 'Case manager' unless directed to do so by the LADO.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement. If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

## **Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold**

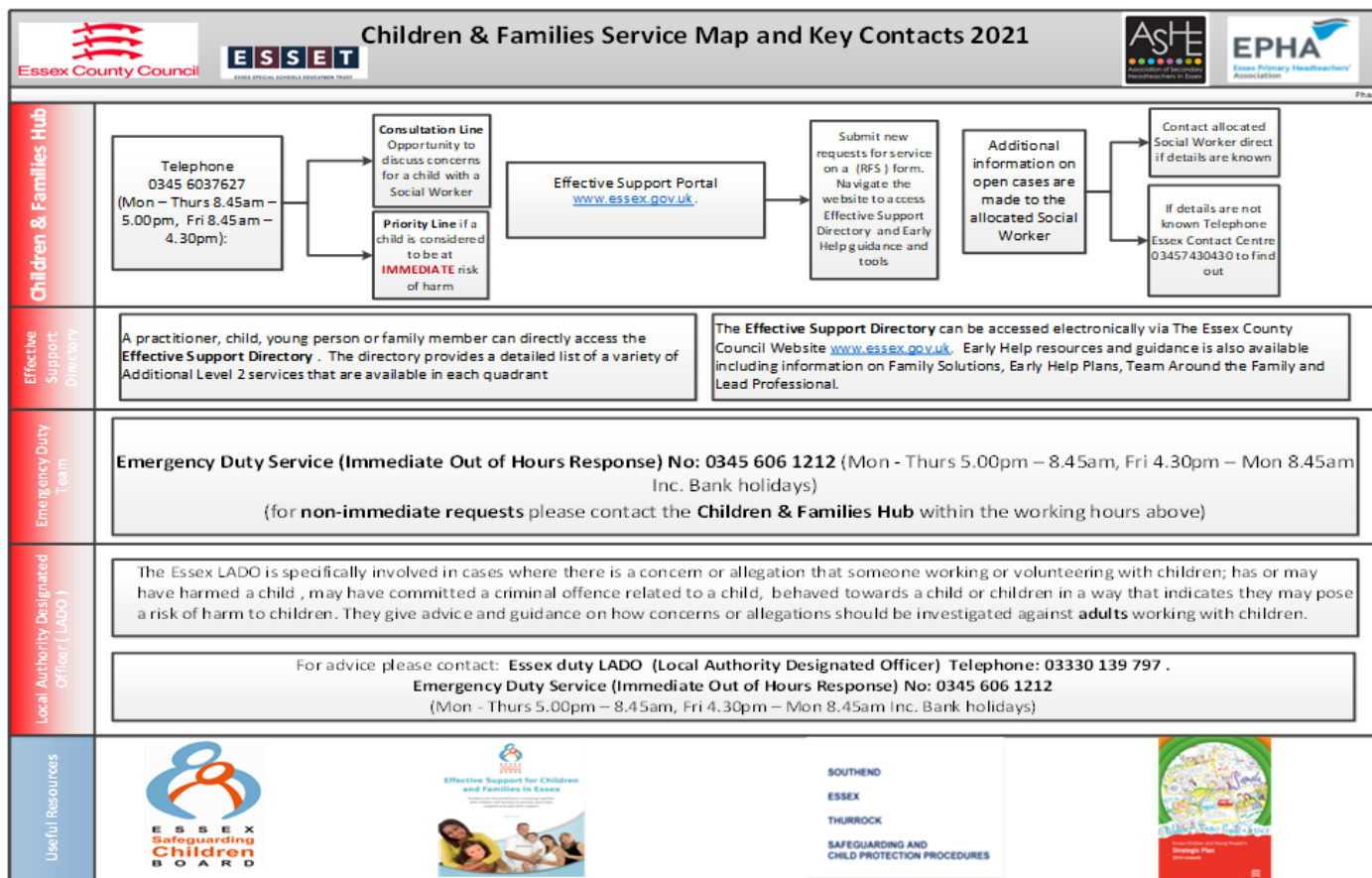
For low-level concerns about practice that does not adhere to our policies (below the "Harms Threshold"), the Head Teacher will act as "case manager" and conduct a review. Following the outcome of the review, the Head Teacher will deliver a teaching conversation and ensure that appropriate training is put in place for the member of staff. Any repeat of the practice or further



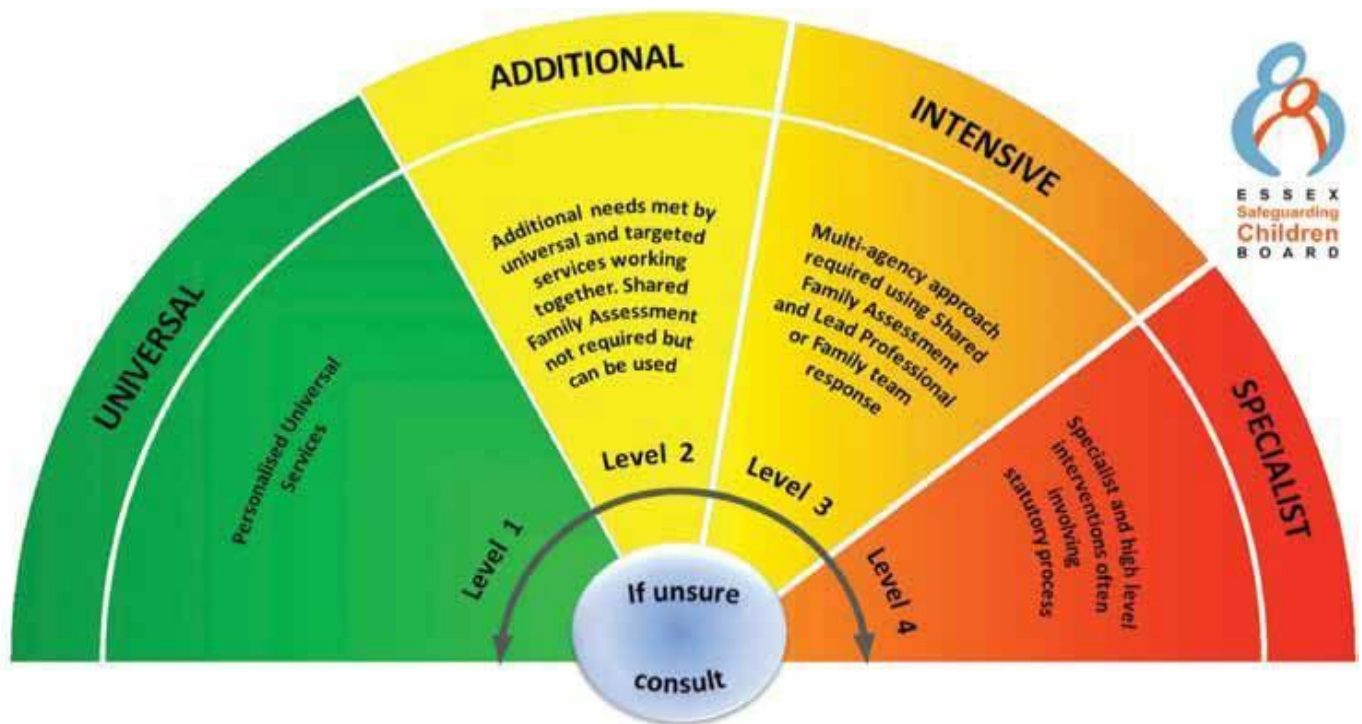
safeguarding concerns will be referred to the LADO. All allegations and responses will be logged by the Head Teacher.

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

## Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



## Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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

## Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

### Arrangements for children who are absent from education

#### Definition of Absent from Education

A child may be considered 'absent from education' if they are persistently absent; not regularly attending school or engaging with alternative provision but the parent has remained in communication with the school. There may be many reasons for this and for some children these reasons were exacerbated by the prolonged pandemic. The school, however, must exercise a safeguarding duty of care response to all pupils with a prolonged period of absence or frequently repeated periods of absence (Persistent Absence). In such cases we work closely with the child and their family to develop an "Attendance support plan" to help them to return to, and consistently attend education. Following the implementation and review of the support plan, if attendance does not improve, the school may make a referral to the Children and Families Hub to request additional support for the family.

*Please see our Attendance Policy for further information.*

#### 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where children 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.

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

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

## 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.



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

**Useful contacts:**

Shane Thomson, ECC Missing Co-ordinator: [shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk](mailto:shane.thomson@essex.gov.uk)

Lucy Stovell, ECC Missing Chats: [lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.stovell@essex.gov.uk)



## Clarity procedures for Prevention of and response to CME:

1. Unplanned Absence: Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). The school will phone parents / carers at 9.30am on a daily basis when the reason for the absence is unknown.
2. The school will follow up any absences (initially at 9.30am on the first day of absence, then at regular intervals until contact can be made as per our Attendance Policy) to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Parents are requested to use the Reporting Absence Form (see Appendix 2) to report absence when the child returns to school.
3. Where there has been no notification from parents or response to School's contact attempts after 2 days, the Designated/ or Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead will attempt to contact other emergency contacts for the pupil as per our Attendance Policy.
4. If no response is received from any pupil emergency contacts after 2 days, the Designated/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead will visit the home address, leaving a letter requesting contact if no answer.
5. If after all attempts fail to get a response, the Designated/ or Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead will make a referral to the Essex Children and Families hub, [Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police.
6. Our school **must** inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

\*NB: Please note that for children identified as 'vulnerable', the procedures may be escalated at an earlier stage under the advice of the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding lead.

Appendix D:



**RED FLAG Notification of Concern**  
(PRINT FROM SAFEGUARDING POLICY)

Name of referrer: .....

Signed:.....

Date reported: ...../...../.....

Time reported: .....

Reported to: .....

Received by DSL/DDSL: ...../...../..... at .....

**Actions required:**

- 1. Indicate below if there is an immediate risk of harm – *Does the child have an injury? Has the child disclosed actual or risk of harm/abuse (consider PENS)?* – If “**yes**” - tick the box; if “**no**” – go to no.2.

**URGENT action required by the DSL/DDSL - please hand to 1.DSL 2. DDSL or 3. Office Staff immediately.**

- 2. Ensure the concern has been recorded on **CPOMs** and that **DSL and both DDSLs** have been “**Alerted**”. This will enable them to view the concern promptly without a need for searching.
- 3. **Deliver** this **RED FLAG by hand** to DSL or DDSL **ASAP**. If they are each in a meeting, please hand to Office Staff (Admin) and they will ensure it is passed on ASAP.

Version [3]

## Appendix E: Safeguarding information for visitors to school, summary



VERSION [5.5]

Welcome to Clarity Independent School

As a visitor to our school it is important that you are aware of our safeguarding procedures – please ask a member of staff if you are unsure of anything in this leaflet

***Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2023)***

- All visitors should be prepared to provide formal identification and, where required, evidence of their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (this may be a letter from an employer to confirm the appropriate DBS check has been obtained)
- All visitors must wear the lanyard provided upon signing in – this must be worn and kept visible at all times while on site
- Where visitors have parked on school site, they must ensure their registration details are provided when they sign in
- All visitors must sign out and hand in the lanyard provided when leaving the school site
- 

We take safeguarding very seriously in our school. Everyone in school has a role to play in keeping children safe, although there certain key people with particular responsibilities:

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Debbie Hanson
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Mrs Sharyn Ailara
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Mrs Debbie Hanson, Mr Richard Clow

### What is Abuse?

Abuse is maltreatment of a child. This may be neglect, any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment that leads to harm or injury, or failure to protect a child from harm. It can happen to any child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability and may be inflicted on the child by an adult / adults or another child or children.

### What to do if you are worried about a pupil:

You may observe something or become aware of information about a pupil which concerns you while you are in school. If you do, it is important that you share your concerns with the Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. The school office will make arrangements for you to speak to them if you cannot locate them.

### What to do if a pupil makes a disclosure:

- React calmly, listen without displaying shock, disbelief or making judgements
- Do not promise confidentiality – explain that you must share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Do not interrogate the pupil, ask leading questions or criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Make accurate notes (record the date, time, place, your observations and exactly what the pupil has said) on a pink 'Red Flag' safeguarding template form, located in the staffroom or main office. Please ask a staff member if you have trouble locating them, as it is essential you record your concerns as soon as you have discovered them, the same day, and do not leave it.



- Report your concerns immediately to the Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Follow the school Child Protection Policy and procedures at all times

#### **What to do if you have concerns about a member of staff**

If you are concerned about the conduct of a member of staff following something you have observed or a disclosure, you must report this to the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in absence of the Headteacher). If your concern is about the Headteacher, you must report this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 03330 139 797.

#### **What to do to keep yourself safe**

- Always speak to pupils calmly and respectfully
- Avoid physical contact with pupils unless you are preventing them from harming themselves or others
- Avoid being alone with any pupil – you should not do so unless there is a specific reason to do so and other staff are aware.
- Always tell someone if a pupil touches you or speaks to you inappropriately (record the incident, including the time and date, and give this to the Headteacher / Designated Lead)
- Never exchange personal contact details with a pupil or arrange to meet them outside of the school environment
- Never have contact with a pupil on social media
- Never use a personal mobile phone or camera around pupils
- Never discuss confidential information outside of school or on-line

#### **Fire and emergency evacuation**

If the alarm sounds (one continuous loud alarm), exit by the nearest fire exit and make your way to the assembly point in the car park. **This is demonstrated on a map on the back of each internal door – please use this to familiarise yourself with the route you would take in case an emergency happens.** Please wait there until you are given permission to re-enter the building. If you discover a fire, please activate the alarm and inform a member of staff if possible. Please alert the Office team upon entry, if you feel you may need assistance to exit the premises in an emergency, whilst visiting the school.

#### **First Aid**

Many of our staff members are trained in First Aid. If you need assistance, please inform a member of staff. Staff with Emergency First Aid at Work certificates on the First Aid room door are qualified to complete first aid with adults. Visitors should not treat pupils unless permission has been given by the Headteacher. In an emergency do not hesitate to call 999 for an ambulance.

#### **Accidents and Incidents**

Please report any accident or near miss to the school office.

#### **Use of school internet**

All users of the school systems and Wi-Fi must comply with the E-safety policy. Please ask at the school office for details. Please note our internet is filtered in line with the new KCSIE 2023 requirements and your use of Clarity's internet will be monitored accordingly.