



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

September 2026

R A Butler Academy School

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS September 2026

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED September 2027

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- Version 2 (07.09.26) updated the August version with the changes from the KCSIE published 1 September – amendments are in **YELLOW**
- Version 3 (15.09.26) updated with the newly published Information Sharing Duty – amendments are in **PINK**

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Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

R A Butler Academy School

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and through our school newsletter.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction alongside our Staff Code of Conduct. In addition, all staff are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2026).

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in September 2026. It is due for review in September 2027.

Governors reviewed this policy against the Essex Model Child Protection Policy (Sept 2026). Amendments were approved to align the school's policy with KCSIE 2026, Working Together to safeguard Children 2026 and Essex safeguarding procedures, including updates to Generative AI, online safety, Risk in the Community, harmful sexual behaviour, attendance and missing education, mobile phones, restrictive interventions and revised statutory references.

Signature

Headteacher

Date:

Signature

Chair of Governors

Date:

1. Introduction

1.1 R A Butler Academy fully recognises the responsibility it has, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

1.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. "Children" includes anyone under the age of 18. This responsibility is more fully explained in the statutory guidance for schools 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026). All staff must be made aware of their duties and responsibilities under Part One of this document, which are set out below.

1.3 Staff should read the above document together with 'Annex B' of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2026 and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners' (March 2015) if they are working directly with children. For those staff who do not work directly with children or where English is a second language, Annex A can be issued instead, but this is a matter for the school to decide.

1.4 Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, all staff in school have a responsibility to:

- Identify concerns early to prevent them from escalating;
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn;
- Identify children who may benefit from early help;
- Know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, neglected or exploited;
- Follow the referral process if they have a concern.

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

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

1.6 This policy sets out how the school's Governing Body discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Our policy applies to **all** staff, paid and unpaid, working in the school, including governors. Teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, office staff, as well as teachers, can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents/carers may also contact the school and its governors. Our policy forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

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

1.7 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, governors

and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe. We will always listen to and advocate for children and ensure that our work reflects the voice of the child. Keeping safe is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all systems, processes and policies across the school.

2. Statutory framework

2.1 There is government guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under 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 five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

2.2 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 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.

2.3 In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures. <https://setscp.trixonline.co.uk/> Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Generative AI: product safety expectations](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Mobile phones in schools](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) (DfE, 2025)
 - [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools](#) (DfE, 2025)
 - [Behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, 2024)
 - [Information Sharing Duty](#) (DfE, 2026)
 - [Teaching online safety in schools](#) (DfE, 2023)
 - [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools](#) (DfE, 2023)
 - [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (DfE, 2017)
 - [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
 - [Early help and effective support](#) (Essex Safeguarding Children Board, 2026)
 - [Education Access Team - Children Missing Education / Home Education policy and practice](#) (Essex County Council, 2025)
 - Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
 - Crime and Policing Act 2026
 - Victims and Prisoners Act 2024
 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021
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- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 All adults working with, or on behalf of, children have a responsibility to protect them, **promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture** and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. **In line with statutory requirements, they also have a duty to work with other appropriate agencies and to share relevant information where it will promote the welfare of and safeguard a child.** However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding leads) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone, no matter what their role is, has a part to play.

The Governing Body

The governing body has strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding in our school. It ensures that our safeguarding arrangements comply with all legal duties and that our policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and that it is reviewed at least annually.

3.4 The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school.

3.5 The Governing Body will:

- appoint a senior member of staff, from the leadership team, to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, DDSL), the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and cannot be delegated. They will ensure that the role of DSL and DDSL is explicit in the role holder's job description.
 - ensure that the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. Give the DSL the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters (see 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025, Annex C). Ensure that the DSL and deputies have
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undertaken appropriate training and that this training is updated **at least every two years**. In addition to the formal training set out above, the DSL and DDSLs must refresh their knowledge and skills e.g. via updates, meetings or additional training **at least annually**.

- ensure that every member of staff, paid and unpaid, and the Governing Body, knows who the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies are and the procedures for passing on concerns from the **point of induction**.
 - ensure that the DSL or DDSL are always available (during school hours, during term-time) to discuss any safeguarding concerns and that all staff are clear upon the course of action they must take if in exceptional circumstances the DSL and DDSL are not available. So not to delay appropriate action being taken, contingency/cover arrangements will always be emailed to staff.
 - ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective and meet national standards.
 - ensure every member of staff and every governor knows:
 - the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputies and their role;
 - how to identify the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation; understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online.
 - that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and / or they may not recognise their experience as harmful;
 - how to pass on and record concerns about a pupil/student;
 - that they have an individual responsibility to be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and exploitation; and for referring safeguarding concerns to the DSL/DDSL;
 - what is meant by, and the importance of showing, professional curiosity;
 - that they have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn;
 - where to find the Multi-Agency Procedures on the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board website;
 - their role in the early help process / targeted support;
 - the process for making referrals to children's social care;
 - the safeguarding response to children who go absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods.
 - The role of filtering and monitoring and the process for reporting issues
 - Ensure all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, at induction. The training should be **regularly updated**, as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
 - ensure that **all** staff, recognise their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies, including low level concerns and allegations against staff.
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- ensure that parents are informed of the responsibility placed on the school and staff in relation to child protection by making this policy available publicly either via the school website or by the school office.
- where pupils are educated off-site, or in alternative provision, the school and the provider will have clear procedures about managing safeguarding concerns between the two agencies. Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

The Headteacher

3.6 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)

3.7 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, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards) ensuring all staff are appropriately trained 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 timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

3.8 The deputy designated safeguarding leads 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 leads will act in their absence.

3.9 The DSL will help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and school leadership staff.

All school staff

3.10 Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our children can learn. We recognise the need to identify concerns as they emerge so we can stop them from escalating and all staff are therefore aware of how to identify children who may benefit from early help. They are particularly alert to children who may have additional need for support either in community-based early help or through access to other agencies.

All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Our staff are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and they understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home or our setting and

also online. Our staff recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination and the effect these experiences may have on them.

Our staff members are aware of and follow school safeguarding processes (as set out in this policy) and also know how to make a referral to Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) – we do not assume that others have taken action.

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

Our staff will always reassure children who report 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. Prevention

4.1 At R A Butler Academy, we recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children.

4.2 We will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, including in a digital context, and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
 - ensure children know that there are trusted adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.
 - tailor our curriculum to be age and stage of development appropriate so that it meets the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.
 - incorporate into the curriculum, activities and opportunities that enable children to develop their understanding of stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
 - ensure that all school staff challenge instances of prejudice related behaviour, including but not limited to, instances of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. Any prejudice related incidents will be responded to in accordance with ECC 'Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents'.
 - incorporate into the curriculum, activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safer from abuse and exploitation in all contexts, including:
 - How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
 - How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
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- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, children and adults.
- That some people behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful context and contact and how to report them.
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.
- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling uncomfortable around any adult or other children.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

4.3 At R A Butler Academy, we use the Cambridgeshire PSHE scheme which covers the above list in their Healthy and Safer Lifestyles Unit. This Unit reinforces these essential skills for every child: self-esteem and confidence building, thinking independently and making assessments of risk based on their own judgements.

We use the Personal Safety Units from the Cambridgeshire PSHE Service Personal Development Programme. These units support children to recognise if they are feeling safe or unsafe in their relationships with family, friends and online. This includes considering the importance of permission seeking and giving in relationships, and the sort of boundaries which are appropriate both on and offline. Children are encouraged to consider the qualities they would look for in a trusted adult, how to judge whether a secret feels safe or unsafe and how to seek support if they are asked to keep an unsafe secret. Children learn that each person's body belongs to them, the correct language for body parts, including genitals, how to identify unsafe or inappropriate physical contact. With the older children, they learn about what sorts of behaviours constitute abuse and neglect (PS5-6). All children have opportunities to practice seeking help or advice from others, including from their Networks of Support, and develop their problem-solving strategies, which can be applied in a range of contexts.

4.4 Generative Artificial Intelligence: The school recognises emerging safeguarding risks associated with generative artificial intelligence (AI). AI technologies have the potential to create or distribute harmful, misleading or inappropriate content, including manipulated images, misinformation, disinformation, online grooming content and abusive material. Staff will remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns involving AI-generated content and will respond in accordance with child protection procedures.

5. Supporting Children

5.1 At R A Butler Academy, we recognise that **any** child may be subject to abuse and 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 and as such will support all children by:

- Providing curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- Creating an ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community.
- Applying the school's behaviour policy effectively. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaising with the senior mental health lead where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health in school for advice on case management.
- Liaising with other agencies which support the pupil, such as: Social Care, EWMHS, Essex Healthy Family and Wellbeing Service or Early Help Teams.
- Promoting supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- Recognising that whilst **any** child may benefit from early help, staff are encouraged to consider the wider environmental factors present in a child's life which could pose a threat to their welfare or safety, (contextual safeguarding).

5.2 Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse, or are victims of abuse, that they will be 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.

5.3 All staff in our school are aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and so we are able to identify and refer children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety, and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in some cases, incidents may fall into more than one category.

5.4 In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately absent from education and consensual/non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk.

6. Children potentially at risk of greater harm

6.1 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, children with medical needs, children with significant health conditions, children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, children questioning gender identity 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.

6.2 Staff are required to be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for children in particular circumstances.

Please see pages 11-12 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026 for the complete list. The list includes:

- **Children with Disabilities, Certain Health Conditions, Additional Needs or Special Educational Needs**

6.3 We recognise that, statistically, children with additional needs, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse, and will not make assumptions that indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.

6.4 Our school has pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or challenging behaviours. We will support staff to decide appropriate strategies that will reduce anxiety for the individual child and raise self-esteem as part of an overall behaviour support plan agreed with parents/carers.

6.5 As part of the PSHE curriculum, staff will teach children personal safety skills suitable to their age, ability and needs. Children will be taught personal safety skills such as: how to recognise if they are feeling unsafe including within family relationships and friendships; how to ask for help; the difference between safe and unsafe secrets; the difference between safe and unsafe physical contact; and how to recognise and manage risk including online. The content of lessons will be shared with parents/carers so that these skills can be supported at home.

6.6 Our school has pupils who may have communication difficulties, and we are aware that these pupils are vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. As a result, such children will often exhibit changes in behaviours or signs, and indicators of abuse recognised by staff with a good knowledge of the child will be identified as we are aware that these children are disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

6.7 Where necessary, the school will provide additional training to staff in the use of Makaton, PECS or other communication systems. Supervision by senior managers will be vigilant to create a protective ethos around the child. Under the Equality Act, there is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children.

6.8 We promote high standards of practice, including ensuring that disabled children know how to raise concerns, and have access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.

- **Young Carers**

6.9 At R A Butler Academy we recognise that children who are living in a home environment which requires them to act as a young carer for a family member or a friend who is ill, disabled, or misuses drugs or alcohol can increase their vulnerability and that they may need additional support and protection.

6.10 We seek to identify young carers; offer additional support internally; signpost to external agencies; be particularly vigilant to the welfare of young carers, and follow the procedures outlined

in this policy, referring to Early Help or Social Care as required if concerns arise. We have a Young Carers group that meets weekly.

Risk in the Community (RIC)

Risk in the community 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 in the community, outside a child's home or our school. All staff are aware of 'contextual safeguarding' and we are therefore mindful of things in a child's life which may be a threat to their safety and / or welfare. We 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 and to help keep our children safe. These risks include criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, serious violence and online exploitation.

- Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation

6.11 Criminal exploitation of children is a form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. Drug networks or gangs exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas. Exploitation can occur even if activity appears to be consensual.

6.12 All staff will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. These are referred to as Extra-Familial Harms/Contextual Safeguarding and/or Risks Outside the Home. School will address indicators of child criminal exploitation with staff through training. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of criminal exploitation arise.

6.13 Our school recognises that young people who are absent can be at increased risk of child criminal exploitation, modern slavery and/or trafficking and has procedures in place to ensure an appropriate response to children and young people who are absent, particularly on repeat occasions.

- Children who are absent from education

6.14 Our school recognises that children who have unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, can act as a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, modern slavery, mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, and risk of FGM or forced marriage.

6.15 The school monitors and follows up on the attendance of individual pupils closely, and analyses patterns of absence to aid early identification of concerning patterns of absence.

6.16 Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Education Access Team, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to our school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

6.17 When a child is missing from education, our school will follow the procedure as set out in Appendix E and we will inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

- Children Misusing Drugs or Alcohol

6.19 The discovery that a child or young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not always sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings. However, the school will follow their safeguarding procedures and consider taking such action in the following situations:

6.20 When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- To believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse;
- To believe the pupil's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults;
- Where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse;
- Where the misuse indicates an urgent health or safeguarding concern;
- Where the child is perceived to be at risk of harm through any substance associated criminality.

- Children at Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

6.21 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where 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.

6.22 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. Appendix E.

6.23 CSE can be a one-off occurrence, or a series of incidents over time, and may range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

6.24 Potential indicators of sexual exploitation will be addressed within staff training, including raising awareness with staff that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of abuse, and may not recognise it as abuse. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of child sexual exploitation arise.

6.25 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer to Social Care if there is a concern that a young person may be at risk of CSE.

- Children Living with Substance Misusing Parents/Carers

6.26 Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with Significant Harm to children, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

6.27 When the school receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures.

6.28 This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children;
- Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g. customers or dealers of drugs;
- The effects of alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour;
- Chaotic drug and alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance;
- Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency;
- Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment;
- Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.

- **Children Living with Domestic Abuse**

6.29 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 applies to those aged 16 or over and introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

6.30 All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

6.31 Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are 'personally connected' regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour.

6.32 Our school recognises that where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, and the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships. Domestic Abuse can also affect children in their personal relationships, as well as in the context of home life.

6.34 Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of Domestic Abuse arise. The school will vigilantly monitor the welfare of children living in Domestic Abuse households, will offer support to them, and contribute to any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safety plan as required.

6.35 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.

6.36 On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child may require. This information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

Children at risk of 'Honour-Based' Abuse (HBA) including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

6.37 Honour-Based Abuse can be defined as:

'An incident or pattern of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion, control or abuse (including but not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, economic, spiritual, faith-related or emotional abuse) motivated by the perpetrator's perception that an individual has shamed, or may shame, the perpetrator, the family, or community or has otherwise broken, or may break, the perceived norms of the community's accepted behaviours, including by speaking out about the abuse and where the perception of shame may also prevent a victim from accessing support or help.'

Our school takes these concerns seriously and staff are made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of HBA through training. Staff are required to treat all forms of HBA as abuse and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

6.38 The new Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2023 bans marriage for 16 and 17-year-olds, who no longer will be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent, as the legal age of marriage rises to 18. It is now illegal and a criminal offence to exploit vulnerable children by arranging for them to marry, under any circumstances whether or not force is used. School will manage any concerns relating to forced marriage sensitively and will report concerns immediately via the procedures outlined in this policy.

6.39 FGM is a procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK. Any indication that a child is at risk of FGM, where FGM is suspected, or where the woman is under 18, will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy. Staff will report concerns to the DSL, who will make appropriate and timely referrals to social care. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice and the case will still be referred to social care even if it is against the pupil's wishes.

6.40 In accordance with the Female Genital Mutilation Act, it is a statutory duty for teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s, which they identify in the course of their professional work, to the police. Teachers should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve social care as appropriate, but the teacher will personally report to the police that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.

- Children who have returned home to their family from care

6.41 Our school recognises that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable. We will vigilantly monitor the welfare of previously looked after children, keep records and notify Social Care as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

- Privately Fostered Children

6.42 Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16, (under 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them, or relative in their own home for 28 days or more.

6.43 Our school will follow the mandatory duty to inform the local authority of any 'Private Fostering' arrangements.

- Children who have Family Members in Prison

6.44 Our school is committed to supporting children and young people who have a parent or close relative in prison, and will work with the family to find the best ways of supporting the child.

6.45 Our school recognises that children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including: poverty, stigma, isolation, poor mental health, and poor attendance.

6.46 Our school will treat information shared by the family in confidence and it will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

6.47 Our school will work with the family, specialist organisations and the child to minimise the risk of the child not achieving their full potential.

- Protected Characteristics

6.48 At R A Butler Academy, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to flourish in an inclusive environment. We take a proactive approach to advancing equality and inclusion for all our children, staff and stakeholders, regardless of age, disability, race/ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, religion or belief/non-belief, sex or sexual orientation.

6.49 We believe it is important that all children gain an understanding of the world they are growing up in, and learn how to live alongside, and show respect for, a diverse range of people.

6.50 No form of discrimination is tolerated and our pupils are taught to show respect for those who share the protected characteristics.

6.51 The curriculum is planned and delivered so that children develop age-appropriate knowledge and understanding during their time at the school. For example, different types of family groups that exist within society are celebrated through books.

6.52 We are proactive but also reactive and will make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage, for example by taking positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a group because of a protected characteristic.

6.53 We make relationships education and accessible for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

6.54 We ensure that the materials used to support teaching are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils and sensitive to their needs.

6.55 We ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect, especially through our work as a Rights Respecting School.

6.56 We ensure that teaching is sensitive and age-appropriate in approach and content.

6.57 We work closely with parents in all cases when planning and delivering the subjects, ensuring that parents know what will be taught and when, and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that the child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

6.58 We put the aims of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of everything we do.

6.59 Children learn about the articles in the UNCRC, which are regularly the focus of our Friendship Days. These articles include: the right to a good education, to develop our talents, to have a voice, to have friends, feel safe and to play. In our classes, we have created class charters to remind us how we can respect everyone's rights and work together towards common goals.

6.60 At R A Butler Academy we have a parents and carers **REACH** (Race Equality and Cultural Heritage) group which meets each half term so that we can draw on people's experiences and knowledge. Our aim of the group is to celebrate diversity within our community and support our children to be their true authentic selves.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education 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... Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse."

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, causing or inciting 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 (neglect may also occur during pregnancy)
-

In addition, Annex A 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:

7. Other safeguarding issues

Prevention of radicalisation

7.1 From 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.

7.2 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

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

7.4 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.

7.5 Children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools’ safeguarding approach.

7.6 The governing body will ensure that the DSL has undertaken Prevent Lead training (which is updated every two years) and that all staff receive training about the Prevent Duty.

7.7 Staff are required to be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate they need help or protection. Concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation are referred to the DSL in the usual way. The school’s designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

7.8 See also ‘The Prevent Duty, Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers’, DfE (June 2015), and ‘Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales,’ HM Government, (March 2024)).

Mental health

7.9 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.

7.10 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.

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

Online safety

7.12 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 content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, misandry, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- ☐ **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; 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:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying including those generated using AI and 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.

Children must be safeguarded from inappropriate and potentially harmful content online. We have systems in school 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.

Serious violence

7.14 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.

8. Child-on-Child abuse and dealing with Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children

8.1 Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.

8.2 Our school recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in, or outside, of school. Any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

8.3 We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); and discriminatory behaviour (including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents). abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; up-skirting, as part of the Voyeurism (Offences) Act, April 2019); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour.

8.4 We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We will challenge inappropriate behaviours when they occur and we do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated. These behaviours should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

8.5 Our school recognises that, even though child-on-child abuse/harmful sexual abuse may not be reported, it is likely that it is occurring, and we are clear there is a zero tolerance to inappropriate or

abusive behaviour. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will seek to understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

8.6 All forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We will therefore:

- Create a whole school protective ethos in which child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Provide training for staff about recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse, including raising awareness of the gendered nature of child abuse, with girls more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators.
- Ensure that staff do not dismiss instances of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment as an inevitable part of growing up or 'banter'.
- Include information and materials within the curriculum that support children in keeping themselves safe from abuse, including abuse from their peers and online, by using lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is. We will encourage children to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Provide high quality Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and/or enrichment programmes including teaching about consent.
- Ensure that staff members follow the procedures outlined in this policy when they become aware of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQA+ children are at greater risk. We will ensure that these children have a trusted adult in school to talk to.
- Recognise the risk of intra familial harms and provide support to siblings following incidents when necessary.
- Never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so.

The school recognises that children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum ranging from age-appropriate behaviour to harmful sexual behaviour. Incidents will be managed on an individual basis, with consideration given to safeguarding both the child displaying the behaviour and any child affected by it.

Dealing with Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children

8.7 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur wholly online, concurrently online and offline, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. It can occur online, or through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

8.8 Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment, and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap. They can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

8.9 Our school will:

- Make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.
- Provide training for staff on how to manage a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- Make decisions on a case-by-case basis.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support, and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making.
- Implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator, and if necessary other children and staff members, safe. We will record any risk assessments and keep them under review.
- Give consideration to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations.
- Liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.
- Refer to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part Five', 2026, 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges,' (DfE, September, 2022) for full details of procedures to be followed in such cases. Also see 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (UKCIS, March 2024)

9. Procedures

9.1 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 multi-agency plans which provide additional support (through a Child in Need or a Child Protection plan).

9.2 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).

9.3 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, 2026)
- [Early help and effective support - Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

9.4 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 their portal. The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. 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.

9.5 If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being

addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

9.6 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 school to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to 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.

9.7 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.

9.8 Visitors without a DBS will be supervised at all times.

10.Training

10.1 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 child protection 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 is kept for all staff and governors.

10.2 Our school ensures that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) also undertakes training in multi-agency working and other matters as appropriate

11.Record Keeping, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Principles:

Information sharing can help to ensure a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address. We recognise that effective multi-agency information sharing is a vital part of safeguarding work and we understand how important it is and its role in our safeguarding arrangements. We work in accordance with all statutory requirements (including the [Information Sharing Duty](#)) and ensure that information shared is focused, proportionate and always in the child's best interests. We will never share information where it is not in the child's best interests or where to do so would place a child at increased risk.

We understand that no individual knows everything about a child or family and that, where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information can reduce the risk of harm. It is only when this happens effectively that adults working with a child have a better understanding of their needs and can better assess any risk and safeguard them. We work in a transparent way with parents/carers and will always inform them of any concerns when sharing with other appropriate agencies, unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We will always consider what it is relevant to share and that it is appropriate and proportionate. We recognise our duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and we also understand this is not a barrier to sharing information, where failure to do so could place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights, such as respecting the

right to a private and family life, would not prevent us sharing information where there are 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.

11.1 At R A Butler Academy, we will ensure that:

- Clear, detailed, accurate, written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately.
- All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate safeguarding file for each child.
- All records must include:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
 - the child's wishes and feelings;
 - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
 - a note of any action taken, decisions reached, and the outcome;
 - a record of any discussion / communication with parents, other agencies etc.
- Electronic records are stored on an identified, purpose-built, secure platform (CPOMS). In addition, appropriate secure storage arrangements are in place for any historic hardcopy safeguarding files.
- All relevant safeguarding records are sent to the receiving school or establishment when a pupil moves schools, within five days, in accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026, and the Education Safeguarding Team's Guidance on Keeping and Managing Child Safeguarding Records.
- Parents are made aware that such records exist, except where to do so would place the child at risk of harm.
- All actions and decisions are led by what is considered to be in the best interests of the child and rationales are included for all discussions and decisions made.

11.2 At R A Butler Academy, we use CPOMS software: a purpose-built secure platform to monitor Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral issues. All staff have access to this system and have been trained in how to use it. In the event of any difficulties, a paper system is still available to ensure the concern is captured. All visitors to our school have access to a paper concerns form. These concerns will be entered electronically by the DSL.

11.3 Any member of staff or visitor to our school receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will include the action taken. Whether this is electronically or on paper, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is alerted and will then decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

11.4 Each fortnight a team consisting of: the designated safeguarding lead and deputies will meet to review safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

11.5 Any records related to child protection are kept on 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.

11.6 In line with statutory guidance, where a pupil transfers from our school to another school/educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the 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.

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

11.7 Our school participates in the Essex Education Information Sharing protocol.

12. Confidentiality and Information sharing

12.1 Information about children and their families is defined as 'special category data', i.e. information that identifies a living individual. Collection, storage and sharing of personal data is governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

12.2 Our school will:

- Ensure staff and volunteers adhere to confidentiality protocols and that information is shared appropriately;
- Ensure staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children (as set out in 'Information sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers,' DfE, July 2018).
- Ensure that if a member of staff receives a Subject Access Request (under the Data Protection Act 2018) from a pupil or parent, they will refer the request to the DSL or Headteacher.
- Ensure staff are clear with children that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

12.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies will:

- Disclose information about a pupil to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis, considering what is necessary, proportionate and relevant. Parental consent may be required.
 - Aim to gain consent to share information and be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Information may be shared without consent where to do so might place the child or another person at immediate risk of harm or prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.
 - Record when decisions are made to share or withhold information, who information has been shared with and why (See 'Working Together to Safeguard Children,' 2026).
-

12.4 In cases where the 'serious harm test' is met, schools must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice (See 'Information sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers,' DfE, May 2024).

13.Communication with parents and carers

13.1 Our school will:

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed of the responsibility placed on the school and staff in relation to child protection.
- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this action.
- Discuss with Children's Social Care if the school believes that notifying parents could place the child or another person at immediate risk of harm or prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.
- Record what discussions have taken place with parents, or, if a decision has been made not to discuss it with parents, for example if the school believes that notifying parents could place the child or another person at immediate risk of harm or prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the rationale behind this decision must be recorded. Records may subsequently be disclosable to relevant partner agencies if Child Protection proceedings commence.

14.Multiagency Working

14.1 The school will:

- Work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all pupils/students.
- Co-operate as required, in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children,' (2026) with key agencies in their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance and providing written reports at child protection conferences and core groups.
- Notify the relevant Social Care Team immediately if:
 - it should have to exclude a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan (whether fixed term or permanently);
 - there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan;
 - there is any change in circumstances to a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Ensure that when a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan leaves, information will be transferred to the new school immediately. The Child Protection Chair and Social Work Team will also be informed.

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

14.3 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.

15.Safer recruitment

15.1 The school will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to Part Three of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2026. This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

15.2 The governing body will ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

16.Allegations about members of the work force

Allegations that may meet the harms threshold (Part Four, Section One)

16.1 Any allegation of abuse made against teachers (including supply staff, other staff, volunteers and contractors) that meets the harms threshold as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026, Part Four, Section One, will be reported straight away to the Head Teacher.

16.2 In cases where the Head Teacher is the subject of an allegation, it will be reported to the Chair of Governors. The school will follow the procedures set out in Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2026.

16.3 The school will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team at LADO@essex.gov.uk within one working day, in the event of an allegation being made against a teacher, member of supply staff or other staff, volunteer or contractor and adhere to the relevant procedures set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2026 and the school's HR Policies, and seek advice from their HR provider.

16.4 The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will ensure that all allegations are reported to the LADO within one working day. The LADO will advise on all further action to be taken.

16.5 Before contacting the LADO, schools should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

16.6 Where the school identifies that a child has been harmed or that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child, they should contact children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

16.7 Our school will consider:

- **Looking after the welfare of the child** - the designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk, and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care.
 - **Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation** - the case manager should discuss with the LADO, the nature, content, and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.
-

16.8 Our school will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff, supply staff or volunteers relating to child protection matters are concluded in full, even when the member of staff, supply staff or volunteer is no longer employed at the school, and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.

16.9 Staff (including supply staff and volunteers) who are the subject of an allegation, have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. However, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold (Part Four, Section Two)

16.10 Low level concerns that do not meet the harms threshold should be reported to the Headteacher. The term low level does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms test.

16.11 Our school will deal with any such concern, no matter how small, where an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work;
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

16.12 All low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous, then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

16.13 Our school will keep records in writing, and they will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

16.14 Our school will promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This will enable the school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

16.15 Our school will ensure that **all** staff and governors, paid and unpaid, are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents/carers. As part of the Induction process, all staff and governors, paid and unpaid, will receive guidance about how to create appropriate professional boundaries (in both the real and virtual world) with all children, especially those with a disability or who are vulnerable. All staff have signed to confirm that they have read ‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings’.

Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

17.1 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.

We work in accordance with the DfE guidance: [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance \(DfE 2026\)](#) and our approach to this is set out in our Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force Policy.

17. Whistleblowing

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

18.2 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.

18. Use of mobile phones and other Smart Devices

19.1 It is recognised that personal mobile phones and other smart devices have the potential to be used inappropriately. All adults are required to sign the Acceptable use of Technology policy which outlines the required protocol for all staff, pupils, governors and volunteers.

In accordance with Mobile phones in school (DfE 2026), R A Butler Academy operates as a phone-free learning environment. The school's arrangements are detailed within the Behaviour Policy and Mobile Phone Procedures on our website.

19. Use of school premises for non-school activities

20.1 Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation or individual, either on or off school site, the governing body will seek assurance that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to keep children safe. There will be arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

20.2 The governing body will use the guidance on 'Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings' (Sep 2023) which details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place.

20.3 The governing body will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

Appendix A:

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 available

- ✓ 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 their family

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.

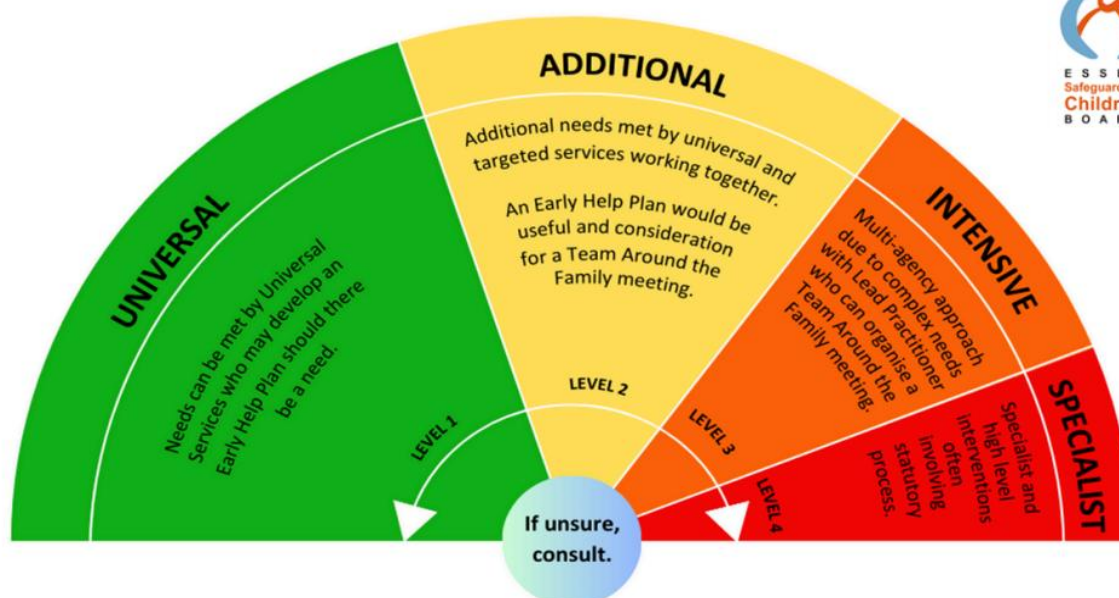
Early Help

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 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 have missing episodes

Definition

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

Introduction

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 education settings, hereafter referred to as education settings. Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from education 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 education 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

Education 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 identify underlying reasons for the missing episodes, address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought from appropriate partners, 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 education setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

When a child goes missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an education setting, this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, attempting contact with the child by phone,

text and social media and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, 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 the child has a Social Worker, they should also be informed. After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

When the child is found

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

Essex Police

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

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

Missing Chats

Each child years that is ten or older 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.

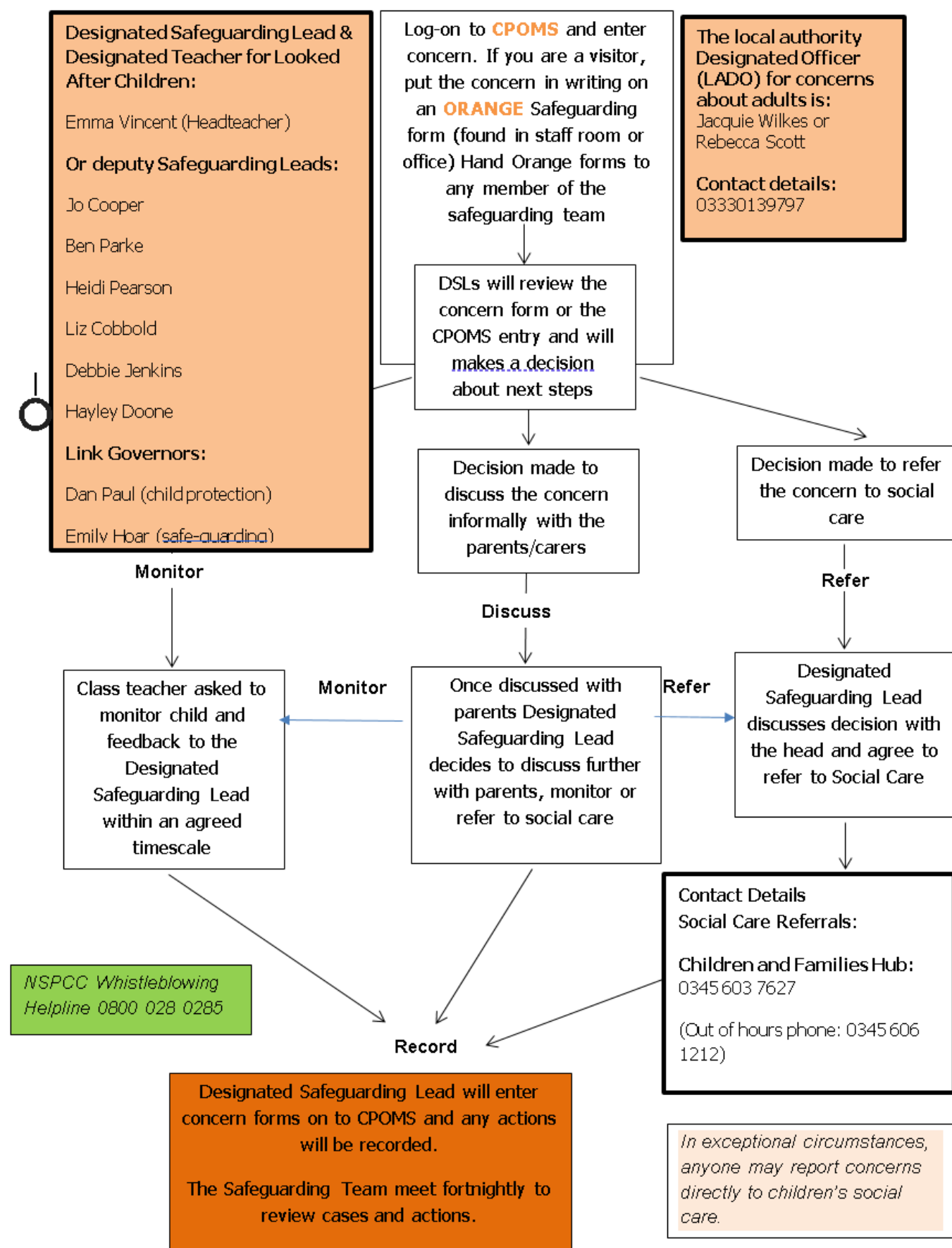
Useful contacts:

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

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

Appendix D - Flow chart for raising Safeguarding Concerns about a child at R A Butler Academy

Flow chart for raising Safeguarding Concerns about a child at R A Butler Academy



September 2026

Appendix E- Four categories of abuse, neglect and exploitation

Abuse a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. 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.

Physical Abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Neglect - 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.

It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

It may involve the neglect of or lack of responsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

It also includes parents or carers failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Provide suitable education

Emotional Abuse - Is the persistent emotional maltreatment so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are:

- Worthless
- Unloved
- Inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs

It may include:

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views
- deliberately silencing them
- 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children including:

- interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- preventing participation in normal social interaction.

It may involve:

- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- The exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment although it may occur alone

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- This may involve:
- physical contact including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex)
- non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- non-contact activities involving:
- children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images,
- children in watching sexual activities
- or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Criminal Exploitation - Both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (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.