Saffron Walden County High School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Date adopted or ratified: November 2016
Reviewed and readopted by the Governors: September 2026

This policy is regularly reviewed following recommended guidelines:

Keeping Children Safe in Education

September 2026
In September 2026 the Department for Education (DfE) updated their statutory guidance on safeguarding.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

School details

Governor Responsible:	SWCH LGB
Governor Lead:	Lucinda Bell
Nominated Lead Member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT):	Paul Singh
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and PREVENT Lead:	Paul Singh
Deputy DSL:	Sharon McCormick
Domestic Abuse Lead and Child Exploitation (CE) Lead:	Sharon McCormick
Looked After Children, Child in Care and Previously	
Looked After Children Lead:	Katie Pieri
Online Safety Lead:	Katie Vanderpere-Brown
Status & Review Cycle:	Statutory Annual
Next Review Date:	August 2027

Key Principles of the SWCHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- Safeguarding is the '*Golden Thread*' that runs through all of our work with children and young people.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns do happen and have happened here on a daily basis. Be vigilant!
- All systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at heart.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following:

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.

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Essex are the responsibilities of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures (ESCB, May 2022)

A copy of these procedures can be found on their website: http://www.escb.co.uk

Our school works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
Children Act 1989
Children Act 2004
Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (Safer Recruitment Consortium, February, 2022)
Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB)
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)
Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015)
Sexual Offences Act (2003)
Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2015)
Data Protection Act 1998
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)
Searching, screen and confiscation (DfE, 2014)
Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE 2014)
When to call the police (NSPCC)
Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults (Home Office 2017)
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) & Health Education (DfE, 2021)

1.2 The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

1.3 We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff[1], volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

There are three main elements to our policy; '**The 3Ps**':

[1] Wherever the word "staff" is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors

PREVENTION through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos. This also covers our responsibility to ensure that those who are unsuitable to work with children are not employed.

PROCEDURES identifying children who are experiencing a safeguarding, or potential, safeguarding incident and referring cases, or suspected cases, of abuse or exploitation to the appropriate agency.

PROVIDE SUPPORT to children particularly those who may have been abused or witnessed violence towards others. SWCHS also have a responsibility to support our staff who are closely supporting a culture of safety, respect, and trust within our school.

2.0 Prevention

2.1 We will ensure that:

2.1.1 All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

- there is a Child Protection Policy together with a Staff Code of Conduct Policy.
- the school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training.
- the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have had they not resigned.
- a senior leader is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- upon appointment, the DSL undertake interagency training and also undertake DSL 'new to role' and an 'update' course every two years.
- all other staff have Safeguarding training updated as appropriate.
- any identified weaknesses in Child Protection at SWCHS are remedied immediately.
- a member of the Governing Body, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the local authority on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection policy is available on the school website or by other means.
- the Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE) and/or for maintained schools through sex and relationship education (SRE).
- that enhanced DBS checks are in place for the Chair of Governors.

2.1.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Paul Singh, is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. His Deputies are Sharon McCormick who is also the Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation Lead and Katie Vanderpere-Brown who is the Online Safety Lead. They are supported by a wider Safeguarding Team who have all been trained to Safeguarding Level 3. They have undertaken the relevant training followed by biannual updates, and these roles are explicit in their job descriptions.

2.1.3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) colleagues involved in recruitment and at least one member of the governing body will complete safer recruitment training to be renewed every 5 years.

2.1.4 All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including the school safeguarding policy so that they know who to discuss a concern with.

2.1.5 All members of staff are trained annually and receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year.

2.1.6 All members of staff are trained to identify concerns early to prevent them from escalating; provide a safe environment in which children can learn; identify children who may benefit from family help

2.1.7 All members know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected and, follow the referral process if they have a concern.

2.1.8 All other staff and governors, have child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.

2.1.9 All members of staff, volunteers, and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through the information on their visitors' badge issued at school reception.

2.1.10 All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and reference to it in our Parents' Handbook.

2.1.11 Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time.

2.1.12 Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.

2.1.13 We will ensure that child protection concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the LADO[2] for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)[3] for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.

2.2 Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated.

2.3 The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Leads, will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abused.

2.4 All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection policy, with the DSLs' names clearly displayed, as part of their induction into the school.

2.5 The policy is available publicly either on the school website or by other means. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the parental handbook and school's website.

2.6 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: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
- The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.

[2] LADO Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff. AEO Area Education Officer
[3] Contact the LADO for guidance in any case.

- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removed potentially compromising material placed online.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including prison.
- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, control, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based abuse and FGM and how they can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent and how and when that can be withdrawn (in all contexts including online).

Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

2.7 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.

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

2.9 **The following members of staff have undertaken Safer Recruitment training:**

Polly Lankester
Paul Singh
Katie Vanderpere-Brown
Shaun Collins

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

2.11 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, 20246, Part Four, Section One, will be reported straight away to *the Headteacher.*

2.12 In cases where the Head Teacher or Principal 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.

2.13 The school will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 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, Part Four *and the school's HR Policies. The Essex LADO can be contacted on* 03330 139797 or lado@essex.gov.uk

2.13 The Headteacher 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.

2.14 Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges 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. Schools and colleges will use the guidance chart found at Appendix B to support their decision-making.

2.15 Where the school or college identify a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

2.16 SWCHS will consider:

- **Looking after the welfare of the child** - the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) 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.

2.17 The 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.

2.18 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.

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

2.20 Low level concerns that do not meet the harms threshold should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will liaise with the Headteacher. NB: 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.

2.21 In cases where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of an allegation, this should be reported to the Headteacher. Where the Headteacher 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, Section Two of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2026.

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

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

2.23 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.

2.24 Schools and colleges can decide where these records are kept, but they must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2025 and the UK General

Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). SWCHS will hold these records in paper form for HR purposes and any safeguarding information will be held on CPOMS.

2.25 SWCHS 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 us 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/college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

2.26 SWCHS will ensure that **all** staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors, are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents/carers as advised within the Local Authority's Code of Conduct: 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (February 2022). As part of the Induction process, all staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors, will receive guidance about how to create appropriate professional boundaries (both online and offline) with all children, especially those with a disability or who are vulnerable. Staff are encouraged to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

2.27 All staff have signed to confirm that they have read the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (February 2022).

2.28 SWCHS will ensure that staff, supply staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of Position of Trust).

3.0 Procedures

3.1 The DSL and deputies are responsible for:

3.1.1 Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Local Authority, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing or email using the Family Operations Request for Support form.

3.1.2 Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. These records are kept using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).

3.1.3 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are <u>separate</u> from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college where appropriate.

3.1.4 Liaising with other agencies and professionals.

3.1.5 Ensuring that either they or the staff member attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.

3.1.6 Ensuring that any pupil currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.

3.1.7 Organising child protection induction, and update training every year, for all school staff with an annual refresher training session.

3.1.8 Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised).

3.2 We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.

3.3 We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

3.4 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

3.5 Our school will support all children by:

3.5.1 Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
3.5.2 Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
3.5.3 Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
3.5.4 Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

Confidentiality

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), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

3.6 The 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 2025) 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.

3.7 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,' July 2026)

3.8 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 2025 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice.

3.9 The Headteacher or DSLs will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.

3.10 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

3.11 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

3.12 We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm; or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with Essex Initial Response Team on this point.

Records and Information Sharing

3.13 Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2025 and GDPR places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Students' personal data should not be shared where the 'serious harm test' is met i.e. where releasing data will or may result in harm to the child. In these cases independent legal advice should be sought.

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

3.15 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then submitted via CPOMS to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

3.16 Any records related to child protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file) in chronological order. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth. (Current guidance is under review and files are now kept indefinitely).

3.17 Records should include:

- a clear, factual, and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- a record of any discussion/communication with parents, or other agencies etc.

3.18 Where a pupil transfers from our school to another educational provision, 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.

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

Multi-Agency Working

3.20 The school will:

- Work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all pupils/students.

- SWCHS is committed to effective multi-agency safeguarding practice and information sharing. Where appropriate and lawful to do so, safeguarding decisions will take account of relevant information provided by children's social care, police, health services and other partner agencies. The school recognises the importance of timely information sharing in identifying, assessing and responding to safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities.

- Co-operate as required, in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children,' (July 2), 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.

3.21 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 Care Team will also be informed.

Filtering and Monitoring

3.22 Artificial Intelligence (AI), Deepfakes and Image-Based Abuse

The school recognises that rapid developments in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies present both opportunities and safeguarding risks for children and young people. As part of its whole-school approach to safeguarding, the school will take reasonable steps to protect pupils from harms arising from AI-generated content and emerging technologies.

Staff should be aware that online risks may include:

- AI-generated images, videos or audio recordings ("deepfakes") that falsely depict individuals saying or doing things they have not said or done.
- AI-generated sexual or nude imagery, including content that has been manipulated to create the appearance of a child being partially or fully unclothed.
- "Nudification" applications or tools that use artificial intelligence to alter photographs and create fake sexual images.
- Image-based abuse, including the creation, sharing, possession or threat to share real or artificially generated intimate images without consent.
- The use of AI tools to facilitate bullying, harassment, coercion, grooming, extortion, fraud or other forms of abuse.
- Exposure to harmful, inappropriate, misleading or extremist content generated through AI systems.

The school will ensure that pupils are taught about the safe, responsible and ethical use of AI technologies through its curriculum, safeguarding education and online safety provision. Pupils will be supported to understand:

- How AI-generated content can be created and manipulated.
- How to identify potentially unreliable, misleading or fabricated content.
- The risks associated with sharing personal information, photographs and videos online.
- How and where to report concerns about online abuse or harmful content.

Any incident involving suspected AI-generated abuse, deepfake imagery, nudification technology or image-based abuse will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Staff must report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The DSL will assess each concern on a case-by-case basis and consider:

- The welfare and safety of any child involved.
- Whether the incident constitutes child-on-child abuse.
- Whether criminal offences may have been committed.
- The need for referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other relevant agencies.
- The need to preserve evidence and secure support for affected pupils.

The school will review its filtering and monitoring arrangements, staff training and pupil education programmes regularly to ensure that emerging AI-related safeguarding risks are identified and addressed effectively

3.23 SWCHS aims to provide a safe environment for all to learn and work. Filtering and monitoring are both important parts of safeguarding pupils and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

3.24 The DSL will take lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring, supported by the SWCHS IT team.

3.25 The school's Behaviour Policy and Mobile Phone Policy form an integral part of its safeguarding framework. All pupil mobile phones and personal connected devices are secured in locked phone pouches during the school day and may only be accessed in accordance with school procedures. This arrangement supports pupil wellbeing, reduces exposure to online risks, limits opportunities for cyberbullying and image-based abuse, and helps maintain a safe and focused learning environment.

3.26 SWCHS will adhere to the standards laid out in 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' (DfE, 2026).

4.0 Provide Support

The school recognises 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:

4.1 Providing curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.

4.2 Creating an ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community.

4.3 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 s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

4.4 Liaising with the Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL), where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health in school/college for advice on case management. SWCHS can offer counselling, CBT, hypnotherapy, mentoring, group work, and other mindfulness/wellbeing support where this is deemed appropriate.

4.5 Liaising with other agencies which support the pupil such as Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service.

4.6 Promoting supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.

4.7 The school recognises that whilst **any** child may benefit from family 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). Staff are required to be particularly alert to the potential need for family help for children in particular circumstances. Please see page 9 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:**

4.7.1 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.

4.7.2 The school has pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or challenging behaviours. The school 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.

4.7.3 As part of the PSHE curriculum staff will teach children personal safety skills commensurate with 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.

4.7.4 The school has pupils who may have communication difficulties and we are aware that they are vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. Instead, such children will often exhibit changes in behaviours or signs and indicators of abuse recognised by staff with a good knowledge of the child.

4.7.5 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.

4.7.6 Under the Equality Act, there is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

4.7.7 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

4.8 The school recognises 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.

4.9 School will: 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 Family Help or Social Care as required if concerns arise.

4.10 The SWCHS Young Carer Lead is Katie Bates.

Children at risk of Criminal Exploitation (CE)

4.11 Criminal Exploitation (CE) 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.

4.12 All staff will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. 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.

4.13 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with Essex Police and/or Social Care if there is a concern that a young person may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

4.14 SWCHS recognises that young people who go missing can be at increased risk of child criminal exploitation and/or trafficking and has procedures in place to ensure appropriate response to children and young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions.

Children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

4.15 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.

4.16 CSE can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and 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.

4.17 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.

4.18 The school recognises that young people who go missing can be at increased risk of sexual exploitation and has procedures in place to ensure appropriate response to children and young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions.

4.19 At SWCHS we are working in partnership with Essex Police and Essex County Council to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have gone missing through the Operation Encompass scheme. On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child may require. The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

4.20 SWCHS has a separate 'Responding to Harmful Behaviours' policy which is published on our website that outlines in detail our response in managing sexual and harmful sexual behaviours involving pupils at our school.

Children frequently absent from education

4.21 SWCHS recognises that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation and 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.

4.22 SWCHS monitors and follows up on the attendance of individual pupils closely, as outlined in the Attendance Policy, and analyses patterns of absence to aid early identification of concerning patterns of absence.

4.23 SWCHS endeavors to hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil to provide additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child who is absent from education is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

4.24 SWCHS will inform Social Care if a child who is absent from education is subject to a Child Protection Plan or there have been ongoing concerns.

4.25 SWCHS will also work with the Uttlesford Behaviour and Attendance Partnership (BAP) to ensure that best practice is followed at all times in line with advice provided by the Essex Attendance Team.

4.26 The School Inclusion Officer is Jane Buckley. The School Inclusion Officer is invited to some safeguarding meetings to ensure that attendance concerns can be acted upon where they may represent a safeguarding or child protection concern.

4.27 The Inclusion Officer will conduct home visits and check-ins to ensure that any child who is absent from school for a sustained period of time, remains safe.

Children misusing drugs or alcohol

4.28 The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings, the school will consider such action in the following situations:

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 living with substance misusing parents/carers

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

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

4.31 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
- 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 (DA)

4.29 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.

4.30 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.

4.31 Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16).

4.32 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.

4.33 The school recognises that where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, 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.

4.34 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, offer support to them and contribute to any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safety plan as required.

4.35 At SWCHS we are working in partnership with Essex Police and Essex County Council to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic abuse in their home; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

4.36 The school's DA Lead is Sharon McCormick.

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

4.37 So called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including breast ironing, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. The 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.

4.38 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.

4.39 SWCHS will manage any concerns relating to forced marriage sensitively and will report concerns immediately via the procedures outlined in this policy.

4.40 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.

4.41 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

4.42 The school recognises that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable. School 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 in accordance with the Essex Safeguarding Children Partnership Board procedures.

Children showing signs of abuse and/or neglect

4.43 SWCHS recognises that experiencing abuse or neglect may have an adverse impact on those children which may last into adulthood without appropriate intervention and support. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Children who have experienced abuse or neglect may display this through their own behaviour, which may be challenging and defiant or passive and withdrawn. We recognise that children may develop abusive behaviours and that these children may need to be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

4.44 All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

4.45 SWCHS will provide training for staff to ensure that they have the skills to identify and report cases, or suspected cases, of abuse in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Children at risk of radicalisation

4.46 Children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a school or colleges safeguarding approach.

4.47 The governing body will ensure that a DSL has undertaken Prevent Lead training and that all staff receive training about the Prevent Duty.

4.48 **The Prevent Lead at SWCHS is Paul Singh**

4.49 Staff are required to be alert to changes in children's behavior 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. 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, (April 2021).

Privately Fostered Children

4.50 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.

4.51 The school will follow the mandatory duty to inform the local authority of any 'Private Fostering' arrangements and refer to the Fostering Assessment Team.

Children who have family members in prison

4.52 The 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.

4.53 The 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.

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

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

5.0 Other related policies to support safeguarding at SWCHS

Physical Intervention – see also the Physical Restraint Policy

5.1 We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention or restraint as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

5.2 Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

5.3 Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the restraint techniques.

5.4 We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

5.5 We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context or working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance in the Staff Code of Conduct to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.[4]

Child-on-Child abuse and bullying

5.6 Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms eg. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of reported bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences / perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse.

5.7 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); 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. The creation, possession, sharing, or threatened sharing of AI-generated intimate images, deepfake content, nudified images or other forms of image-based abuse; upskirting 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 in the

[4] 'Guidance on Safer Working Practices is also available on the DfE website

future. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. All child-on-child abuse is dealt with according to the school's anti-bullying / Child Protection procedures and the police / social care involved as appropriate.

The school recognises that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, antisemitism, Islamophobia, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, disability-related discrimination and other forms of discriminatory behaviour. Such incidents can have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, attendance, educational engagement and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the indicators and impact of prejudice-based harm and consider whether incidents require a safeguarding response alongside any behaviour, equality or disciplinary procedures.

5.8 All forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

5.9 The school will therefore:

5.9.1 Create a whole school protective ethos in which child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
5.9.2 Provide training for staff about recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse.
5.9.3 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, banter, or "just having a laugh".
5.9.4 Include within the curriculum, information and materials that support children in keeping themselves safe from abuse, including abuse from their peers and online.
5.9.5 Provide high quality Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and/or enrichment programmes including teaching about consent.
5.9.6 Ensure that staff members follow the procedures outlined in this policy when they become aware of child-on-child abuse.
5.9.7 Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Dealing with sexual violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) – see separate Harmful Behaviours policy

5.10 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. The school recognises the escalatory nature of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence and will challenge sexist, misogynistic and discriminatory language and behaviours at the earliest opportunity.

5.11 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 or college. 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.

The school will:

5.12 Be clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
5.13 Provide training for staff on how to manage a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

5.14 Make decisions on a case-by-case basis.
5.15 Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making.
5.16 Implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator and if necessary other children and staff members, safe. Record any risk assessments and keep them under review.
5.17 Give consideration to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations.
5.18 Liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.
5.19 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, December 2020).

Racist Incidents – see Racist Incident Policy

5.20 Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately, and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents.

Health & Safety – see Health and Safety Policy

5.21 Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school and when undertaking school trips and visits.

Use of school/college premises for non-school/college activities

5.22 If the governing body provides extended school/college facilities or before or after school activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for safeguarding as written in this policy shall apply.

5.23 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 and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

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

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Governing Body visits to the school
- Annual Safeguarding Audit commissioned by the Saffron Academy Trust
- Annual child Protection file audit
- Weekly safeguarding meetings

- Supervision for DSL and Deputies
- SLT ‘drop-ins’ and discussions with children and staff
- Pupil surveys and questionnaire
- Scrutiny of attendance data
- Scrutiny of range of risk assessments
- Scrutiny of LGB minutes
- Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for SLT and LGB to monitor
- Review of parent concerns and parent questionnaires

Appendix 1

Recognising signs of Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and / or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside of school. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familiar harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Categories of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Signs of Abuse in Children

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation.

Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.
In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury.
- Several different explanations provided for an injury.
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment.
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury.
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment.
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury).
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments.
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby.
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding.
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally.
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times.
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush.
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting.
- Bruising around the face.
- Grasp marks on small children.
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse.

Bite Marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.
A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine).
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements.
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area.
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks).
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.
Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type.
- There are associated old fractures.
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement.
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life.

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Fabricated illness

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.
The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family

- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 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.

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.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as ‘teenage relationship abuse’. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of ‘domestic abuse’ (if one or both parties are under 16).

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. SWCHS 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, offer support to them and contribute to any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safety plan as required.

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Children under the age of 13 cannot legally consent to any form of sexual activity. Any report or concern involving sexual activity with a child under 13 must be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures.

Staff should also be aware that the law makes clear that sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 is an offence. Whilst safeguarding responses should consider the age, development, relationship dynamics and circumstances of those involved, children under 16 cannot legally consent to sexual activity with an adult.

Children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to know their abuser than not. Sexual abuse can take place within the family, within institutions, in community settings and online. All concerns relating to sexual abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct

- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Encouraging children to watch pornographic materials or sexual acts between adults constitutes sexual abuse.

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

Child-on-Child Abuse

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is "acting out" which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour. Abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse and other prejudice-based incidents which affect a child's welfare, wellbeing or ability to access education safely.

'Sexting' and the use of Mobile Technology

The circulation of pornographic images by mobile technology or the internet can in many situations constitute a criminal offence. It is an offence to send by means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive, indecent, obscene or menacing. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else - young people may not aware that they could be breaking the law as these offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The making and distribution by mobile technology of images of a person in a state of undress is referred to as 'sexting' and is often inadvertently entered into by children who are trying to establish relationships with others of a similar age. In some cases children, particularly girls, are coerced into sending provocative or indecent images or videos of sexual acts. These can easily be distributed amongst large groups of other young people and can quickly end up in the hands of paedophiles.

Assessment

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
    - Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
    - Knowledge of society's standards for what is being proposed
    - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
    - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
    - Voluntary decision
    - Mental competence
- **Coercion –** the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Child Exploitation including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) SWCHS CE Lead is Sharon McCormick.

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/ or take place online.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual or criminal exploitation.

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint or sexual assault
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation

- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership

Mental Health

All staff should be 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. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern, IMMEDIATE action should be taken, and the usual procedures followed.

Appendix 2

Procedures for responding to Child Protection Concerns at SWCHS
Principles

This school takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in its care.

As part of the ethos of the school, the staff and governors are committed to:

- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers and working in partnership with them
- Listening to and valuing the pupils
- Ensuring all staff, both teaching and support, are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse, know the correct procedure for referring concerns or allegations and receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out these requirements.
- Maintaining a safe school environment for all pupils
- Exercising their duty to work in partnership with other agencies and to share information with them.

We recognise that teachers and support staff, because of their contact with and knowledge of the children or young people in their care, are well placed to identify abuse and offer support to children in need.

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

Procedures for Referral (see also attached 'Child Protection Guidelines for staff': Appendix 4)

All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Essex Local Authority audit tools and guidance
- Family Operations Hub guidelines for referral
- D of H guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002

Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Paul Singh) or if unavailable to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Sharon McCormick). In the absence of either of the above the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. The DSL **may** seek initial advice from the Family Operations Hub by asking for the **Consultation Line**, or, where the child is in immediate danger, can immediately make a referral by asking for the **Priority Line**: telephone: **0345 603 7627** (out of hours: 0345 606 1212).

Referrals should be made in writing or email using the Family Operations Request for Support form accessible via the portal: www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk click on the link for 'requesting support'. Essential information will include pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, reason for the referral, name of person receiving the referral and any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.

To refer non-urgent CP issues or to access Family Solutions support you need to complete a request for support form.

Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual pupils/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

Alleged abuse by staff

When concerns or allegations involve members of staff, the procedure for referral stated above remains the same. The DSL must be informed and the DSL will liaise with the Headteacher (SLT for staffing). In addition, the Essex Safeguarding Team will need to be informed (01245 436744) and the Essex LADO (03330 139797). If the concerns or allegations involve the DSL they should be reported to the Headteacher, unless they are the Headteacher, in which case they must be reported directly to the designated governor for child protection who will make the referral to Social Services and to Safeguarding – Lucinda Bell is the Safeguarding Governor and her details are to be found in the Staffroom on Teams.

This Child Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Physical Restraint/ Intervention Policy.

Concerns by staff that safeguarding issues are not being dealt with appropriately by the Safeguarding Team

If a staff member has a concern that the DSL, Deputy DSL or members of the safeguarding team are not following up concerns in an appropriate manner then they should report this immediately to the Headteacher or the Chair of governors – Sarah Dignasse.
If they have serious concerns they should contact the Essex LADO (03330 139797). There are four LADOs for Essex who work on a shift pattern. The names of the Essex LADO can be found at https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Managing_allegations_in_the_Childrens_Workforce/Pages/ManagingAllegationsInTheChildrensWorkforce.aspx
The duty email address of the LADO is: lado@essex.gov.uk

Record Keeping

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context and giving the date, time and location.
All records relating to child protection concerns will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential. They do not form part of the pupil's educational records and are not required to be disclosed to parents/carers except by agreement.
All referrals should be recorded on CPOMS. If the system is down then the school will temporarily revert to the Pink Logging Forms held in most large offices around the school.

THINK PINK - complete a referral using CPOMS.

Parental Involvement

This school is committed to helping parents/carers understand its responsibility for the welfare of all pupils.
Parents/car
ers will be made aware of the school's child protection policy via the school prospectus and initial meetings with parents of new pupils.

Where possible, concerns should be discussed with parents/carers and the designated person should seek agreement to making referrals, unless to do so would place the pupil at increased risk of significant harm, or if advised against doing so by a member of the Initial Response Team.

Training

The DSL and his deputies will attend DSL training events as appropriate and receive Level 3 training every two years.

DSL Level 3 Refresher Training:
Paul Singh, 6th October 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Jo Chapman, 21st April 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Amy Kennedy, 11th March 2026, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Esther Blakey 1st September 2026, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Cathrine Cahsey 9th January 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Katie Vanderpere-Brown 9th October 2025, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team
Katie Pieri, 14th November 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Polly Lankester, 17th January 2025, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Anna Bendall, 10th February 2025, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Sharon McCormick, 10th February 2024, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.
Phil Heath, 14th June 2026, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team.

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children Training:
Katie Pieri, November 2020, Essex County Council Safeguarding Team.
Katie Pieri, 18th May 2021, Looked After Children Monitoring Review, Essex County Council.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Training:
Sharon McCormick, 14th January 2021, Understanding Domestic Violence and Abuse, Levels 1 & 2, Against Violence and Abuse (AVA).
Best Practice in Working with Child Survivors of Domestic Abuse, 1st December 2021, AVA
Sharon McCormick, February 2021, Familiarisation with MARAC Toolkit, Essex County Council Safeguarding Team.
Sharon McCormick, April 2021, DV Practice Guidance and Webinar for Social Workers, British Association of Social Workers.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours Training:
Paul Singh**,** 12th May 2022, Harmful Sexual Behaviours Course (Secondary), Essex County Council
Sharon McCormick**,** 12th May 2022, Harmful Sexual Behaviours Course (Secondary), Essex County Council
Anna Bendell, 16th May 2022, HSB and when to involve the Police, Cambridgeshire County Council Education Safeguarding Team and Cambridgeshire County Constabulary
Introduction to Gender-based Violence for Schools, 8th December 2021, AVA
Paul Singh, 5th December 2019, Managing Sexualised Behaviours in Secondary Schools, NSPCC
YACs/SSOs, 16th December 2019, Managing Sexualised Behaviours in Secondary Schools, Paul Singh
Polly Lankester, 21st August 2023.

Brook Traffic Light Tool Training:
Paul Singh, July 2021, Brook
Sharon McCormick, July 2021, Brook
Jo Chapman, July 2021, Brook

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Lead Training:
CE Champions' Forum, 13th October 2021, 23rd February 2022, and 11th May 2022, ESCB
Sharon McCormick, 28th April 2021, Child Exploitation Champions Forum, Essex County Council Safeguarding Team.
Sharon McCormick, January 2019, Essex County Council Safeguarding Team.

FGM training:
Sharon McCormick, 4th January 2021, Home Office

Children's Mental Health Champion Training:
Sharon McCormick, 7th October – 17th November 2020, Place2Be

Suicide Prevention Training:
Anna Bendell, 28th June 2022, Is there a suicide crisis in the young, Professor Louis Appleby
Katie Pieri, 18th May 2022 and 25th May 2022, MIND West Essex
Sharon McCormick, March 2019, Essex County Council Safeguarding Team.

Trauma training:
Beth Robertson, Basic Awareness, 2nd February 2022, ECSB
Beth Robertson, Advanced, 10th February 2022, ECSB
Beth Robertson, Understanding trauma - working towards recovery, 10th June 2022, Room 4 Training
Beth Robertson, Understanding trauma - working towards recovery, 15th July 2022, Room 4 Training
Sharon McCormick, Trauma Training Basic Awareness, 12th January 2022, ECSB
Trauma Training Advanced, 30th March 2022, ECSB

Dealing with self-harm:
Whole Pastoral Team, 15th November 2022, CAMHS ABIT

Safer Recruitment Training:
All SLT, November 2019.

PREVENT training:
Prevent Awareness Course, Paul Singh, 9th January 2023, HM Government

Basic Safeguarding and Child Protection Training:
All staff, September 2025
In both cases of Basic Safeguarding and Child Protection Training an Office 'Form' was sent for all staff to complete confirming they had undertaken the training, read KCSiE (2026), and this was then used to update the Single Central Record (SCR).
New starters were given access to the Basic Safeguarding and Child Protection Training and confirmed via email that they had received the training. This was then used to update the SCR.

CPOMs training:
Safeguarding Team, January 2021
Pastoral Team, April 2021
Whole staff, 7th June 2021
Whole staff top-up, 3rd September 2024
Whole staff top-up, 1st September 2025

Challenging Pre-conceptions Training:
Whole staff, 7th June 2021
Whole staff, 2nd September 2024

Additional training undertaken by Sharon McComick (Safeguarding Officer):
Judicium Education - Sofa Session – Safeguarding: Back to School: Are you KCSIE ready? 10/09/25
CPOMS - Understanding and Preventing Self harm & Suicide: A Whole School Approach, 10/09/25
ESCB Training - New Developments in Drug and Alcohol Use, 15/10/25
ESCB TRAINING – Getting to know your Partners – Young carers and Youth Service, 22/10/25
West Essex C&F Partnership Network Meeting in Uttlesford (in person), 18/11/25

ESCB COURSE - Getting to know your Partners – SETDAB, 19/11/25
ESCB COURSE - Young Persons Lived Experience of Child Exploitation (in person), 20/11/25
04/02/26 Judicium Education - Sofa Session – Safeguarding: Beyond the School Gate: Safeguarding your pupils in alternative settings
12/02/26 ESCB COURSE – Overcoming the challenges in practice on child sexual abuse
MIND Suicide Awareness (online) 07 and 14/09/22
Streetwise 365 training (in person) 27/09/22
National Online Safety: Annual Certificate in Safeguarding for Staff 2022-23 (online) 03/10/23
ESCB CE Champion: exploitation awareness, adult exploitation, and child exploitation (online) 18/10/22
Judicium Education: PREVENT and Incel (online) 09/02/23
Judicium Education: Safeguarding: Criminal Searches of Children Following Child Q (online) 08/03/23
Judicium Education: Safeguarding: Sexual Harassment in Schools 2 Years on from Everyone's Invited29/03/23
Judicium Education: Protected Characteristics (online) 03/05/23
UDC Modern Slavery Awareness training (in person) 16/11/22
Cambridgeshire Violence Against Women and Girls (online) 24/11/22
Essex Safeguarding Forum (online) 01/03/23
BEAT (eating disorders) SPOT Workshop - Supporting a pupil in school (online) 18/04/23
Child Exploitation Champion's Forum (in person) 19/10/22
Child Exploitation Champion's Forum (online) 22/02/23
Child Exploitation Champion's Forum (in person) 17/05/23
Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Conference (in person) 14/06/23

The Role of the Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body will ensure that safeguarding remains at the forefront of all strategic decision making and policy development. The governing body will provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny to assure itself that safeguarding arrangements are effective, that pupils are protected from harm, and that the school maintains a strong culture of safeguarding.

Safeguarding responsibilities will underpin all relevant aspects of governance and school improvement planning.

It will:

- Nominate a governor for safeguarding who will take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and practice and champion safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate governor safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. This training will be regularly updated.
- Ensure governors and trustees are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure an annual safeguarding report is made to the full governing body. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.
- Ensure that this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is annually reviewed, ratified, updated and understood and followed by all staff.
- Ensure that this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is be published on the school website.

The Governing Body recognises that cyber security forms an important part of safeguarding. Appropriate measures will be taken to protect sensitive pupil information, safeguard digital systems, and reduce the risk of cyber threats that could impact the safety, welfare or education of pupils. The effectiveness of cyber security arrangements will be reviewed regularly alongside the school's filtering and monitoring systems.

- Ensure that children's exposure to potential risks while using the internet is limited by having in place age-appropriate filtering and monitoring systems and ensure the effectiveness is regularly reviewed.
- Ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account where there are safeguarding concerns.

Statement for inclusion in the Parents' Handbook which is issued annually:

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Our first concern is your child's welfare, and therefore there may be occasions when our concern about your child means that we have to consult other agencies before we contact you. The procedures we follow have been laid down by the Education Safeguarding Service. If you want to know more about this procedure, please speak to Mr Singh, Deputy Headteacher: Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appendix 3

Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
All forms of so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to Paul Singh or Sharon McCormick and **THINK PINK BUTTON – complete a referral on CPOMS.** We all need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Breast Ironing

Breast Ironing also known as 'Breast Flattening' is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education.

Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistleblowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly but refer to Paul Singh, Deputy Headteacher and the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, or his deputy, Sharon McCormick, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
What is FGM?

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Makes childbirth easier
-

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM
  Countries where FGM is practised include: Kenya; Senegal; Gambia; Mali; Malaysia; Egypt; Nigeria; Eritrea; Yemen; Afghanistan; Kurdistan; Iraq; Somalia; Pakistan; Indonesia; Sri Lanka; India; Sierra Leone; Colombia; Sudan; Oman.
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

The 'One Chance' Rule

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule **for FGM**. It is essential that action is taken **without delay as FGM cannot be undone.**

FGM mandatory reporting duty: Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015)
If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must ***personally*** report this to the police. A member of the Safeguarding Team will assist individual teachers with contacting the police.
Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college's Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should report their concerns or suspicions via a referral on CPOMS.
Non-teachers should report all concerns – where FGM has been carried out, there is a suspicion that FGM has been carried out or where a girl is at risk of FGM - via **a referral on CPOMS. Canteen staff and Site Team will continue to use the Pink Form.**

You can contact the Essex Police to discuss any concerns on 101 or report a crime using the Essex Police online reporting portal found here:
https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

Appendix 4

Child Protection Guidelines for Staff for inclusion in the Teachers' Handbook and issued to all staff annually

(Teaching and Non-Teaching)

We have a "duty in law" to act upon concerns/information received concerning child protection issues. These may include accidental injury, neglect, ill treatment or sexual abuse. It is extremely important that every member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) is aware of the procedures they might need to adopt and the personnel who are directly involved.

Procedure in the case of disclosure

Disclosure is when a child openly informs you about incidents of this nature which they claim to have experienced. If a child discloses directly to you, the procedure you should follow is laid out below:

- Once a pupil has disclosed **do not question them in great depth over matters of detail** but immediately contact **Paul Singh, Designated Safeguarding Lead or his Deputy, Sharon McCormick. As soon as possible make a written report of the disclosure and hand to either Paul Singh or Sharon McCormick**. Please make all referrals using CPOMS. As a back-up Child Protection **pink referral forms** are kept in Area and Year offices.

- **Paul Singh or Sharon McCormick** take responsibility for the decision as to whether or not Initial Response are contacted **and makes any contact themselves.** It is very important that we do not have different people liaising with the Family Operations Hub/ Social Care over different cases. In the absence of both please contact another senior member of staff.

Procedure in the case of suspicion

In the case of suspicion, things are much less clear-cut but it is important that members of staff alert relevant colleagues if they have worries in this area. If you are concerned that a child in your care is at risk in some way then it is important that you:

- Complete a **referral using CPOMS** and allocate to **Paul Singh or Sharon McCormick,** who will liaise with the Year Achievement Coordinator or another CP trained colleague as appropriate.
- The Year Achievement Coordinator should **liaise with Paul Singh** and the Form Tutor/ other colleagues as appropriate.
- If it is felt that there is sufficient cause for concern then the same procedure as for disclosure should be followed (see above).
- **Paul Singh or Sharon McCormick** still retain the responsibility for contacting Police/ Social Care if it is deemed appropriate.

Appendix 5

PREVENT Anti-radicalisation

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

It requires schools to:

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

CHANNEL is a national support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Our staff understand how to identify those who may benefit from this support and how to make a referral.

PREVENT Safeguarding Objectives: a national initiative

Within this overall framework the Prevent strategy will specifically:

• respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;

• prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and

• work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

Schools can help to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same ways that they help to **safeguard children** from drugs, gang violence or alcohol.

The purpose must be to protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values. Awareness of Prevent and the risks it is intended to address are both vital. Staff can help to identify, and to refer to the relevant agencies, children whose behaviour suggests that they are being drawn into terrorism or extremism.

Schools of all kinds can play a role in enabling young people to explore issues like terrorism and the wider use of violence in a considered and informed way. Schools can facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government. These are important for reasons which go far beyond Prevent but they connect to the Prevent agenda.

PREVENT referrals should be reported in line with other safeguarding procedures.

All action is taken in line with the guidance provided in the HM Government Document: 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent'.

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

1. negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
2. undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
3. intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

PREVENT is part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy. preventing people from becoming radicalised and involved in terrorism or supporting terrorism. It also covers involvement with other groups which could be considered extreme: ISIL, Animal Rights, Environmental, terrorism related to Northern Ireland.

As a school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. At SWCHS all staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

As a school we need to follow the **NOTICE, CHECK, SHARE** principles from the PREVENT initiative.

As a school, we must **NOTICE** the vulnerabilities which might be exploited by extremist organisations:

- difficult personal circumstances (relationship breakdown, family issues)
- financial concerns or concerns regarding unemployment
- changes in friendship groups
- difficult experiences linked to their faith (i.e. victim of racist comments, sense of guilt, injustice, grievance)
- issues with drugs / alcohol
- lack of parenting (neglect, no boundaries / curfews)
- personality traits (low self-esteem)
- lack of knowledge / education; naïvety
- social exclusion
- inappropriate use of social media / TV / video games (exposure to violence and propaganda)
- peer pressure
- mental health

As a school, we must also **NOTICE** the signs which might indicate that a member of our community is becoming involved in an extremist organisation:

- changes in friendship groups
- changes in behaviour at school (language, emotions, paranoia, fixated on a subject, withdrawn, depressed)
- references to weapons or violence
- changes in appearance (clothing, uniform, personal appearance, tattoos)
- changes in routine or absence from school (lengthy or unexplained trip abroad)
- student talks about a specific individual (perhaps an influential figure with strong views), political issues or global events in a concerning way
- comments or views expressed in work done which give cause for concern (e.g. inflammatory comment, extreme religious or political statement)
- comments about what students are going to do in the future after leaving school which give cause for concern

Any staff with concerns regarding a member of our community should then CHECK these concerns by referring to Paul Singh, Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, and who is the school's PREVENT Lead.

The referral will be considered and information sought from SWCHS colleagues. If appropriate, the PREVENT Lead will SHARE this with the quadrant Prevent Champion:

West Quadrant: Sue McCann sue.mccann@essex.gov.uk

She will then decide whether they should be referred to channel. The referral form is available on www.escb.co.uk and should be emailed to PREVENT@essex.pnn.police.uk.
You can contact the Essex Police to discuss any concerns on PREVENT@essex.pnn.police.uk

DC Rachael Harris Tel: 01245 452196
Essex Police: 101
Confidential anti-terrorist hotline number: 0800 789 321

Appendix 6

Gender Questioning Children

SWCHS recognises that children and young people may question their gender identity at any stage of their development. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all pupils, including those who are gender questioning.

We understand that gender questioning children may face increased risks, including:

- Bullying or harassment (including online)
- Mental health challenges
- Isolation or exclusion
- Risk of exploitation or abuse

Safeguarding Considerations:

- All staff are expected to treat gender questioning children with dignity and respect.
- Staff must be alert to any safeguarding concerns that may arise, including emotional distress, peer-on-peer abuse, or discriminatory behaviour.
- Concerns about a child's welfare must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with standard safeguarding procedures.

Support and Inclusion:

- SWCHS will work in partnership with parents/carers, health professionals, and other relevant agencies to support the child's wellbeing.
- The school will ensure that any support provided is age-appropriate, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child.
- Staff will receive training to understand the needs of gender questioning children and how to respond appropriately.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

- Information about a child's gender identity will be treated as sensitive personal data under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2025.
- Disclosure of such information will be managed carefully, with consideration given to the child's wishes, safeguarding needs, and legal obligations.
- SWCHS is committed to promoting equality and diversity and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. All pupils, regardless of gender identity, are entitled to feel safe, supported, and respected in our school community.