

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR DODDINGHURST COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL EARLY YEARS PROVIDER

APPROVED BY: Manager and Committee

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1. Introduction

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.’

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#) (Department for Education, 2021)

2. Purpose

This policy is for all leaders / Management Committees, staff, parents / carers, volunteers, and the wider community. It provides a framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children who attend our setting.

3. Ethos

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, where all children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. There are various ways in which we fulfil our safeguarding responsibility, for example through our environment, curriculum, and clear policies and procedures.

We will take all necessary steps to keep our children safe and well, and ensure they are protected from harm. If we have concerns about children’s safety or welfare, we will notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. This means Essex Social Care and, in emergencies, the police.

4. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (HMG, 2018) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The statutory partners in Essex are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county and the partnership arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB).

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, under which providers are required to take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of young children.

In addition, in Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#). This is local guidance, written by the safeguarding Boards in Southend, Essex and Thurrock, which sets out child protection and safeguarding arrangements in Essex.

This policy takes into account and should be read in conjunction with other statutory and local guidance (this is not an exhaustive):

- [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#) (DfE, 2021)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#) (DfE, 2018)
- [SET Procedures](#) (ESCB, 2019)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
- [The Prevent Duty guidance](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](#) (ESCB, 2017)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour - Safe practice for schools](#) (Essex County Council, 2021)
- [Children Act](#) (HMG, 1989)
- [Children Act](#) (HMG, 2004)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2021)

This policy also complements our Behaviour Policy, which includes information on positive handling, and our Staff Code of Conduct.

Our setting also works in accordance with statutory and local guidance where there are concerns about radicalisation and extremism. In these cases, usual child protection procedures will be followed.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Manager, Committee and Lead Safeguarding Officer has oversight of our safeguarding arrangements and ensures that they operate effectively, that there are appropriate policies in place, and that staff receive the right training to keep children safe.

Our setting is required to have a designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. To ensure there is cover when the Lead Practitioner is absent, we also have a Deputy Lead Practitioner. Their names are on the front page of this policy.

Our Lead Practitioner is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, including Essex Social Care and other agencies as required. The Lead Practitioner provides support, advice and guidance to staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issues as required.

Our Lead Practitioner and Deputy Lead Practitioner attend a child protection training course to enable them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and

neglect. They also ensure that everyone in our setting (including temporary staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors) is aware of our child protection procedures and that they are followed at all times.

Everyone in our setting has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the Essex [Early Help](#) procedures and our role in it. They are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff members are aware of and follow our procedures (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a request for support to Essex Social Care if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they act on them immediately and speak with the Lead Practitioner or Deputy Lead Practitioner – they do not assume that others have taken action.

6. Child Protection Procedures

Our setting works with local statutory services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support, for example Child In Need or Child Protection plans.

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the setting who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred, **must** report it immediately to the Lead Practitioner (or, in their absence, the Deputy Lead Practitioner). If, for any reason, the Lead Practitioner or Deputy Lead Practitioner is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the setting to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required.

Where there is risk of immediate harm, the setting will telephone the Essex Social Care Children & Families Hub and / or the police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the [Essex County Council](#) website. We may also seek advice from Essex Social Care or another appropriate agency about a child protection concern if we are unsure how to respond to it.

Wherever possible, we share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to request support from Essex Social Care, with parents / carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that it could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

Any individual may request support from Essex Social Care where it is suspected that a child has been harmed, or where there is a risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or visitors join our setting they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Lead Practitioner and Deputy Lead Practitioner, and how to share concerns with them.

7. Training

The Lead Practitioner and Deputy Lead Practitioner undertake Level 3 Child Protection training every two years. The Manager and all staff members receive appropriate child protection training at least annually, in line with ESCB expectations.

In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of all child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff.

8. Professional confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including children and parents / carers) or promise to keep a secret.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the Lead Practitioner or Deputy Lead Practitioner with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

9. Records and information sharing

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

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time, and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is presented to the Lead Practitioner or Deputy Lead Practitioner who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records relating to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to any other child file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially until the child transfers to another educational setting.

Where a child transfers from our setting to another, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the Lead Practitioner (or in the case of a school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead) at the new setting, 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 setting, and then destroy any copies held in our setting. Where appropriate, the Lead Practitioner may also contact the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

Where a child joins our setting, we will request child protection records from the previous educational setting (if applicable, and if none are received).

10. Multi-agency working

The Lead Practitioner will ensure our setting is represented at a Child Protection Conference or other safeguarding meetings for children registered with us, or previously known to us. We may be required to submit a report for these meetings and, where possible and appropriate, we will share this in advance with parents and / or carers. The member of staff attending a meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns we have and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If the setting is part of a multi-agency group for the safeguarding arrangements for a child, the Lead Practitioner will ensure we are represented at meetings and that we provide appropriate information and contribute to any plan. Any concerns about the plan and / or a child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at these meetings, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm.

11. Allegations about members of staff / volunteers working in the setting

All staff members and volunteers are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of Induction and are outlined in our Staff Code of Conduct. Any concerns about the conduct of an adult working with children in our setting should be referred to the Manager (or the Deputy in their absence). Where the concern is about the Manager, it should be reported direct to the Proprietor.

Our setting works in accordance with statutory guidance and the [SET Procedures](#) (ESCB, 2019) in relation to allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). The procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Manager (or Proprietor) will inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **03330 139 797** or lado@essex.gov.uk within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO

will be made immediately, as they will then advise on how to proceed, whether the matter requires police involvement and the referral process going forward.

In accordance with the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#) (DfE, 2021), we will also inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We will also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. We will make these notifications as soon as reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the allegations being made. We are aware that not complying with these requirements without reasonable excuse is committing an offence.

12. Physical intervention and use of reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for our staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children, but these are exceptional circumstances and do not form part of our routine approach to managing behaviour. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our setting works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context. Our Behaviour Policy reflects the approach taken to understanding behaviour, physical contact and intervention.

13. Whistleblowing

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

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

14. Online Safety

Technology forms part of the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage; computer skills are key to accessing learning. We help our children to begin to learn how to use technology safely, and to be safe online. We will engage with our parents / carers about online safety to support them in keeping their children safe at home when using technology.

15. Use of mobile phones

We acknowledge that mobile phones are often the only means of contact available and can be helpful in supporting safeguarding arrangements in settings, including when on outings. In our setting, when mobile phones are used, this is underpinned by a risk assessment and operated within a clear framework, so everyone understands their responsibilities in ensuring phones are used safely.

We will ensure that staff **personal** mobiles:

- are stored securely in basket on the stage and will be switched off or on silent whilst staff are on duty;
- are not used to take pictures of any children attending the setting;
- are not be used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting;
- are not used to contact parents / carers or children except in the event of an emergency; and
- are not used by visitors.

16. Use of cameras, photography and images

Most people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for acceptable reasons. However, due to cases of abuse to children through taking or using images, we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

To keep our children safe, we will:

- always obtain consent from parents / carers for photographs or video recordings to be taken, used, or published (for example, on our website or displays)
- ensure only the setting's designated cameras are used when photographing or videoing children;
- ensure that children are appropriately dressed if photographs or videos are to be taken
- ensure that children's names are not displayed alongside any photographs in a public space
- ensure that personal devices including cameras, mobile phones, tablets, smart watches or other such technology are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting without prior explicit written consent from the setting;
- ensure that all images are stored securely and in accordance with statutory guidance;

- ensure where professional photographers are used that the appropriate checks, such as those with the Disclosure and Barring Service, references and parental consent are obtained prior to photographs being taken.

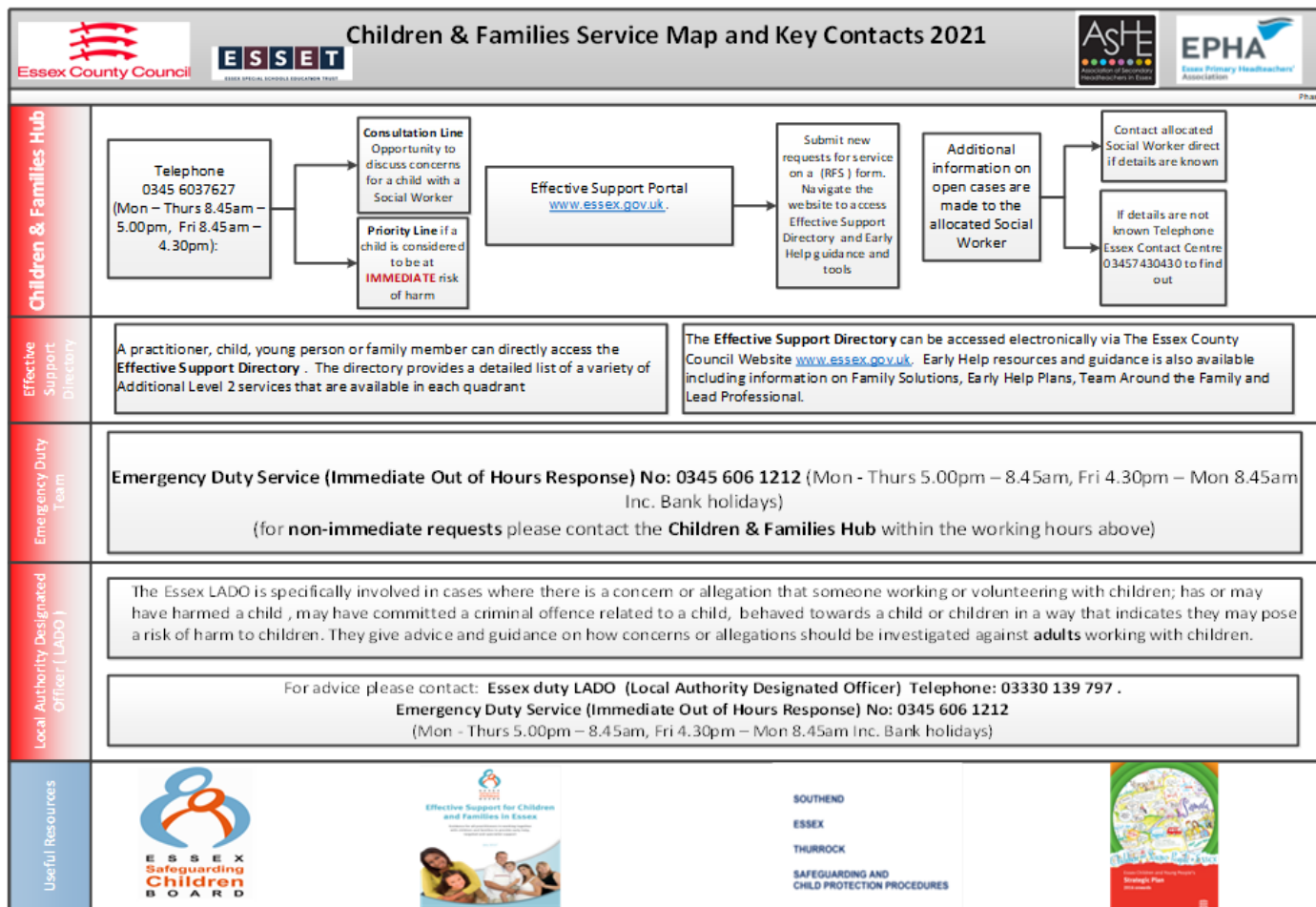
17. Attendance

Regular attendance is important to a child's development, progress and wellbeing, and is encouraged at all times. Poor attendance can be a concern for a number of reasons:

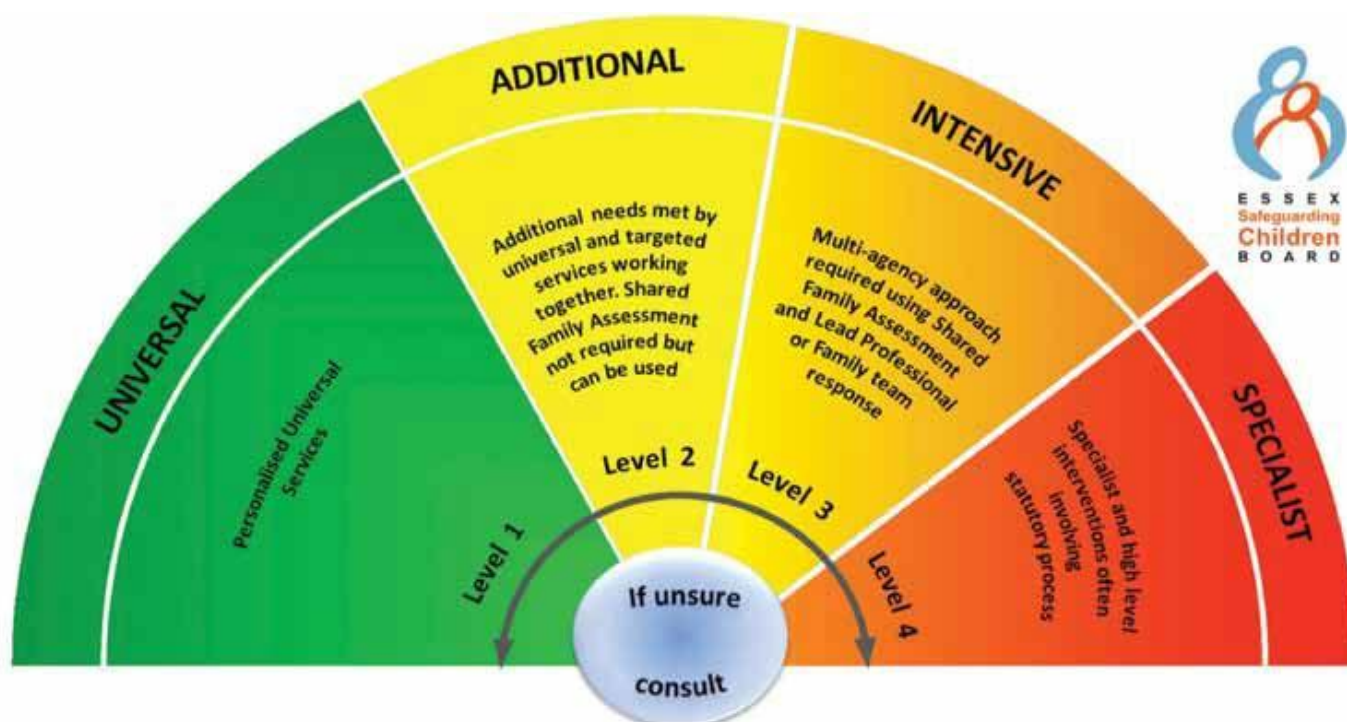
- it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect
- it can significantly impact on a child's progress and / or wellbeing
- a child may be exposed to additional risks when not in the setting

As part of safeguarding and attendance procedures, a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance is maintained and this data is used to identify patterns of absence as they emerge, to ensure concerns are addressed at an early stage.

Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

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

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

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

Appendix C – types of abuse and harm

Information about abuse and harm including examples of specific safeguarding issues is set out below. Further information about types of abuse and harm is given in:

- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners](#) (HMG, 2015); and
- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2021).

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. A child may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children – the four categories of abuse are:

- **Physical** - *may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent / carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child*
- **Emotional** - *the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development*
- **Sexual** - *forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children*
- **Neglect** - *persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development*

Signs of possible abuse

- **Physical** - *children with frequent injuries, unexplained or unusual fractures / broken bones, unexplained bruises, or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks*
- **Emotional** - *children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong; parents or carers who withdraw attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'; parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; parents or carers who humiliate their child (eg: name-calling / making negative comparisons)*
- **Sexual** - *children who display knowledge / interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age; children who use sexual language / have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have; children who ask others to behave sexually / play sexual games; children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections / underage pregnancy*

- **Neglect** - children living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe; children who are hungry or dirty; children without adequate clothing (eg: not having a winter coat, shoes); children living in dangerous conditions (eg: around drugs, alcohol or violence); children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm; children who fail to receive basic health care; parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured

Harmful sexual behaviour

It is normal for some children to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop. However, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive (derived from Hackett, 2014). It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour. HSB encompasses a range of behaviour, which can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as those it is directed towards.

Children can experience HSB in various settings. This includes at their education setting, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At education settings, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, changing areas, or outside spaces such as play areas, and when travelling home.

If a child's sexual behaviour is not healthy or age-appropriate, it's important to respond quickly before the behaviour becomes harmful to that child or other children, and to ensure they receive the right help at the right time to address the concerning behaviour.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

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

Children with SEND may require additional help and support to ensure they are appropriately safeguarded.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It

can also happen between adults who are related to one another and can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

Being exposed to domestic abuse in childhood is child abuse and can have a significant and lasting impact. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, but they can also experience it indirectly. Either can have a serious effect on a child's behaviour, brain development and overall wellbeing, and also compromise the child's basic need for safety and security.

In Essex, the [Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board \(SETDAB\)](#) is responsible for designing and implementing the Domestic Abuse Strategy and provides advice, guidance and resources to support work around domestic abuse.

Contextual safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family and that children may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how these risks can be understood to keep children safe. It's an approach that's often been used to apply to adolescents, though the lessons can equally be applied to younger children.

Emotional wellbeing

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for them to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Wellbeing 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 or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

Radicalisation, extremism and the Prevent Duty

Individuals are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism, in the same way they are vulnerable to other safeguarding issues. Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021) defines the following:

Extremism: the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces

Radicalisation: refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups

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

The [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act](#) (HMG, 2015) placed a duty on childcare providers and schools - under section 26 of the Act, childcare providers and 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**.

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from an educational setting may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

So-called 'Honour Based Abuse'

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast flattening.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Information about FGM is available on the [National FGM Centre](#) website.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and multi agency guidelines, which are available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website. The Forced Marriage Unit can also provide advice and information: call 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fcdo.gov.uk.

Breast Flattening

Breast flattening is the process during which young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.

Information about breast flattening is also available on the [National FGM Centre](https://www.nationalfgmcentre.org/) website.