

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

***APPROVED BY GOVERNORS – September 2026
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED – July 2027***

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Holy Cross Catholic Primary School Statement

Holy Cross is a Catholic Primary School. Its religious dimension lies at its heart and is fundamental to its existence. Its ethos is based around Christian values as laid down by the person of Jesus Christ, and exemplified in His teaching.

Our Mission Statement expresses this clearly:

Holy Cross is a Catholic school which seeks to build a closer partnership with parents, the parish and the wider community.

We work hard to provide an environment which is secure, stimulating and happy and where everyone is appreciated and enabled to give their best.

We encourage all to have respect for each individual, to be honest, tolerant, just and forgiving and to develop a closer relationship with each other and through this, a closer relationship with God.

We recognise Jean Baptiste Debrabant's vision that:

"A Christian based education is a sure hope for the future of religion and society."

We live out our school mission of **'Building relationships with God and each other, working hard in faith and hope to give our best in all things'** at all times and follow our school values of –

Respect, Honesty, Tolerance, Justice, Forgiveness

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1. Introduction

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.”

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- the Behaviour policy
- the Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct)
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

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

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

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School has a whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and it underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents/carers, governors and the wider school community. Holy Cross Catholic Primary School believes that, only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

2. Statutory framework

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

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

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

Guidance

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools, the Local Authority and other agencies who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

The governing body

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

There is a named governor for safeguarding arrangements and they are also named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and leads on a 'whole-school approach' to this. The governing body ensures there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in place.

The governing body ensures the school engages with statutory safeguarding partners and contributes to multi-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It understands the importance of sharing information in keeping children safe and ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The governing body ensures that all adults in our school (including governors / trustees) who work with children receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated.

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

The governing body has specific duties around online safety and ensures we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to keep our children safe online. These arrangements are reviewed at least annually to ensure they are effective.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that adults in our school are suitable – this is done by:

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

It also ensures there is an appropriate Staff Code of Conduct Policy in place, so that adults when they start work with us are clear of the boundaries within which they operate. The Governing Body ensures all staff are aware they must follow this policy and that appropriate action is taken where this does not happen.

The Headteacher

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. Mrs Power, our Headteacher works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)

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

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are able to act in their absence, so there is always cover for this role.

All school staff

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

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

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

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

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

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

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

"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others... Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely,

by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.”

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

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

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

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

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

Essex has adopted the following definition for CCE: *‘Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 years. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation doesn’t always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.’ (Home Office, 2018)*

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

CSE is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and it can be committed by an individual or an organised network. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted: *"Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".*

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

Risk in the community (RIC)

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

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

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment, violence and sexualised behaviours)

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, harmful sexual behaviours, gender-related abuse, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate harmful behaviour of any kind in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur. We do not normalise abuse, and it is not tolerated in our setting. Our culture is very much one of kindness, compassion, hope, connection and belonging. We encourage all to have respect for each individual, to be honest, tolerant, just and forgiving and to develop a closer relationship with each other and through this, a closer relationship with God.

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

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

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

Children who are absent from education

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

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

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

We work in accordance with the Thurrock for children who go missing during the school day. All referrals will be logged on the register of children missing education. They will then attempt to trace the family and find out whether education arrangements are place, by:

- checking the local education and social care databases
- making sure the Missing Children's Panel is aware of the case
- linking with relevant professionals - for example special education needs and disabilities teams, housing teams, benefit agencies

The referral will be passed to the relevant team for additional casework to support a return to full-time education.

Domestic abuse

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

Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse (either by witnessing or experiencing it) can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners, and we receive and share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family, or be placing a child at risk of harm.

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

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.

Harmful sexual behaviour

We understand that children's sexual behaviours exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate / developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, either in person or online. We

recognise that children who display harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and we will support them accordingly.

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

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

Mental health

We recognise that good mental health for all our children and staff is very important, and we understand the part our school plays in this. We work to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all children and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which can increase someone's vulnerability and also protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in someone's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are needed to counter-balance these to promote resilience and keep children safe.

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

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

Online safety

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

- ❑ **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, misandry, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- ❑ **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;
- ❑ **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying including those generated using AI and online bullying,
- ❑ **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams

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

Children must be safeguarded from inappropriate and potentially harmful content online. We have systems in school to filter information and block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. These systems are monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective, and all staff are trained in online safety and how to report concerns.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School understands that using online services is an important aspect of raising educational standards, promoting pupil achievement, and enhancing teaching and learning. The use of online services is embedded throughout the school; therefore, there are a number of controls in place to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. This is outlined in the Holy Cross Catholic Primary School On Line Safety Policy.

Prevention of radicalisation

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

The Prevent Duty requires schools to:

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

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. If a child on roll at our school is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

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

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

Serious violence

Serious violence may involve physical assault or carrying, threatening with or using a weapon. It can also be associated with Child Criminal Exploitation and our staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime.

As with any other safeguarding issue, we will assess risk based on information received and our understanding of potential and actual violence. Any concerns will be addressed to help safeguard all children and we will work with other appropriate agencies to do so. We will always take a proportionate approach to such matters, whilst ensuring that all children and staff are appropriately safeguarded.

So-called ‘honour-based violence’ (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)

Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. We understand that this form of abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of FGM where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school operates in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

A *forced marriage* is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. We will always report any concerns that a child may be or has been subjected to a forced marriage and will work with the appropriate agencies.

5. Procedures

Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This may be a co-ordinated offer of community-based early help when additional needs of children are identified or contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional ‘Family Help’ support through a Child in Need plan or at a Child Protection plan level.

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected or actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred, must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- ☐ Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2026)
- ☐ [Early help and effective support - Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)
- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)
- ☐ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- ☐ PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [Essex Effective Support](#). We may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to another agency, with parents or

carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or may impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for an external agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

All staff understand that, if they continue to have concerns about a child, feel a concern is not being addressed or that a situation does not appear to be improving for a child, they should raise this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them. We also provide information on safeguarding to any visitor to our school, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

6. Children potentially at risk of greater harm

We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be:

- children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care
- children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues
- children requiring support with mental health
- young carers
- children with medical needs
- children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- children who are questioning their gender

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and / or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and that barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect for these children. These can include:

- ☐ that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability
- ☐ that they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- ☐ that they may be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- ☐ potential communication difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or recognising that abuse is occurring
- ☐ potential additional risks due to higher dependency on adults and / or need for intimate care
- ☐ issues with understanding the risks online and how it may influence their behaviour

We work with Social Care and other relevant agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for all children and that they receive the appropriate help and support.

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive

appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our school receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding / child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors.

The school ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

8. Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a vital part of safeguarding work and we understand how important it is and its role in safeguarding arrangements. We will always use our professional judgement to ensure that information shared is focused and proportionate and we are signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol which includes how to share and receive information for safeguarding purposes.

We understand that no individual knows everything about a child or family. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and are regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

A member of staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone (including parents/carers or pupils) about a safeguarding concern, nor promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) to share information on individual child protection cases with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

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

9. Child protection records

Accurate records are an essential aspect of effective child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse will record it as soon as possible on CPOMs, 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 presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

The written report should include:

- Details of the child's name, class etc;
- All details of the concerns/behaviour/incident/disclosure;
- Use child's own words;
- Ensure all information recorded is factual and accurate;
- Date and time of recording;
- Who the incident/disclosure was made to;
- Note any other witnesses;
- Use full names of all involved, where possible;
- Do not use abbreviations;
- Chronology of actions – date, place, who and what;
- Include body map, if appropriate
- Signature and date of person recording the incident (if written)

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

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

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

10. Multi-agency working

We understand the importance of agencies working together to keep children safe, and there is a legal requirement to do so.

We work with other relevant agencies such as Social Care, Police, the Virtual School and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our school (or sometimes who was previously with us) has a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan. Where this is the case, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure our school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have oversight of their school attendance, emotional wellbeing, academic progress, welfare and presentation, linking with the Essex Virtual School, which has strategic oversight of this group of children. Where our school is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure we are represented, provide appropriate information and contribute to the plan at these meetings. We will report on the child's progress in school, and any concerns about them will be shared at the meeting, unless to do so would place them at risk of harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead would speak with the child's key-worker outside of the meeting, and as soon as there is a concern.

11. Allegations about members of the children's workforce

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2026) set out the procedures in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). These procedures should be followed where an adult has:

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

Any concerns about an adult in our setting should be reported to the Headteacher or the designated safeguarding lead, who will then decide how to take this forward. In some cases, it might not be clear whether an incident constitutes an allegation. If this is the case, it will be necessary for us to explore the concerns to establish some facts – this initial fact-finding is not an investigation, it is to clarify information and to direct our response to the concern raised.

Where an allegation against a member of staff is received, and it is felt that any of the above criteria apply, this is to be reported to the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Essex Children's Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@thurrock.gov.uk. We may not carry out any investigation before a Children's Workforce Allegations Team referral has been made.

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

Any concern relating to the Headteacher should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors, who will refer the matter to the Children's Workforce Allegations Team.

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

12. Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

Our Behaviour Policy sets out our approach to behaviour for all children and also for those with more difficult or harmful behaviour. We recognise there are some children who have needs that require additional support and a more personalised approach and we always consider all behaviour, and our response to it, in the context of safeguarding.

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

13. Mobile Phones

In line with the [Mobile phones in schools \(DfE 2026\)](#), our school is a phone-free environment. Our approach to this forms part of our wider safeguarding arrangements and is detailed in our Mobile Phone Policy.

14. Whistleblowing

All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place and these are available in the 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](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/whistleblowing/) 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 or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Appendix A: Thurrock Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention

In Thurrock the Tiers of need are represented on Thurrock's Effective Support Windscreen. It is intended to provide practitioners with a shared understanding and common language around needs and harm.

This is a conceptual model of need and in reality, children and families will move across the windscreen. It will not be the same for each child or family; it is a means of providing needs led appropriate access to services, when considering the type of support needed. Some children and families will need additional

support that they will source directly from the relevant agencies; others may need support to navigate the early help system. Some children and families will require short term support following a specific incident whilst others will require longer more intensive support from a range of agencies. Children in Tiers 2-4 also need and use Tier 1 Universal Services.

Repeated assessments should not be necessary to move children from one Tier to another and children's stories can follow them as they progress through service provision. There will be some children, for example those with complex needs or who are deemed to be at risk of significant harm, who should be enabled to move quickly and effortlessly to the required service response without necessarily going up through each Tier.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are subject to the same safeguarding concerns and support pathways as all other children in Thurrock. In addition, they may also receive support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (more information in page 20).

In Thurrock we are working to a model of staged intervention which reflects four tiers of need. The tables later in this document provide a quick reference point for professionals to have the necessary conversations with other professionals and with the family. This is not an exhaustive list and family circumstances rarely fit neatly into one category.

The purpose of this document is to help match the response to the child's needs and is a way of supporting consistent and clear responses to children's safeguarding and wellbeing.

It is important to remember that guidance will never give all the answers, nor will it ever take the place of talking to each other. Where a practitioner has concerns about a child's welfare and/or doubts about the most appropriate pathway to meet a child's needs, they should consult initially with their own manager and organisation's safeguarding leads.

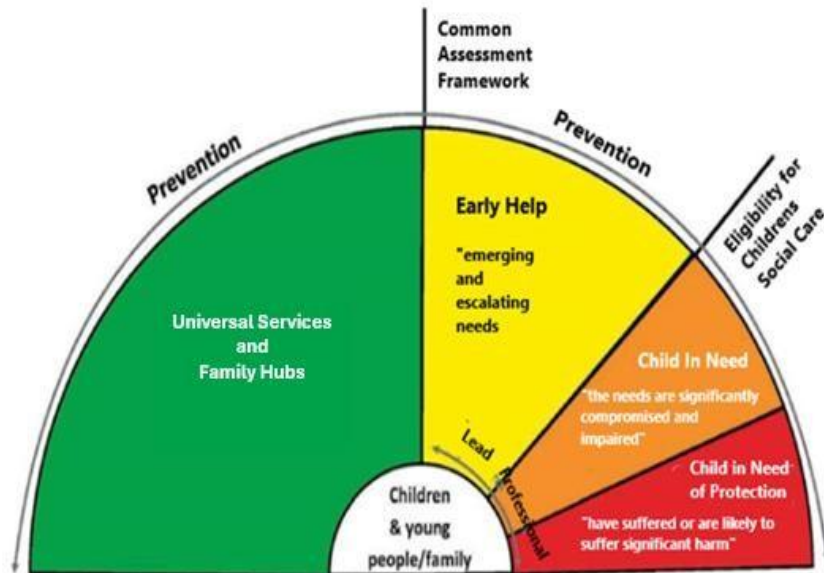
Tier 1 Children requiring Universal Services	Children whose needs are met through universal services. Children who make good overall progress in all areas of universal development and receive appropriate universal services.
Tier 2 Children requiring early intervention/prevention	Children whose health and development may be adversely affected and who would benefit from extra help in order to make the best of their life chances.
Tier 3 Children in Need who require statutory services	Children whose health and/or development is being impaired or there is a high risk of significant impairment.

Tier 4 Children whose needs are complex, in need of specialist services or in need of protection

Children who are experiencing significant harm or where there is a high likelihood of significant harm. For children who require statutory services.

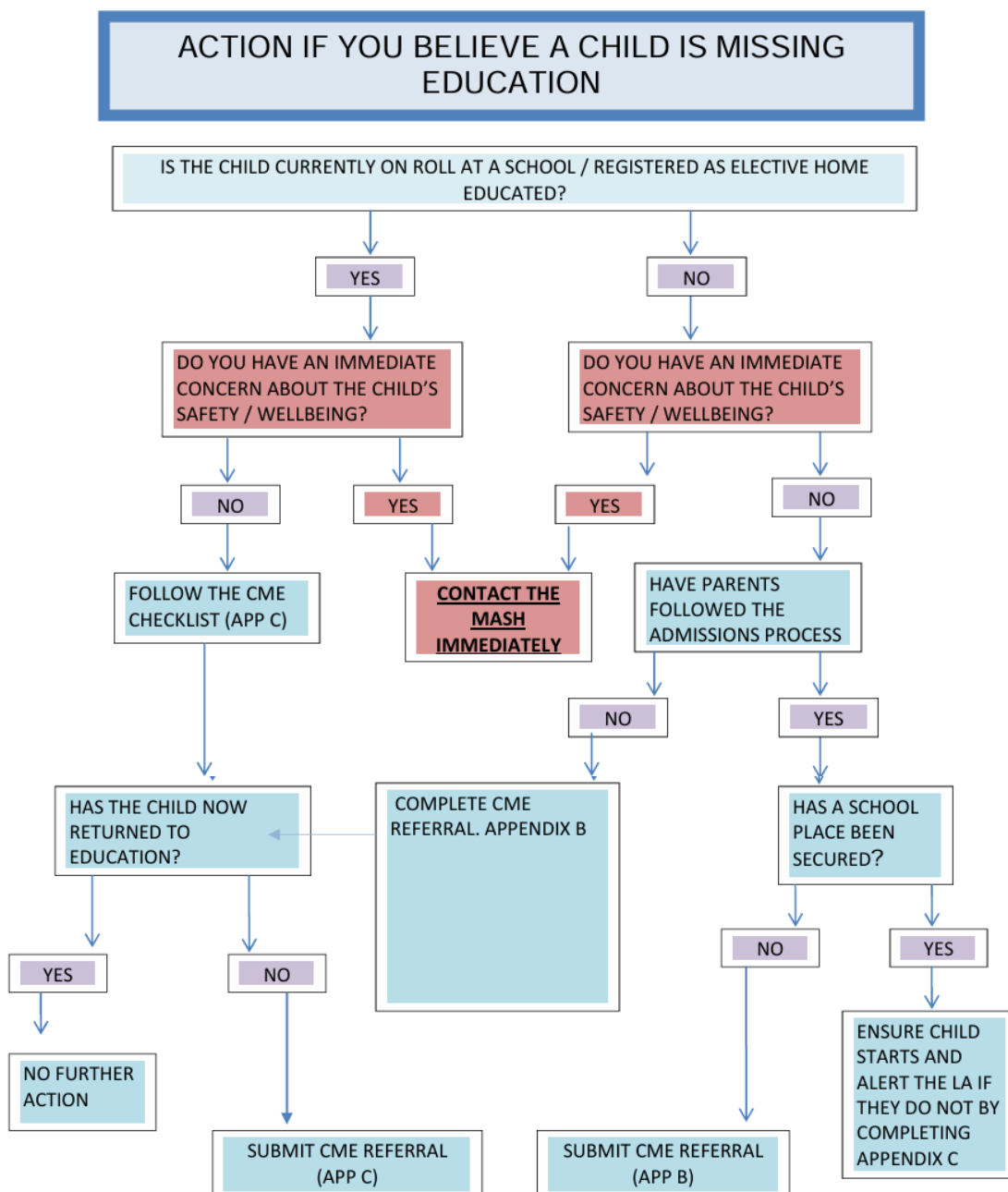
Thurrock Effective Support

THURROCK LOCAL
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP



Those involved in commissioning and designing services will need to bear in mind that the aim is to ensure seamlessness between each Tier, so that children or young people whose needs do escalate can access a range of services that can respond to their changing needs. Seamlessness must also apply to de-escalation of need. Children whose needs are reducing as a result of intervention may require services to be changed.

Appendix B



Appendix C

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School Safeguarding Governor Role Descriptor General duties

Maintain strategic oversight to ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place to cover all aspects of safeguarding responsibilities and requirements and that all statutory responsibilities are met. Champion safeguarding and child protection issues within the school.

Ensure all other members of the governing board develop their understanding of the board's child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

Ensure that all members of the governing board and trustees have the relevant safeguarding and child protection training.

Liaise with the clerk to governors to ensure that safeguarding is a standard agenda item for every governing board meeting.

Compliance with safeguarding guidance

Maintain an awareness and understanding of the most up-to-date versions of KCSIE and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of local and national developments in safeguarding provision and compliance requirements, including details of the local safeguarding partner arrangements.

Monitor how the school contributes to multi-agency working to safeguard children.

Ensure all governors have read the most up-to-date version of KCSIE in full and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Ensure all staff working directly with children have read at least Part one of the most up-to-date version of KCSIE and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Ensure all staff not working directly with children have read at least Annex A or Part one of the most up-to-date version of KCSIE and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Ensure safeguarding-related policies are compliant with government guidance, kept up-to-date, reviewed as per the review schedule, and published on the school website where required or recommended.

Ensure that all recruitment of staff and volunteers is undertaken in line with safer recruitment processes, including obtaining and checking references.

Ensure that an enhanced DBS check is carried out for all members of the governing board, including a section 128 check. [A section 128 check is a requirement for academy trustees and for governors of maintained schools.]

Ensure that appropriate safeguarding training, including online safety training, for all staff, volunteers, governors and trustees is provided during induction and updated on an annual basis.

Ensure that this training complies with the law and statutory guidance, meeting local and national requirements.

Ensure that where school facilities are hired by external organisations or individuals, appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

Working with the DSL

Ensure that the school has appointed a DSL who is a member of the SLT.

Ensure the DSL receives the time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role effectively.

Ensure that there is an up-to-date job description in place for the DSL and, if appointed, any deputy DSLs.

Make certain that any deputy DSLs are trained to the same standards as the DSL.

Ensure that, as a minimum, the DSL undertakes an annual safeguarding audit, and review and monitor the outcomes and actions taken following this audit.

Invite the DSL to report to governors following completion of the safeguarding audit to identify any actions required and advise on the next steps.

Ensure that, as a minimum, the DSL provides the governing board with an annual report on the implementation of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

In discussion with the DSL, monitor the implementation of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and consider the outcomes of the school's evaluation of this provision.

Monitoring

Visit the school on a termly basis to observe safeguarding practice in action.

Ensure there is an up-to-date single central record (SCR) covering all staff, and that individuals' details are removed once they no longer work at the school.

Monitor the school's risk assessment procedures to ensure that safeguarding risks are appropriately identified and all risks to pupils are addressed, e.g. radicalisation and child criminal exploitation (CCE).

Oversee school policy to ensure the DSL leads early help support for pupils.

Review the procedures for monitoring the safety of pupils placed with an alternative provider and pupils in homestay exchanges.

Monitor the procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse and low-level concerns raised against staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors.

Communication

Ensure the school communicates a culture of 'it could happen here' in relation to safeguarding issues.

Ensure that a robust system is implemented to make certain all staff keep accurate records of all safeguarding-related concerns and activity.

Ensure all staff are made aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

Ensure the school has clear lines of communication and works in partnership with parents and any relevant external agencies.

Monitor any processes used to make sure all relevant parties have up-to-date information about pupils.

Ensure that information is only shared on a need-to-know basis and monitor systems to ensure the confidentiality of pupils and their families is secured.

Ensure that pupils and parents are regularly surveyed to investigate their perspective on safeguarding at the school.

Ensure that all staff understand that in all cases where they are unsure about concerns they have, they must always speak to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Ensure that all staff are aware of the process to follow when a pupil confides that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and understand that they should only involve those who need to be involved.

Ensure that when recruiting, the school's shortlisting and interview processes for candidates adhere to the government guidance.
