



The
Appleton
School

Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on	16 th September 2025
Signature Chair of Governors	<i>Clittle</i>
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September 2025

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR THE APPLETON SCHOOL

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED JULY 2026 (earlier if required)

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KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

If you are concerned a child is subject to, or at risk of, being harmed or neglected, you should take action, as set out below, considering the **home address** of the young person/family. To check a local authority, postcodes of the home address can be checked here: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Essex (see Appendix A and B)

Essex Children and Families Hub -0345 603 7627 (out of hours 0345 606 1212)
Ask for Priority (Level 4) or Consultation (Level 2,3,4)
[Request for Support Form](#)

➤ **Immediate Risk of Significant Harm - Priority**

Where a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, please call the Children & Families Hub on 0345 603 7627 and ask for the 'Priority Line', and/or call the Police on 999.

During out of hours (Monday to Thursday 5pm to 8.45am, Friday and Bank Holidays 4:15pm to 8.45am), please call: 0345 606 1212 or email: Emergency.DutyTeamOutOfHours@essex.gov.uk

➤ **Request for Support**

If you are concerned that a child or young person is being harmed or neglected, or is at risk of this, you should go to the [Essex County Council](#) website where you can make a request for support to the Children & Families Hub.

➤ **Consultation**

The Children and Families Hub offer a consultation line for professionals providing advice and guidance. This can be accessed by calling 0345 603 7627 and asking for the 'Consultation Line'. You can also seek advice on Early Help at the online weekly 'drop-ins' – more information is available on this [link](#).

➤ **Request for Information Portal**

Enquiries and requests for information from the Children and Families can be made through this [online form](#).

➤ **Useful Resources**

The [Essex County Council](#) website includes the Essex Directory of Services [Essex Directory or Services](#) and other guidance and tools to support practitioners in their work with children and families across Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Windscreen of Need (Appendix C)

Thurrock

If you are concerned that a child living in Thurrock is being harmed or neglected or is at risk of this, you should contact:

Worried about a child?	Contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – Children's Social Care: 01375 652802 or thurrockmash@thurrock.gov.uk
Out of Hours	Monday to Thursday, 5:30pm to 9am Friday, from 4:30pm through the weekend until 9am on Monday, public holidays: 01375 372468
Police Child Abuse	Team 01277 266 822 or Call 999 if you are concerned a child needs immediate protection

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-care-professionals-services/thurrock-mash>

Southend

If there is a concern that a child living in Southend may be at risk of or may be suffering significant harm, contact CSPOC **01702 215007** Option 1. Please see attached Appendix 7 for Southend procedures.

Radicalisation

If there are concerns someone is vulnerable to radicalisation, or there is a concern about organisations that work with children:

If you have a concern that a crime is being committed, planned, or you are aware of any terrorist activity, please contact the police on either **999** (if urgent) or **101** (for all other enquiries).

It is recommended that advice is sought before a referral is made. Staff in our schools should speak to the DSL in the first instance, who can then seek advice if required through the Police Prevent team: prevent@essex.police.uk **01245 452196** or through the Education Safeguarding Team: EducationSafeguarding@essex.gov.uk

If it is felt a referral is needed to Prevent, the online form can be found here: [Report Extremism in Education](#) and advice can be found here.

If there are wider safeguarding concerns, a call should be made to the Children and Families Hub/ Social Care to consider whether other support and action is also necessary.

Domestic Abuse – Operation Encompass

Our schools are signed up to Operation Encompass to receive notifications. Operation Encompass aims to reduce the long-term impacts of domestic abuse by providing early intervention and support. When the police attend incidents of domestic violence or abuse where children are directly or indirectly involved, they notify the designated safeguarding lead at the child's school before the start of the next school day. The safeguarding lead then makes sure the child gets the immediate support that they need.

Any queries, or email correspondence relating to Operation Encompass should be sent to operation.encompass@essex.police.uk.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on **0204 513 9990**

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on **0808 2000 247**. Its [website](#) provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

1. Introduction

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

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2025)

This 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, 2025)
- the Behaviour policy
- the Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct)
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

- 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

Our 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. We believe that, only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

The Appleton School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. “The welfare of the child is paramount” (Children Act 1989).

Our approach to safeguarding and welfare includes:

- Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching, and pastoral support offered to students;
- Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns;
- Support for students who may have been abused.

The school recognises that we are an agent of referral and not of investigation.

- Establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Provide reporting mechanisms to support all pupils/students, allowing them to report concerns in a way that they feel comfortable. We will seek to gain student voice on a regular basis to review this;
- Ensure that students know that there are adults within the school they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Ensure students receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating;
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships;
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others;
- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded, and our system of democratic government;
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;

- Promote tolerance of and respect for people of with protected characteristics, including all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability, and sexual orientations;
- Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents/carers, and colleagues from partner agencies.

2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in Working)[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. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board \(ESCB\)](#). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

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 legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information Sharing \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act (2004)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- [Teaching online safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Generative AI: product safety expectations \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE 2025\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour and appendices \(ECC 2025\)](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges DfE 2025\)](#)
- Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)

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

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school and a 'whole-school approach' to this. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on the front cover).

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 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 undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The 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.

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)

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. 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 Deputy / Deputies)

The designated safeguarding lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained, leading on online safety (including filtering and monitoring standards) 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 lead/leads is/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 lead/leads is able to act in their absence.

All school staff

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our children can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, missing education and consensual/non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk. In addition, we recognise that any child may benefit from additional help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it.

All staff members are aware of and follow school safeguarding processes (as set out in this policy) and are also aware of how to make a referral to Social Care, if there is a need to do so. Staff understand that, if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and 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, either at home or out in the community. We understand there are many factors which may impact on our children's welfare and safety and we also understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We recognise that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues 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. 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 another child or children"

The guidance refers to four main categories of abuse:

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

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

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

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

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

CSE is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. In Essex, the definition of 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.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of CCE / CSE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts / new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs / alcohol
- Children missing for periods of time / regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Staff utilise and work in line with the [County Lines and Exploitation Toolkit for Professionals](#). One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. Once the victim has been safeguarded, and appropriate referrals made to relevant agencies, these first responder organisations can consider a referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

Child on child abuse (including 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. [You may wish to include / replace this with your own ethos / values]

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 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.

Sexting

Sexting is defined as the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'. 'Sexting' does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police (UKCCIS [Sexting - How to Respond to an Incident](#)). Staff are aware that consensual image sharing is still illegal.

In regards to sexting, staff must be aware of how to keep themselves safe when dealing with any imagery. Staff are all aware not to look at or open images or forward these to any individual unless specifically requested by the police.

If an incident involving 'sexting' comes to the attention of staff, they are advised to:

- Report it to the DSL immediately;
- Not to view, copy, print, share, store/download the imagery themselves, or ask a child to share or download – this is **illegal**;
- If they have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to them before they could ask them not to), they will report this to the DSL and support will be provided;
- Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it;
- Not ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL;
- Not share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents/carers;
- Not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved;
- Explain to the student that they need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL, and that they will be kept informed throughout the process.

The DSL (or DDSL) will use the [guidance](#) to determine appropriate next steps, particularly whether external agencies need to be informed, or whether the incident can be managed by the school, informing parents for most incidents. As noted in guidance, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for the DSL or equivalent to view the image to identify and fully safeguard the children involved, in line with [Searching, Screen and Confiscation guidance](#).

Sextortion

Cases of Financially motivated sexual extortion (sextortion) have increased globally. Children are being forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand (such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card) after an offender has threatened to release nudes or semi-nudes of them. This is financially motivated sexual extortion, a type of online blackmail often referred to in the media as 'sextortion'. It is a form of child sexual abuse. Financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by organised crime groups (OCGs) based overseas who are typically motivated by money. These groups target all ages and genders however, a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged 14-18. OCGs may target multiple children and young people within an education or wider social setting, as it is more likely that a child or young person will accept a friend request or communicate with someone they don't know if they believe they are a 'mutual friend'.

All staff should report disclosures around incidents of this nature to the DSL who will refer to the relevant local authority/police.

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).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour is included in the school's RSHE Policy and curriculum and Behaviour Policy.

Appendix E has the school's Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Policy.

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 ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (*see Appendix C*), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Risk in the community (RIC)

RIC 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.

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.

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 aim 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.

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, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **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.

In regards to the use of mobile devices the school has a 'not seen, not heard, not taken' policy unless staff authorise use mobile devices in lessons to support the students' education. We also have some students who use their mobile devices to monitor their medical situation, i.e. blood sugar levels. Full details of use of mobile devices in lessons is outlined in the school ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

We have systems in school to filter information and block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content - Smoothwall. 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. We also have a system to monitor the use of IT – Impero.

The school's ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy provides further guidance/information.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

The Appleton School recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming)

and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

The Appleton School will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our Online Safety, ICT and Internet Acceptable Use, Behaviour and Artificial Intelligence policies.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. The school will also apply its Harmful Sexual Behaviours policy (found within the Child Protection Policy) around any child-on-child harmful sexual behaviours such as where indecent images have been shared that are AI-generated.

Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, 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.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

As with other safeguarding issues, we work with other relevant agencies to share information and address concerns, to help safeguard all children.

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

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

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

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

Signs that FGM might happen:

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad.
- A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'.
- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM.
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays.
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school.
- A girl struggles to keep up in school.
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home.

Signs that FGM might have taken place:

- Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting.
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet.
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed.
- Acting differently after an absence from school or college.
- Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations.
- Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed.

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. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

5. Procedures

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

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected 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, 2025)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [Essex Effective Support](#). 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 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 in

the school to ensure that all staff members have access to urgent safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them. 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 or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

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

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

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 deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

8. Supporting Students through CAPE - Citizenship and Achieving Personal Excellence (PSHE/RSE)

It is vital that staff working with young people understand the above safeguarding issues (and any other relevant contextual issues) to allow them to be alert to and respond to signs and evidence of a concern. Staff also use this knowledge to plan what information needs to be communicated to students and parents/carers; The DSL works with the CAPE coordinator and other relevant staff within each school to ensure students are taught about issues in a timely and age appropriate manner through personal development/ PSHE/RSE lessons and opportunities. Children are supported to obtain and develop the knowledge and skills to keep themselves and others safe. Children are made aware the law is in place to protect them, rather than criminalise them. Staff know that students with Special Educational Needs may require additional support with their understanding during learning opportunities – please see our school's CAPE/RSE policies for more details. Various methods are used within each school to communicate to parents/carers how to help keep their child safe linked to current learning and/or emerging trends.

9. Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and we understand that decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Our school is signed up to the Education and Learning Information Sharing Protocol which includes information sharing for safeguarding purposes. This protocol enables us to share and receive information with the Local Authority in a legal, safe, and secure way, to support our work in keeping children safe.

The school is signed up to the Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information, where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life, would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and are regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

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

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.

10. 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

Our school uses CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System). This is monitored by the DSL/DDSL's and the Headteacher. All staff can record incidents and concerns on here.

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 then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records relating to child protection are kept 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 school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead may also make contact with the new 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).

11. Interagency working

It is important that agencies work together to keep children safe, and there is a legal requirement to do so.

We work with other relevant agencies, such as Social Care, the Virtual School, Police and Health / mental health services to support children and keep them safe. This includes where a child in our school (or who was previously known to 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 well-being, 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.

12. 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 2025) and the SET procedures (ESCB 2025) 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, the SET procedures (ESCB, 2025) require this to be reported to the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Essex Children's Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@essex.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.

13. Behaviour, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

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

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children and young people for a variety of reasons, this may include:

- to comfort a child or young person in distress (*appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment*);
- to direct a child or young person;
- for curricular reasons (*for example in PE, Music, Drama etc*);
- in an emergency, to avert danger to the child, young person or others;

The guidance produced by the Department for Education [Use of Reasonable Force \(DfE, 2013\)](#) states that:

*“Schools **should not** have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a child or young person or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a child or young person causing harm.”*

The term ‘reasonable force’ covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. ‘Reasonable’ means using no more force than is needed. Our school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context

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 school **Whistleblowing Policy**. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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: Concern for a child or young person and their family

Concern for a child or young person and their family

As concerns emerge

- ✓ In agency/organisation/education setting based meeting with the family

Consultation opportunities

- ✓ Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead
 - ✓ TAFSO@essex.gov.uk
 - ✓ [Early Help Drop-ins](#) – (link will take you to days, time and joining info)
 - ✓ SET CAMHS Professional Consultation Line available Mon-Thurs 10am-midday. Tel: 0300 300 1996 - professionals only
- * Always record your concern and outcome of any consultation *

Further resources available

- ✓ Review your concerns against the [Indicators of need](#) (within the Effective Support document)
- ✓ Find a service in the [Essex Directory of Services](#) or [Frontline](#)
- ✓ SEND needs [Essex Local Offer](#) or SEND [Information, Advice & Support](#).
- ✓ [Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service](#)
- ✓ [Early Help plan template](#)

Safeguarding concerns for child, young person and their family

Consultation with your organisation's designated safeguarding person/safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding Consultation with the Children & Families Hub 0345 603 7627.

Submission of a [Request for Support](#) to the Children & Families Hub or use the Priority Line for most urgent child protection concerns (call 0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line).

The Children and Families Hub triage the information shared and make a decision about level of need.

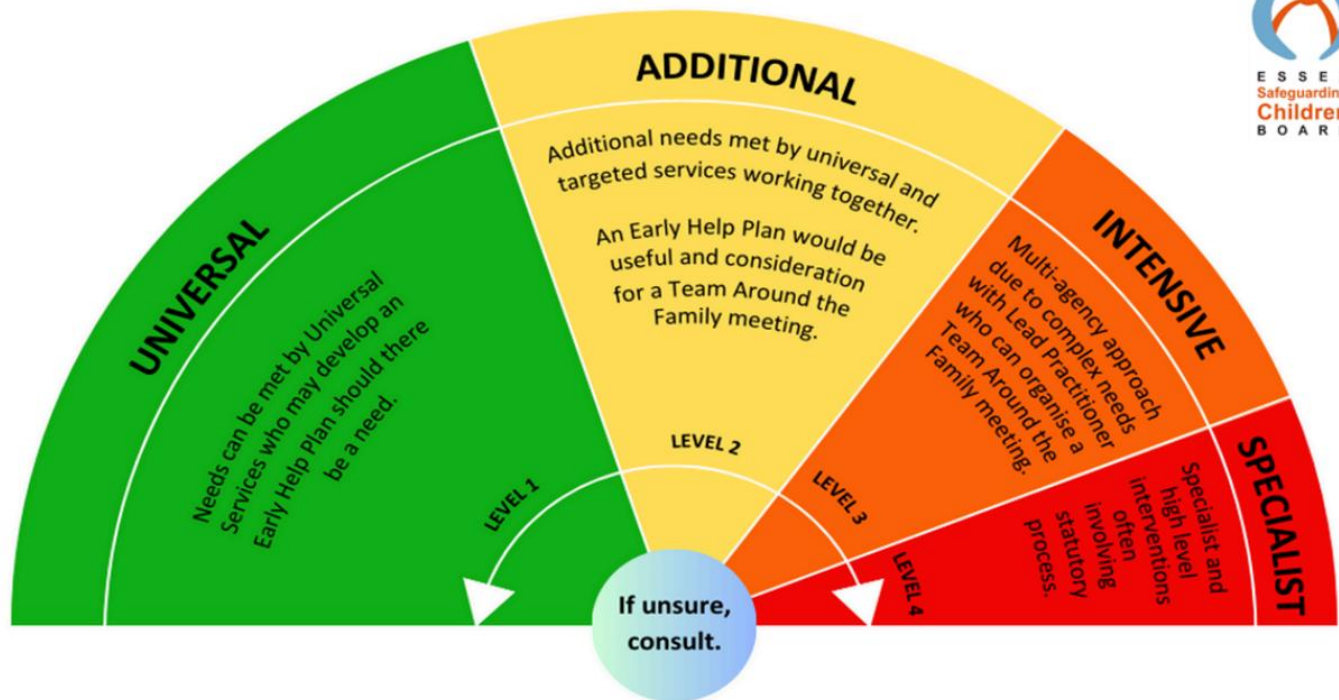
For those Requests for Support that do not require a Family Solutions or Children's Social Care intervention, the referrer will receive feedback explaining the rationale for the decision.

Early Help

Family Solutions

Children's Social Care

The Effective Support Windscreen



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

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

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

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

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

At the Appleton School all staff are made aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly, and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

We recognise that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

Therefore, we recognise that it is important that staff are aware of their school's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing from education procedures.

Arrangements for children who are absent from education

Definition of Missing

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

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where children missing frequently are open to Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the educational setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

2. When a child goes missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an educational setting this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, contacting the child by phone, text and social media, and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, then they must be reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, **or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm.** It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

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

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

3. When the child is found

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

4. Essex Police

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

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

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

Useful contacts:

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

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

Safeguarding Procedures



The Designated Safeguarding Leads:





Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):
Mr S Stockdale	Mrs C Whitehead	Miss K Green	Mrs A-M Salisbury	Miss J Wright	Mrs C Jones
					

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **EVERYONE’S** responsibility” KCSIE 2025

1. If you have a concern about a child, or a child has made a disclosure, and you consider the situation to be an emergency (where there is risk of harm or where a child has been harmed including any injuries, child-on-child abuse, fear of going home, risks when leaving, missing children), concerns should be **taken directly** to the DSL (or DDSL) person ASAP.
2. In the absence of a DSL, all referrals should be made to the **headteacher** or a **deputy headteacher**. In the absence of any of the above, where a child is at risk of significant harm, you can ring the ‘Hub’ on **0345 603 7627** (out of hours number: **0345 606 1212**). They advise the next steps that are needed. Record this. In situations of immediate risk of significant harm, staff should contact the **police – 999**.
3. For all non-emergency concerns, or after any emergency referrals have been made in person, please log all information on **CPOMS** at the first opportunity. It is important to log the **child’s words** and not your interpretations.

Allegations about adults



Headteacher:	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	Deputy Headteacher:	Deputy Headteacher:
Miss S Cox	Mr S Stockdale	Ms J Everett	Mr J Hannan
			

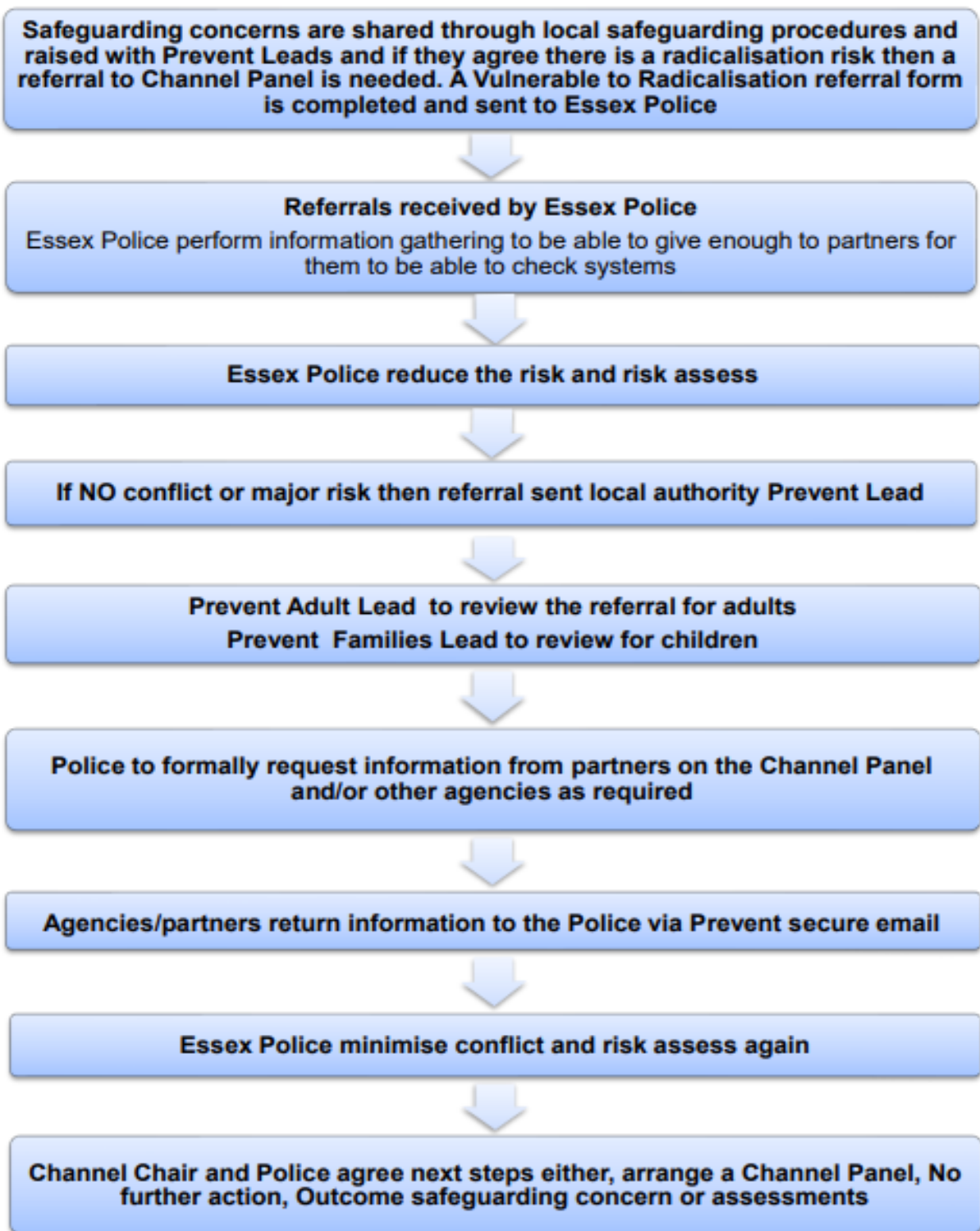
Chair of Governors:
Mrs Charlotte Little

Safeguarding Governor:
Mrs Charlotte Little

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **EVERYONE’S** responsibility”
KCSIE 2025

1. If you have a **concern about a staff member** (anyone working in the school in any capacity), or a child has disclosed something about a staff member to you to suggest they have behaved in a way that has harmed / may harm a child: possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they pose a risk or harm to children, please report this immediately in person to the **headteacher** (unless the allegation is about the headteacher). It is important to report and then log the **child’s words** and not your interpretations.
2. In the absence of the headteacher, report to either of the **Deputy Headteachers**. Alternatively, report to the DSL. In the absence of any of the above, or if the allegation is about the headteacher, report to the **chair of governors**, Mrs Charlotte Little. Any concerns about the chair of governors should be reported to the **Trust CEO – Mrs Sarah Skinner**.
3. If none of these staff members are available to speak to, call the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 03330 139 797. They advise the next steps needed. Record this.

Appendix E: Essex CHANNEL/PREVENT Flow Chart



Appendix F: Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Safeguarding risk assessment - general

Name of child	
Class	
Year Group	
Assessment completed by	
Date	

Risk identification:	
What is the actual risk?	
What is the potential risk?	
Who is affected by the risk?	
In which situation may the risk occur?	
What kind of harm is likely to occur?	
Risk reduction strategies:	
Proactive interventions to prevent risk	
Reactive interventions to respond to risk	
Who needs to be involved to support the plan?	
Staff Training:	
Identified training needs	
Training provided to meet needs	
Date training completed	

Agreed by:	
Date:	

Communication of risk management strategy:	
Plans and strategies shared with	
Communication method and date	

Review:	
How effective have the strategies and interventions been?	
Has the risk reduced?	
Has the risk increased?	
Are any additions or amendments required?	

Agreed by:	
Date:	

Addendum: Meeting digital and technology standards in schools

Filtering and monitoring standards for schools

Standard 1: We will identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage our filtering and monitoring systems

The importance of meeting the standard

We aim to provide a safe environment to learn and work, including when online. Filtering and monitoring are both important parts of safeguarding pupils and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

Clear roles, responsibilities and strategies are vital for delivering and maintaining effective filtering and monitoring systems. At the Appleton School the right people are working together and using their professional expertise to make informed decisions.

How to meet the standard

Governing bodies and proprietors have overall strategic responsibility for filtering and monitoring and need assurance that the standards are being met.

To do this, they will identify and assign:

- a member of the senior leadership team and a governor, to be responsible for ensuring these standards are met
- the roles and responsibilities of staff and third parties, for example, external service providers

We recognise that there is not always capacity for full-time staff for each of these roles and responsibility and therefore, may lie as part of a wider role within the school. However, it will be clear who is responsible and it is possible to make prompt changes to our provision.

Technical requirements to meet the standard

The senior leadership team are responsible for:

- procuring filtering and monitoring systems
- documenting decisions on what is blocked or allowed and why
- reviewing the effectiveness of your provision
- overseeing reports

They are also responsible for making sure that all staff:

- understand their role
- are appropriately trained
- follow policies, processes and procedures
- act on reports and concerns

Senior leaders will work closely with governors, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and IT service providers in all aspects of filtering and monitoring. Your IT service provider may be a staff technician or an external service provider.

Day to day management of filtering and monitoring systems requires the specialist knowledge of both safeguarding and IT staff to be effective. The DSL will work closely together with IT service providers to meet the needs of our setting. Where appropriate we will ask our filtering or monitoring providers for system specific training and support.

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety, which includes overseeing and acting on:

- filtering and monitoring reports
- safeguarding concerns
- checks to filtering and monitoring systems

The IT service provider should have technical responsibility for:

- maintaining filtering and monitoring systems
- providing filtering and monitoring reports
- completing actions following concerns or checks to systems

The IT service provider should work with the senior leadership team and DSL to:

- procure systems
- identify risk
- carry out reviews
- carry out checks

When to meet the standard

The school will regularly review the detail of this information in order to ensure they are meeting this standard.

Standard 2: We review our filtering and monitoring provision annually

The importance of meeting the standard

For filtering and monitoring to be effective it should meet the needs of your pupils and staff, and reflect your specific use of technology while minimising potential harms.

To understand and evaluate the changing needs and potential risks of our school, we review our filtering and monitoring provision annually.

Additional checks to filtering and monitoring will be informed by the review process so that governing bodies and proprietors have assurance that systems are working effectively and meeting safeguarding obligations.

How to meet the standard

Governing bodies and proprietors have overall strategic responsibility for meeting this standard. They make sure that filtering and monitoring provision is reviewed, which can be part of a wider online safety review, at least annually.

The review will be conducted by members of the senior leadership team, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and the IT service provider and involve the responsible governor. The results of the online safety review will be recorded for reference and made available to those entitled to inspect that information.

Your IT service provider may be a staff technician or an external service provider.

Technical requirements to meet the standard

A review of filtering and monitoring will be carried out to identify our current provision, any gaps, and the specific needs of our pupils and staff.

We understand:

- the risk profile of our pupils, including their age range, pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND), pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- what our filtering system currently blocks or allows and why
- any outside safeguarding influences, such as county lines
- any relevant safeguarding reports
- the digital resilience of our pupils
- teaching requirements, for example, your RHSE and PSHE curriculum
- the specific use of your chosen technologies, including Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)
- what related safeguarding or technology policies we have in place
- what checks are currently taking place and how resulting actions are handled

To make our filtering and monitoring provision effective, our review will inform:

- related safeguarding or technology policies and procedures
- roles and responsibilities
- training of staff
- curriculum and learning opportunities
- procurement decisions
- how often and what is checked
- monitoring strategies

The review will be done annually, or when:

- a safeguarding risk is identified
- there is a change in working practice, like remote access or BYOD
- new technology is introduced

There are templates and advice in the reviewing online safety section of [Keeping children safe in education](#) that the school will follow when conducting reviews.

Checks to our filtering provision will be completed and recorded as part of our filtering and monitoring review process. How often the checks take place will be based on our context, the risks highlighted in our filtering and monitoring review, and any other risk assessments. All checks will be undertaken from both a safeguarding and IT perspective.

When checking filtering and monitoring systems we will make sure that the system setup has not changed or been deactivated. The checks will include a range of:

- school owned devices and services, including those used off site
- geographical areas across the site
- user groups, for example, teachers, pupils and guests

We will keep a log of our checks so they can be reviewed. You should record:

- when the checks took place
- who did the check

- what they tested or checked
- resulting actions

We make sure that:

- all staff know how to report and record concerns
- filtering and monitoring systems work on new devices and services before releasing them to staff and pupils
- blocklists are reviewed and they can be modified in line with changes to safeguarding risks

We will use the South West Grid for Learning's (SWGfL) [testing tool](#) to check that our filtering system is blocking access to:

- illegal child sexual abuse material
- unlawful terrorist content
- adult content

When to meet the standard

The school will regularly review the detail of this information in order to ensure they are meeting this standard.

Standard 3: Our filtering system blocks harmful and inappropriate content, without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning

The importance of meeting the standard

We recognise that an active and well managed filtering system is an important part of providing a safe environment for pupils to learn.

We also recognise that no filtering system can be 100% effective. We understand the coverage of our filtering system, any limitations it has, and mitigate accordingly to minimise harm and meet your statutory requirements in [Keeping children safe in education](#) (KCSIE) and the [Prevent duty](#).

An effective filtering system needs to block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. It should not:

- unreasonably impact teaching and learning or school administration
- restrict students from learning how to assess and manage risk themselves

How to meet the standard

Governing bodies and proprietors will support the senior leadership team to procure and set up systems which meet this standard and the risk profile of the school.

Management of filtering systems requires the specialist knowledge of both safeguarding and IT staff to be effective. Where appropriate we will ask our filtering provider for system specific training and support.

Technical requirements to meet the standard

We make sure our filtering provider is:

- a member of [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF)
- signed up to Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit list (CTIRU)
- blocking access to illegal content including child sexual abuse material (CSAM)

Where the filtering provision is procured with a broadband service, we make sure it meets the needs of our school.

Our filtering system is operational, up to date and applied to all:

- users, including guest accounts
- school owned devices
- devices using the school broadband connection

Our filtering system:

- filters all internet feeds, including any backup connections
- be age and ability appropriate for the users, and be suitable for educational settings
- handle multilingual web content, images, common misspellings and abbreviations
- identify technologies and techniques that allow users to get around the filtering such as VPNs and proxy services and block them
- provide alerts when any web content has been blocked

Mobile and app content is often presented in a different way to web browser content. If our users access content in this way, we will get confirmation from our provider as to whether they can provide filtering on mobile or app technologies. A technical monitoring system will be applied to devices using mobile or app content to reduce the risk of harm.

It is important to be able to identify individuals who might be trying to access unsuitable or illegal material so they can be supported by appropriate staff, such as the senior leadership team or the designated safeguarding lead.

Our filtering systems allows us to identify:

- device name or ID, IP address, and where possible, the individual
- the time and date of attempted access
- the search term or content being blocked

We conduct our own data protection impact assessment (DPIA) and review the privacy notices of third party providers. [A DPIA template](#) is available from the ICO.

[The DfE data protection toolkit](#) includes guidance on privacy notices and DPIAs.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has guidance on establishing [appropriate filtering](#).

Our senior leadership team may decide to enforce Safe Search, or a child friendly search engine or tools, to provide an additional level of protection for our users on top of the filtering service.

All staff need to be aware of reporting mechanisms for safeguarding and technical concerns. They should report if:

- they witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed
- they can access unsuitable material
- they are teaching topics which could create unusual activity on the filtering logs
- there is failure in the software or abuse of the system

- there are perceived unreasonable restrictions that affect teaching and learning or administrative tasks
- they notice abbreviations or misspellings that allow access to restricted material

Dependencies to the standard

We also check that we meet:

- [Broadband internet standards](#)
- [Cyber security standards](#)

When to meet the standard

The school will regularly review the detail of this information in order to ensure they are meeting this standard.

Standard 4: You should have effective monitoring strategies that meet the safeguarding needs of your school or college

The importance of meeting the standard

Monitoring user activity on school devices is an important part of providing a safe environment for children and staff. Unlike filtering, it does not stop users from accessing material through internet searches or software.

Monitoring allows us to review user activity on school devices. For monitoring to be effective it must pick up incidents urgently, usually through alerts or observations, allowing you to take prompt action and record the outcome.

Our monitoring strategy is informed by the filtering and monitoring review. A variety of monitoring strategies may be required to minimise safeguarding risks on internet connected devices and may include:

- physically monitoring by staff watching screens of users
- live supervision by staff on a console with device management software
- network monitoring using log files of internet traffic and web access
- individual device monitoring through software or third-party services

How to meet the standard

Governing bodies and proprietors support the senior leadership team to make sure effective device monitoring is in place which meets this standard and the risk profile of the school.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will take lead responsibility for any safeguarding and child protection matters that are picked up through monitoring.

The management of technical monitoring systems require the specialist knowledge of both safeguarding and IT staff to be effective. Training should be provided to make sure their knowledge is current. Where required, we will ask our monitoring system provider for system specific training and support.

Technical requirements to meet the standard

Governing bodies support the senior leadership team to review the effectiveness of our monitoring strategies and reporting process. Make sure that incidents are urgently picked up, acted on and outcomes are recorded. Incidents could be of a malicious, technical, or safeguarding nature. It is made clear to all staff how to deal with these incidents and who should lead on any actions.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has guidance for schools and colleges on establishing [appropriate monitoring](#).

Device monitoring will be managed by IT staff or third party providers, who need to:

- make sure monitoring systems are working as expected
- provide reporting on pupil device activity
- receive safeguarding training including online safety
- record and report safeguarding concerns to the DSL

Make sure that:

- monitoring data is received in a format that your staff can understand
- users are identifiable to the school or college, so concerns can be traced back to an individual, including guest accounts

If mobile or app technologies are used then we will apply a technical monitoring system to the devices, as our filtering system might not pick up mobile or app content.

In the online safety section of [Keeping children safe in education](#) there is guidance on the 4 areas of risk that users may experience when online. Our monitoring provision will identify and alert you to behaviours associated with them.

Technical monitoring systems do not stop unsafe activities on a device or online. Staff should:

- provide effective supervision
- take steps to maintain awareness of how devices are being used by pupils
- report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL

The school monitoring procedures are reflected in this policy and integrated into relevant online safety, safeguarding and organisational policies, such as privacy notices.

Where we have a technical monitoring system we will conduct our own data protection impact assessment (DPIA) and review the privacy notices of third party providers. [A DPIA template](#) is available from the ICO.

[The DfE data protection toolkit](#) includes guidance on privacy notices and DPIAs.

Dependencies to the standard

Check that you meet:

- [Cyber security standards](#)

When to meet the standard

The school will regularly review the detail of this information in order to ensure they are meeting this standard.