

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Policy type	Statutory
Review period	Annual
Last reviewed on	Autumn 2024
Next review due	Autumn 2025
Approval level	Executive Board

Approved by (Name, date, signature)



Executive Board, 25 September 2024
Published on

Omnia Foundation Website

POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

MISSION

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

Aims of the Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2024)

This Child Protection Policy is taken from the Essex County Council Model Child Protection Policy and has been written by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board Team. It is for all staff, home settings, members of the Executive Board, volunteers and the wider Omnia foundation community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for the foundation and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- the foundation Rights & Responsibilities policy
- the Whistleblowing Policy
- the Use of Physical Intervention Policy
- the Digital Safety Policy
- the Me, Myself & I Policy
- the foundation Staff Code of Conduct
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education to be found in the Attendance Policy
- 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:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's 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

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

Statutory Framework

There is government guidance set out in Working Together (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 (Social Care), Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB).

In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (Section 157 for Independent Schools) places a statutory responsibility on The Executive Board to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students of the foundation.

In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures. The Omnia Foundation also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(HMG, 2023\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support \(2021\)](#)
- [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 advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [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)
- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2018\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion in schools, academies and PRUs, including pupil movement \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2022\)](#)
- [Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - good practice for schools \(ECC, 2021\)](#)
- [Filtering and Monitoring Standards \(DfE\)](#)

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 and the Local Authority and other agencies who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in the Omnia Foundation with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding leads) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

The Executive Board

The Executive Board ensures that the policies, procedures and training in the foundation 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 is reviewed at least annually.

The board member for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This director takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in the foundation. The Executive Board ensures there is a named

designated safeguarding lead and at least one deputy safeguarding lead in place (also named on the front cover).

The Executive Board ensures the foundation contributes to inter-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 Executive Board ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is then 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 Executive Board ensures our students are taught how to keep themselves safe (including online) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. The foundation works in accordance with new government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age students) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age students) and Health Education (for all students in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The Executive Board and foundation leadership team are responsible for

- ensuring the foundation follows 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 foundation's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information)
- ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised on-site.
- online safety (including strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring systems to support this)

The Head of Foundation

The Head of Foundation works in accordance with the statutory requirements upon all foundation staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by The Executive Board 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 will act in their absence.

All Foundation Staff

Everyone at the Omnia Foundation has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment where our students can learn. All staff are aware of the types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put young people at risk of harm, so we are able to identify those 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 young people are at risk. In addition, we recognise that any young person 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 foundation processes (as set out in this policy) and are 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 student'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 young people may not always feel able or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, perhaps because they are embarrassed or they may not always recognise that they are being abused. We recognise there are many factors which may impact on our students' welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We also understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Our staff will always reassure students who report abuse / victims of abuse that they are taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never make a young person feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are

causing a problem.

Types of Abuse / Specific Safeguarding Issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education defines 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 four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (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 Child Sexual Exploitation (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”.

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

Peer on Peer (Child on child) abuse

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 actions of any kind in the foundation and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate actions 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 in accordance with the foundation values of Open-minded, Motivated, Noble, Independent, Achievers.

We recognise that the foundation may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of our young people at risk of, or who have suffered, harm and trauma. Nevertheless, whilst on-site, their actions and reactions may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive responses towards other students. The foundation recognises that some students may abuse their peers and that this may happen on-site, or outside of it.

Any incidents of peer on peer (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.

The Omnia Foundation understands that even though peer on peer (child on child) abuse / harmful sexual abuse may not be reported, it is likely that it is occurring and we are clear there is a zero tolerance approach to inappropriate or abusive actions. We understand the barriers which may prevent a young person from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

We use a range of strategies to help young people understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is acting in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. The foundation understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse. We ensure that our students feel confident and comfortable to report abuse and reassure them that they are not causing a problem by doing so.

For further information, please refer to the foundation's Anti-Bullying 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. The Omnia Foundation recognises that a student missing from education or a student whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to educate them at home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the foundation procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not on-site, students may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with home settings and other partners to keep our young people on-site whenever possible.

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

The Omnia Foundation must inform the local authority of any student who has been absent without the permission of the foundation for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

(see Attendance Policy for more details around procedure for children missing in education)

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside of foundation life. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a student's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a young person and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a student and their home setting.

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.

The foundation 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 / share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a student or home setting or be placing a young person at risk of harm.

Harmful sexual behaviour

We understand that young people's sexual activities exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate / developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that harmful sexual behaviour and peer on peer 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.

The foundation 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 students about healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, equality, the law and how to keep themselves safe (on and offline).

For further information, please refer to the foundation Me, Myself & I Policy.

Mental Health

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 student and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that our foundation play a key part in this. The Omnia Foundation aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all students and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

It is vital that we work in partnership with home settings to support the well-being of our students. Home settings should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with the foundation, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

Online Safety

We recognise that our students are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any student can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our students with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

The four main areas of online risk could be categorised as:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults;
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying;
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams.

The Omnia Foundation seeks to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Online Safety policy.

Prevention of Radicalisation

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

The PREVENT duty requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students 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.

The Omnia Foundation works 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 indicators which may signal that students are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from education, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts, money or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

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. Whilst our setting is exclusively for boys, we are aware that our students may have family members or girlfriends who may be subject to FGM. Therefore the foundation operates in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

Procedures

The Omnia Foundation 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 / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the foundation 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, 2022)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 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 foundation 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 adults from the home setting. 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 on-site, we will always seek to inform home settings, 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 home settings.

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 foundation 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 the foundation 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 the foundation, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

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.

The Omnia Foundation understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. 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

Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Head of Foundation, all staff members and board members receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated by the Head and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members 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 and child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and board members. All staff, whether working directly or indirectly with children, are required to read Section 1 of KCSIE annually and sign a declaration held on Cezanne, the HR Portal, to say they have done so.

The Omnia Foundation ensures that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

The Chief Operating Officer and the Head of Foundation attend termly safeguarding updates from the Essex Safeguarding Team organized by Essex Primary Heads Association.

Information sharing and confidentiality

Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a student, 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 home settings or students) 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.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the student's best interests to do so.

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

Child protection records

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The Omnia Foundation is clear about the need to record any concern held about a student or students within the foundation and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse will record it on CPOMS 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 deputies), 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 student file). All child protection records are stored securely online and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the student's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.

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

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

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, including where a child on roll (or 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 the foundation 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 home setting. The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the foundation 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 attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. Where the foundation 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, 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.

Allegations about Members of the Workforce

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct. The foundation works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The foundation has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with young people). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Head of Foundation or, in their absence, the most senior member of staff on-site. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Head of Foundation will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

This role is distinct from the designated safeguarding lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the foundation to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the foundation operates within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

Where the concern involves the Head of Foundation, it should be reported directly to the Chair of the Executive Board.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Head, senior named person or the Chair of Executive Board must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the

Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on 03330 139 797 within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to students, home settings and HR. The foundation does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

Staffing matters are confidential and the foundation operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

Rights and responsibilities, use of physical intervention and reasonable force

Our Rights and Responsibilities Policy sets out our approach to the management of emotional dysregulation for all students 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 or 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 young people. 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. The Omnia Foundation works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

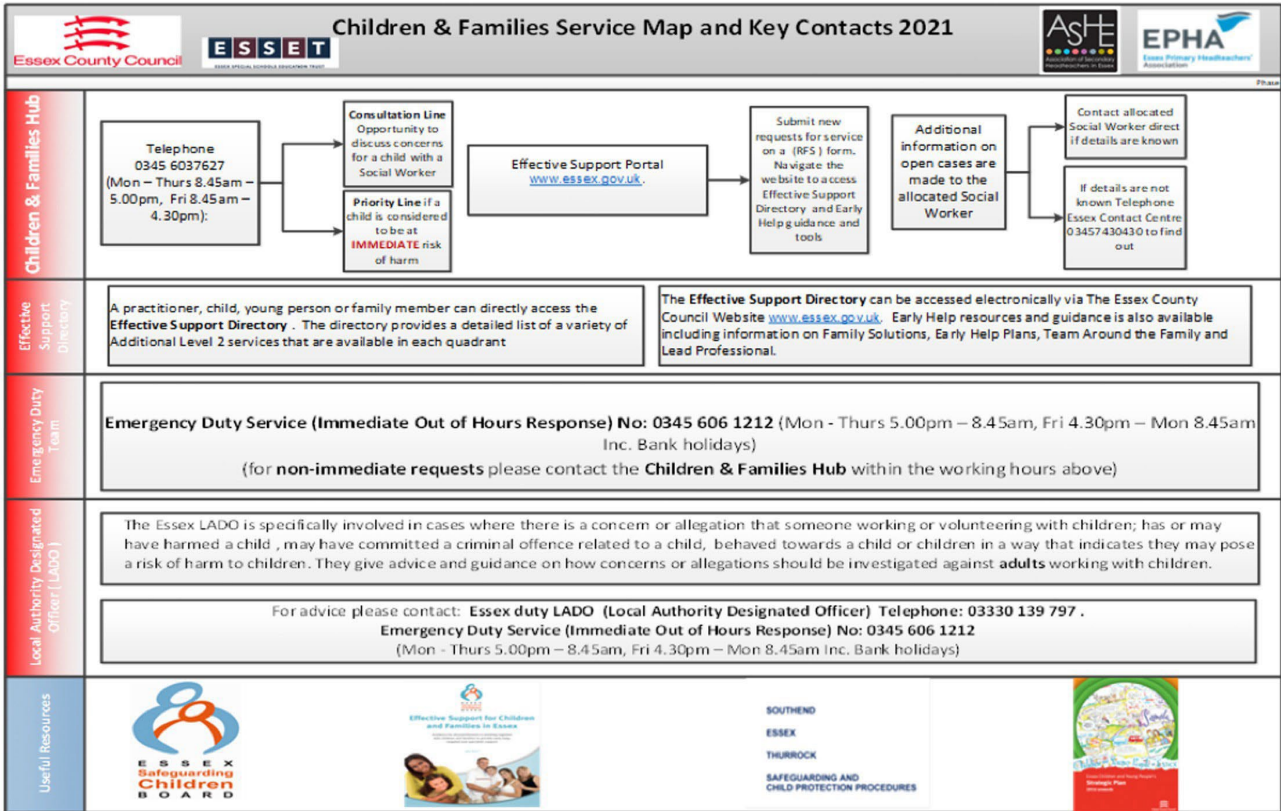
For full details, please refer to the foundation Use of Physical Intervention Policy.

Whistleblowing

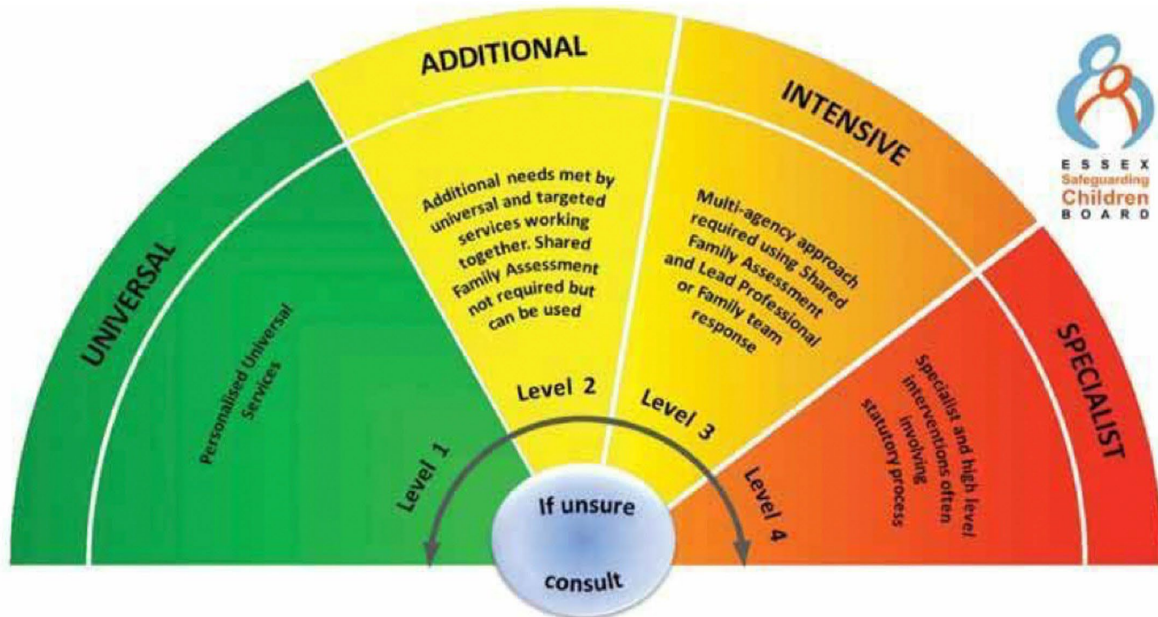
All members of staff and the wider foundation community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concerns will be taken seriously by the foundation leadership team. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place and these are available in the foundation Whistleblowing 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.

Home settings or others in the wider foundation community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Appendix A: : Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

Children with Additional needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools, 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 coordinate work alongside the child and family.

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

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

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

Arrangements for children who go missing during the school day

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)

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.

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 home setting 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.

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.

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
