

CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR ST BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL

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POLICY TO BE REVIEWED October 2025



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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.

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 \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#)the school Behaviour policy;
- the school 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 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.

2. 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, 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 [Southend Safeguarding Partnership](#).

In Southend, the statutory partners are Southend-on-Sea City Council, Essex Police and one of the three Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) covering the county of Essex; Mid & South Essex ICB.

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 Southend, 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 \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#)[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

[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 \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)

[Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2006](#)

[Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE, 2022\)](#)

[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 \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)

[Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(DfE July 2013\)](#)

[The Prevent Duty Guidance \(Home Office, 2024\)](#)

[Teaching online safety in schools – Guidance 2023](#)

[School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)

[SEND Code of Practice \(DfE 2015\)](#)

[Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)

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 and the Local Authority 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 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 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. 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 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 governing body ensures that all adults in our school 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 work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships and Health Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships, Sex & Health Education (for secondary age pupils) mandatory.

The governing body and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

The Headteacher

The [Teachers' Standards 2012](#) (updated 2021) 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. The 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 (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained 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 timely referrals to Southend Children's Single Point of Contact Team (C-SPOC) are made in accordance with current [SET Procedures](#). They work with the local authority and other agencies 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 school staff

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it. They are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff members are aware of and follow school 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. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) – they do not assume that others have taken action.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#) describes abuse in the following way:

“Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.”

Keeping Children Safe in Education refers to four categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Our staff will always reassure children 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 child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are causing a problem.

All staff in our school are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child’s welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely ‘stand-alone’ events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and / or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual / non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk.

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 criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an 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. CCE and CSE 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 Southend, 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.

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. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school 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, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). 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.

Our school complies with [Children missing education \(DfE, August 2024\)](#) and [Southend on Sea Borough Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance \(November 2023\)](#).

Our school must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the school has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil.

We work in accordance with the Southend Protocol for children who go missing during the school day, to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Our school also complies with the regulations regarding [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and Southend's guidance <http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/4834>

Our school notifies the Elective Home Education Team via secure email to ehe@southend.gov.uk at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provides a copy of the parents written notification to home educate and the date they came off roll.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child'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 child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will 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.

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

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 female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school will operate 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.

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 child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils 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 parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so 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. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils 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 range of online risks could be categorised as:

content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: 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: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and nonconsensual 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. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online and we seek 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 / Use of IT Technology Policy.

Child-on-child abuse

Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and that this may happen in school, or outside of it. Any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

Our school recognises that, even though 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 to inappropriate or abusive behaviour. We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur – we do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated.

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so.

Please refer to the anti bullying and behaviour 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.

It requires schools to:

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

- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

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 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 well-being, 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.

5. 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

6. 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 / 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), so that discussion can take place regarding whether any support for the child can be managed internally via the school's own pastoral support process, or if an early help assessment is indicated, or a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Southend Children's Safeguarding Partnership guidelines - the [SET Procedures](#) (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#)[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)
- [The Prevent Duty Guidance \(Home Office, 2024\)](#)
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Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the child is in immediate danger, or at risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. A telephone referral to Children's Social Care must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours, using the Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service form to provide the information required.

The Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service should be used to support a child Protection referral. The Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service form and guidance is available on the [Southend Safeguarding Partnership](#) website and Southend Learning Network. A completed Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service form contains all the information required for a child protection referral and should be sent to Children's Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) team. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure, plus any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.

Any child may benefit from early help. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

The school 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 Children's Social Care, 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 another 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's Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) team and / or Southend Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to 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.

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake child protection training specifically for Designated Safeguarding Leads 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 Southend Children's Safeguarding Partnership. 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 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. Professional confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils) or 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 deputy) with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

9. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our 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.

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 be allowed to 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 regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, on CPOMS noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and will include the action taken. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy), will be alerted and 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 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 educational setting without delay, separate from their main pupil file. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Care will be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Unless there is a specific reason for us to keep it, which will be recorded (for example, we still have siblings in the school and the records relate to them too, or there is an ongoing complaint or request for access to records).

We will also keep a record of having received confirmation from the receiving school and [if relevant] of the date when we destroyed our copy.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may also make contact with the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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

10. Interagency working

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). A report will be made available to a Child Protection Conference Chair, 48 working hours in advance of the Conference, and shared with the parents/carers before the day of the Conference. 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 and, in the case of a Conference, to express a view, at the end of the meeting, as to whether the child(ren) should be made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need Plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection Plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed. If there is an unexplained absence of, or injury to a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, the child's Key Worker must be notified immediately.

11. Allegations or concerns about people working with children

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 Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct. The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the [SET Procedures](#) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information regarding this.

The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Headteacher (or Deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governor who will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The [SET Procedures](#) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Headteacher, senior named person, or the Chair of Governors must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **01702 534591** or safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they

will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. The school will manage these procedures alongside the school's disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the school's HR Advisor.

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

12. Use of reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There 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.

13. 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](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

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

14. Appendix A: Children’s Service Key Contacts

<p>Children’s Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) team Children’s Social Care, Southend City Council: Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.</p> <p>OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals</p>	<p>01702 215007, option 1</p> <p>c-spoc@southend.gov.uk (unsecure)</p> <p>0345 606 1212</p>
<p>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</p>	<p>01702 534591 (Direct)</p> <p>07827990956 (Mobile)</p> <p>SafeguardingforChildren@southend.gov.uk</p>