



Hedingham School & Sixth Form

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026

Reviewed and amended by Mr D Nash, Assistant Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead

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DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD	David Nash - Assistant Headteacher
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD	Rory Hyde – Head of Sixth Form
OTHER TRAINED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS	Andrew Wright – Year Leader Mark Woodley – Year Leader Jack Lockley – Year Leader Victoria Webb – Year Leader Hannah Joslin – Pastoral Support Officer Debbie Bolton – Pastoral Support Officer Claire Runtle – Pastoral Support Officer Sarah Godfrey – Sixth Form Assistant
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR	Martin Lee

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CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR HEDINGHAM SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

1. Introduction

‘Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child’. (Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2026)

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. It should be read in conjunction with the Safer Recruitment Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour, Relationships and Recognition Policy, Mental Health and Well-Being Policy, Attendance Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visit Policy, E-safety Policy, Social Media Policy and Photography Policy. It should also be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026). It should also be read in conjunction with the safeguarding response to children missing from education and the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE).

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

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

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 mission statement, motto and vision 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. Mission Statement

Hedingham School seeks to create a challenging and stimulating learning environment so that students are prepared for life in the 21st Century through a safe, caring and supportive environment. We strive to foster positive relationships with students and staff, offering mutual respect for all members of the community.

The aim of the child protection and safeguarding policy is to create a positive ethos of all aspects of safety within our school community. We want every child to feel safe, secure and listened to. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to talk about concerns and help ensure early intervention for any safeguarding concerns raised. We emphasise to staff that:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.
- It could happen here.
- A child has one chance at childhood.

Safeguarding issues are explored throughout the curriculum and are underpinned by our behaviour ethos of Ready, Respect, Safe and character expectations.

3. Statutory Framework

There is government guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS integrated Care Boards covering the country.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory responsibility on the Governing Board to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students of the school.

Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (DfE 2026)
- 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 online safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2021\)](#)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour and appendices \(ECC 2024\)](#)
- [Filtering and Monitoring Standards \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)

4. 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 Board

The Governing Board 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 and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The Governing Board ensures there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead in place.

The Governing Board 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 Board ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction 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 Governing Board ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place. Our children will be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Governing Body 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. Our school will work in accordance with new government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education mandatory.

The Governing Board 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all 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 Essex Children's Social Care (Children's and Family Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

If for any reason the designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads will act in their absence. The Deputy Safeguarding leads are trained to the same standards as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Headteacher

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which include 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 the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, he ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Board are followed by all staff.

All school staff

Everyone in our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and liaising with the designated safeguarding lead to report any concerns. 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 they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act immediately and speak with the safeguarding team. If the situation is urgent, no time should be wasted in informing the safeguarding lead or in his absence, the deputy safeguarding leads. If teaching, staff should alert the duty teacher. A 'Red Card' must be completed through the digital reporting system, MyConcern. Staff without access to a computer must complete a paper Red Card and hand it in person to one of the safeguarding team. In Urgent matters, this should not take priority over face-to-face communication. Email must not be used to report safeguarding concerns.

5. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) defines abuse as the maltreatment of a child.

"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 off-line 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.

All staff must read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full to ensure a higher baseline of safeguarding literacy across the entire workforce. 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). Staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger. We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap. It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our students. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Mobile Phones

Following the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (2026), the school is mobile free by default with students handing in their phones upon arrival at school. There are exceptions to this rule where medical evidence has been provided where an application can support managing a medical condition such as diabetes. Please see our mobile phone policy for further information.

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 best understanding of the child and their family.

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 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 three 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, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;

conduct: 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

Our school seeks to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways including education through the curriculum and in assemblies.

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 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.

Our school understands 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 approach 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 & Coercive Control: Includes cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying, and extortion.

Technology-Assisted Harm: Includes the creation and distribution of self-generated intimate images, including digitally altered "deepfakes" using AI. This also includes viewing content risks such as misogyny, self-harm and conspiracy theories.

Extreme Misogyny & The Manosphere: Misogyny which is heavily influenced by online influencers and the 'manosphere.'

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB): Includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, misogyny, upskirting and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

Physical & Serious Violence: Physical assault, fighting, and threats with weapons.

Emotional Abuse: This can include verbal abuse.

Hazing & Initiation Rituals: Forced activities, hazing, or degradation to gain entry into a group.

We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. The school may also use trauma-informed responses depending on the context of the situation and student. Both the victim and the child displaying behaviours may be at risk. The school will consider support needs for the perpetrator as well as any disciplinary action.

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.

The school implements robust behaviour management and pastoral care policies and procedures to support students (Behaviour Relationships and Recognition Policy/ Anti-Bullying Policy).

For more information, please see our Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of 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 of 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.

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

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Sexual violence and sexual harassment is not dismissed as 'banter,' 'part of growing up,' 'just having a laugh,' or 'boys being boys.' We will challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. The school is aware that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The school understands that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language.

The school is also aware that harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or offline and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of harm and is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (county lines is when drug networks of gang's groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas and seaside towns). Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation. It is defined as:

'Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does now always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.' (Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.' (Home Office 2018).

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal lines".

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Gangs recruit and use children and young people to move drugs and money for them. Children as young as 10 years old are recruited, often using social media. They are exploited and forced to carry drugs between locations, usually on trains or coaches. They may also be forced to sell drugs to local users.

Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. 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.

Children missing from Education

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)

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Absence, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. The school 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 wherever 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 ([Education Access Team](#), 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.

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 policy should be read in conjunction with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

- [Essex Schools Infolink](#)
- [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)

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.

I. 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 will be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, contacting the child by phone, 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.

We will inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. We will also inform a Social Worker if there is one allocated to the child.

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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

Our school must inform the local authority of any student who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Please see Appendix D for Hedingham School Missing Children procedure.

Domestic Abuse

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

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

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

So-called 'honour-based violence; (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

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

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

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

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.

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 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.

Our school 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 Social Care and / or the Channel Panel. If a child on roll at our school is referred to the Channel Panel, a representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with an assessment and support plan.

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

All staff members understand how to identify those who may benefit from this support. (*Appendix C*)

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 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.

The school has well-being 'check-ins' across all year groups from 7-13. This is under the whole school mental health 'framework' of mood scales. Mood scales are a supportive tool to help students recognise, show and regulate emotions. They give a language to how the young person is feeling. *'I am feeling yellow today.'* They also give strategies to co-regulate and self-regulate how they are feeling and restore a sense of control and personal efficacy. It will enable us as a school to ensure we can support all students with their mental health.

The school also has wellbeing weeks which involve exploring mental health in Personal Development sessions. The school also has a well-being group which is led by students weekly. Year Leaders use tools with students such as Worry Journals, anxiety journals and Resilience scales to equip students with skills in regulating their mental health. There are regular assemblies and Personal Development sessions on all aspects of mental health and well-being such as healthy use of technologies and lifestyle choices.

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

For more information, please see our Mental Health and Well Being Policy.

6. Children potentially at risk of greater harm (including children with special educational needs and disabilities)

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 disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

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

7. Gender Questioning Children and Single-Sex Spaces

Children are all different and, similarly, the way that children who are questioning their gender or taking steps towards social transition experience this process will be different. The Cass Review (2024), an independent review of NHS gender identity services for children and young people, notes that for adolescents, exploration is a normal process, and rigid binary gender stereotypes can be unhelpful. Many adolescents will go through a period of gender non-conformity in terms of hairstyles, make up, clothes and behaviours. They also have greater agency in how they present themselves and their decision making.

However, the school will also have an awareness that these children may have complex needs and will seek to identify any safeguarding concerns. Gender questioning children frequently present with co-existing neurodiversity (such as autism) or mental health difficulties like anxiety.

When considering any request for social transition, the school will first consider what is in the best interests of the child. This applies to any element of social transition including requests for the school to support a change in pronouns, names or uniform. The school views these requests as significant psychological actions that can impact a child's long-term developmental trajectory. This principle includes the need for:

- The involvement of parents in decision making wherever possible. The school will work openly alongside families regarding gender distress.
- Caution and clinical advice in relation to supporting social transition. Staff will maintain a supportive but neutral stance ensuring we do not inadvertently lock a child into a medical pathway before a holistic clinical assessment has taken place.

The Cass Review (2024) is an independent, landmark review of NHS gender identity services for children and young people.

Schools are required to record a student's biological sex. Transgender or gender-questioning pupils are legally barred from using toilets, changing rooms or boarding accommodation on a school trip designated for the opposite biological sex. In alignment with statutory safeguarding duties, the school will have clear sex-separated boundaries for toilets, changing rooms and overnight accommodation.

If safety or fairness is a concern, mixed sex sport will also revert to single-sex groups with no exceptions.

8. 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).

Members of staff receive professional development on how to identify children potentially at risk, how to ask clarifying questions and not leading questions or investigating the incident and how to report concerns.

In urgent situations, all members of staff **must** verbally speak, without delay, to a member of the safeguarding team as named in this policy. In urgent cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed without delay. In his absence, the Deputy Safeguarding Lead should be informed. A digital 'red card' must be completed through MyConcern for all safeguarding concerns.

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, 2026)
- ☐ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- ☐ 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- ☐ PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school, they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) and how to share concerns with them.

Any staff member or visitor to the school must refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [Essex Effective Support](#). 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. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

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, the staff member concerned 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 should 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) and how to share concerns with them.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

David Nash (Assistant Headteacher) 01787 460470 hed.nashd@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rory Hyde – Head of Sixth Form 01787 460470 hed.hyde@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Additional Safeguarding Leads (Level 3 Trained)

Andrew Wright (Year Leader) 0787 460 470 hed.wrighta@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Mark Woodley (Year Leader) 01787 460 470 hed.woodley@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Jack Lockley (Year Leader) 01787 460470 hed.lockleyj@hedingham.essex.sch.uk
 Victoria Webb (Year Leader) 01787 460470 hed.webbv@hedingham.essex.sch.uk
 Melissa Dunne – (SENCo) – 01787 460470 hed.dunnem@hedingham.essex.sch.uk
 (see Appendix C)

Students are reminded twice every half term that there are processes in place to allow them to report a concern and be confident that concerns will be responded to in a timely and appropriate way. Students can share concerns about themselves or others through:

Telling a member of staff at school.

Visiting the Student Support Centre (SSC)

Completing an 'Orange Card' ('worry boxes' in four locations around the school which are emptied daily).

Emailing from their school email address safe@hedingham.essex.sch.uk (emails go directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead's account).

9. Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy and other named people on this policy undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members 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 is 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.

10. 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 students) 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 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.

11. 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, the status of such records 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 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, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept in 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 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 school to another school / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school.

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

12. 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 child protection conference 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). The member of staff who attends the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If a child is subject to a 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.

13. Allegations about members of the workforce

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

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

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

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

Where an allegation against a member of staff is received, and it is felt that any of the above criteria apply, the SET procedures (ESCB, 2026) require this to be reported to the Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Essex Workforce Allegations Team at LADO@essex.gov.uk. This should be done by the Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or the Chair of Governors within one working day (or sooner via 03330 139797 if **immediate safeguarding is required**). We will not carry out any investigation before a Workforce Allegations Team referral has been made.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. Any reasonable force used should be proportionate and necessary. “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 and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context. Please see Hedingham School’s Behaviour and Recognition Policy for further guidance.

15. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is ‘making a disclosure in the public interest’ and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example students in the school or members of the public.

All staff members are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the school’s Code of Conduct / Whistleblowing policy.

We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection / safeguarding concerns and feel confident that that any concern will be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership team. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: 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

16. Filtering & Monitoring

The School’s broadband provider provides basic filtering this is supplemented with a configured smoothwall, filtering is based on Key stage levels with curriculum appropriate restrictions at each level

Monitoring is provided by Senso Enterprise Cloud and is regularly reviewed.

Guidance for Students and Parents/Carers on Livestream/video lessons or contact with students

Heddingham School provision of live or pre-recorded lessons will be through Microsoft Teams. This platform has been centrally safeguarded in relation to security settings and filters. Password protected.

School staff will:

- Provide group only live contact. Remote learning on a one to one basis is not appropriate.
- Provide contact whilst against a natural background
- Wear suitable clothing
- Keep live sessions to a reasonable length of time.
- Use professional and appropriate language.
- Only use Microsoft Teams on the school's platforms.
- Invite each student to attend any live session as pre planned via Microsoft Teams or school email.
- Use their own discretion on screen sharing/turning on their camera
- Abort the session or remove a student should there be any unwanted behaviour or conduct and will report this to the school and parents as necessary.
- Is it good practice to record any live session delivered. This allows students who have missed the live delivery to access at a later date. These recording will be held securely on the school network.

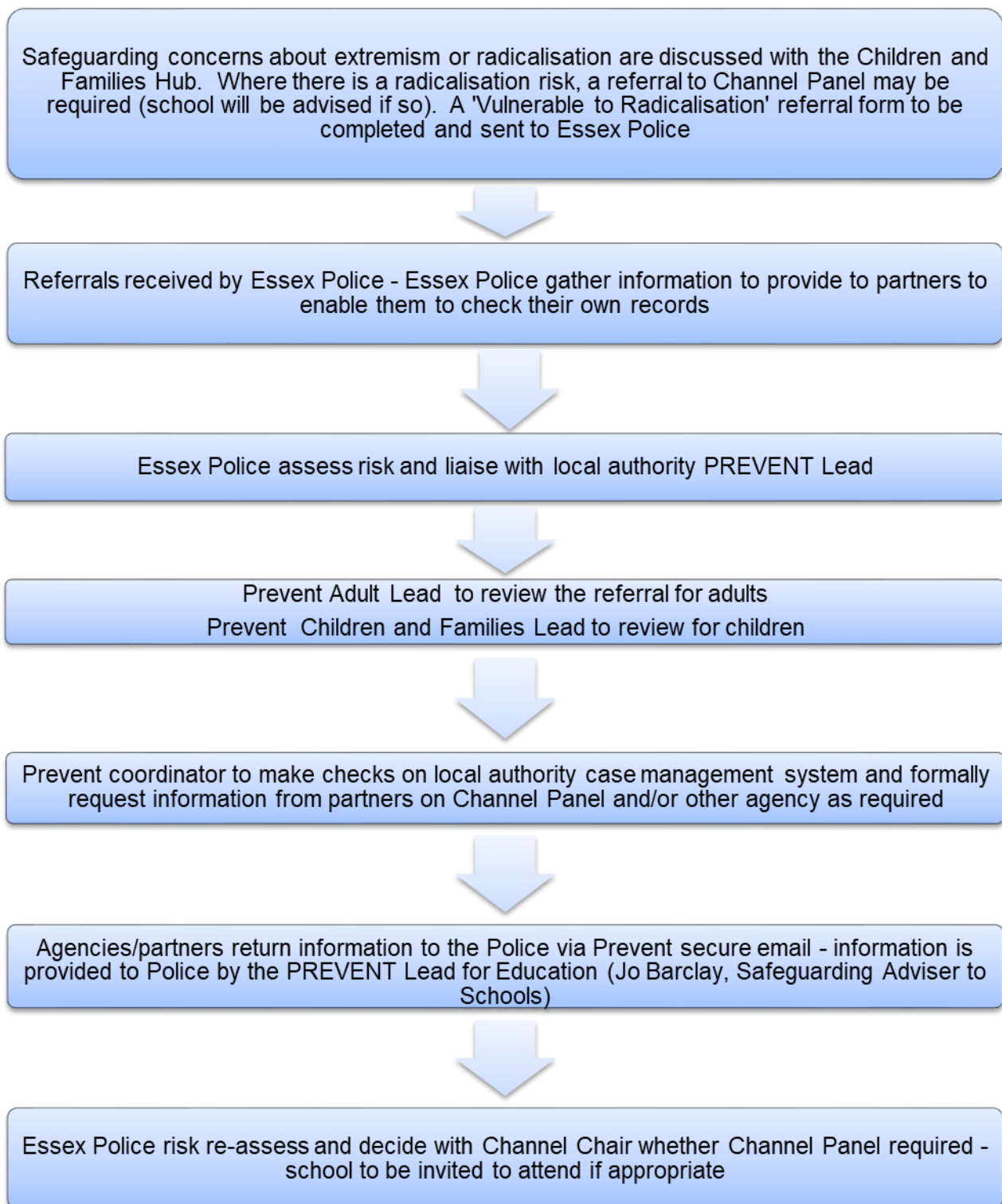
Students will:

- Sit against a natural background, ensuring that there is nothing in the background that is inappropriate. The member of staff may feel that there is something inappropriate where students do not. We would expect the student to reposition should this be the case.
- Wear suitable clothing
- Be located in a communal area of the house. Where parents feel that they are best located in a room on their own, the door should remain open, with an adult within earshot of the session.
- Double check that any other tabs they have open in their browser would be appropriate for their teacher to see, if they are sharing their screen.
- Only use platforms provided by Heddingham School
- Use appropriate language only, even if communicating with another member of the household. This includes gestures and other body language.
- Behave and conduct themselves appropriately, as they would in the classroom, or they will be asked to leave the session or the session may even be aborted.
- Not record, screenshot or otherwise the session as this will breach the acceptable use policy.
- Not share any content they may have recorded or have been sent by another student. Any such actions should be reported to the school as soon as possible.

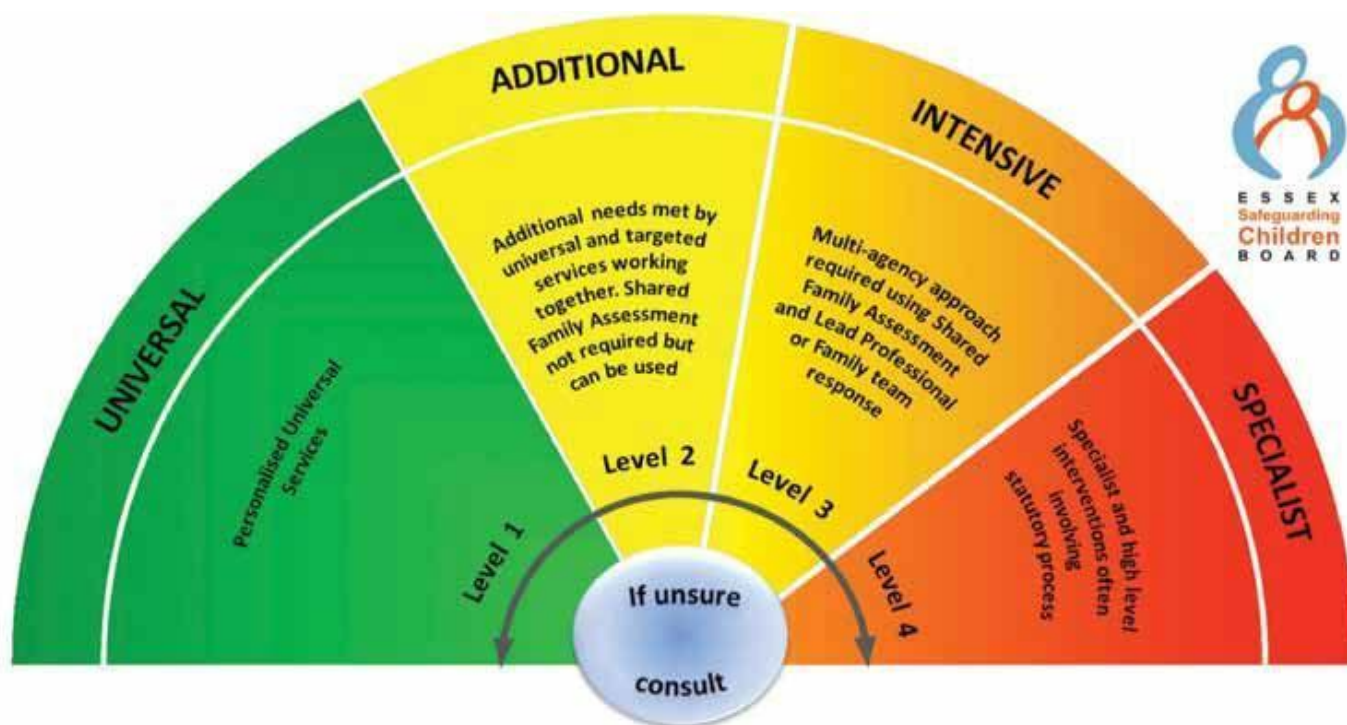
Parents/Carers will:

- Read the guidance and expectations outlined above and ensure these are adhered to by the student, when taking part in any live session.
- Wear suitable clothing if the chances are that they will be passing within screenshot whilst moving around their household.
- Ensure their child is located in a communal area of the house. Where parents feel that they are best located in a room on their own, the door should remain open, with an adult within earshot of the session.
- Use appropriate language only, even if communicating with another member of the household. This includes gestures and other body language.

Appendix A: PREVENT Referral Flowchart



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 co-ordinate work alongside the child and family.

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

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

Everyone's
responsibility



It could
happen here

SAFEGUARDING

IDENTIFY

Physical/ emotional/ sexual and neglect

which can be educational,
physical, emotional
or medical

Personality

Appearance? Reserved?
Scared? Socially isolated?
Divisive language?

Appearance

Unexplained injuries? Uniform?
Unexplained money/ gifts?

Engagement

Attendance? Progress?
Participation?

TELL EXPLAIN DESCRIBE

Only ask questions to clarify concerns

Tell me about what
happened?

You seem a bit upset and
I'm worried about you, is
anything troubling you?

When did this happen?
Where did this happen?

I am going to have to
share this information
with...

REPORT

Urgent

Straight to the designated
safeguarding lead -
Do not delay (Risk to life,
unsafe to go home)

My Concern

Teaching and Associate staff

myconcern !

Red Card

Visitors, cleaners, catering
staff, ask for a Red Card at
Reception, Student Support
Centre, Caretakers office or
Catering office



SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Mr Hyde
DEPUTY
SAFEGUARDING
LEAD



Mr Nash
DESIGNATED
SAFEGUARDING
LEAD



Mrs Dunne
SENCO



Mrs Webb
YEAR
LEADER



Mr Lockley
YEAR
LEADER



Mr Wright
YEAR
LEADER



Mr Woodley
YEAR
LEADER



Mrs Bolton
PASTORAL
SUPPORT
OFFICER



Miss Joslin
PASTORAL
SUPPORT
OFFICER



Mrs Runtle
PASTORAL
SUPPORT
OFFICER



Mrs Godfrey
SIXTH FORM
ASSISTANT

Essex Children's Safeguarding Board 0345 603 7627

HEDINGHAM SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

SAFE?

How do you
look after
yourself and
others?

SAFE?

safe@hedingham
.essex.sch.uk

Appendix D Procedure for when a child is absent from school

