Belfairs Academy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy September 2026

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Document control

Policy title	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
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Version	2 (September 2026)
Status	Ratified
Applicable to	All staff, governors and trustees, volunteers, visitors and contractors; shared with parents/carers and the wider academy community
Author	ROG (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
Checked by	WIB
Based on	Southend-on-Sea City Council Model Child Protection Policy for Education Providers (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, in force from 1 September 2026
Valid from	September 2026
Review date	September 2027 (at least annually, and sooner if national or local guidance changes, or following learning from a safeguarding matter)
Date ratified by governors/trustees	**28 September 2026**

The Governing Body will receive regular safeguarding assurance reports throughout the academic year and will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including child protection, attendance, online safety, filtering and monitoring, safer recruitment, staff safeguarding training and safeguarding culture across the academy.

Policy review dates and changes

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date ratified	Date implemented
September 2026	ROG	Annual review to align with KCSIE 2025.	September 2026	September 2026
September 2026	ROG	Re-based on the Southend-on-Sea City Council Model Child Protection Policy (2026) and updated to KCSIE 2026. Changes include: a stronger safeguarding culture and professional boundaries; online safety, AI-generated content and deepfake risks; low-level concerns; child-on-child abuse (including racism, faith-based prejudice and misogyny); attendance; SEND safeguarding; filtering and monitoring;	September 2026	September 2026

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date ratified	Date implemented
		safeguarding training and Part one reading for all staff; governance responsibilities; staff welfare and supervision; information sharing; regulated activity for volunteers; updated local authority contacts, portal referral route and threshold guidance; and cross-references to Belfairs and Legra policies.		

Key safeguarding contacts

Key contacts within Belfairs Academy

Safeguarding role	Name and role
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and CSE Champion	Greg Rodulfo
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Tracy Foster Sophie Peake Natalie Rowland
Senior Leader nominated for contact in the absence of the DSL and Deputy DSLs	Emma Haddow
Head of School	Emma Haddow
Designated Safeguarding Governor	Dominic Carver
Chair of Governors / Chair of the Directors of Legra Academy Trust (concerns about the Head of School)	Dominic Carver/Kathy Herlock
Attendance Lead / Education Welfare Officer	Charlie Smith
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)	Tracy Foster
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Amy Burch
Senior Lead for Mental Health and Well-being	Amy Burch
PSHE / Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Lead	Liam Maher
Senior Leadership Digital Lead (filtering and monitoring)	Greg Rodulfo
Data Protection Officer	Jackie Tomkins

Key safeguarding local authority contacts

Service	Contact details
Referrals to Children's Social Care (C-SPOC)	Where the academy has concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person, a referral should be made through the Southend Children's Services Portal. C-SPOC consultation line (pre-contact advice): 01702 215007 (Option 1). **Out of hours (urgent referrals):** 0345 606 1212

Service	Contact details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Where there are concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child. Email: LADO@southend.gov.uk Tel: 01702 534539
Essex Police	999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies. Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101. See When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges.
Education (Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding)	Email: Servicesforschools@southend.gov.uk Education Safeguarding is led by the Head of Service for Education Performance, Partnership & Safeguarding.
Children Missing from Education	Email: me@southend.gov.uk
Southend Virtual School	Southend Virtual School
School Nursing Team	Email: schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk Tel: 01702 534843

Key safeguarding national contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day, including advice about female genital mutilation, children and young people affected by gangs, and concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery. Text: 88858 Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Report Abuse in Education helpline	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance, including for non-recent abuse. Tel: 0800 136 663 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice	Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how child protection issues are being handled in their organisation. Tel: 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line	Helpline for professionals working with children and young people with any online safety issues. Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Police Anti-Terrorist Hotline	Tel: 0800 789 321
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge. Tel: 0808 2000 247

Organisation	Description and contact details
Prevent Duty	Police Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321. Government advice and trusted resources to help safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and promote shared values: Educate Against Hate. Guidance on how to make a Prevent referral: Making a referral to Prevent - GOV.UK
Operation Encompass	Information, resources and e-learning for schools: Operation Encompass
Report harmful online content	UK Safer Internet Centre: report harmful content CEOP: to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism
Harmful sexual behaviour support services	Stop it now! for worries about a child's sexual behaviour: 0808 1000 900. Includes Shore, a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support.
Safer recruitment	Guidance can be found in KCSIE. Further advice on safer recruitment for schools and colleges using recruitment and supply agencies is in the Better Hiring Institute's Better Hiring Toolkit for Education Supply Chains.
Children missing education	Statutory guidance for schools and local authorities, including a policy checklist: Children missing education - GOV.UK

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Statutory Context

1.1.1 This Child Protection policy enables Belfairs Academy to carry out its functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with key statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities, including:
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
  - Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK]
- Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) and The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation (2023)
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures

1.1.2 Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It is defined in this guidance as the activity undertaken to protect children who are suspected of suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

1.1.3 As defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children 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, and
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

1.2 Academy context: child protection policy statement

1.2.1 Belfairs Academy maintains an attitude of *"it could happen here"* and a whole-academy approach to safeguarding. We recognise that everyone in the academy has a role to play to keep children safe.

1.2.2 The academy is committed to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which children feel safe, listened to and respected, concerns are taken seriously, staff demonstrate professional curiosity and safeguarding is regarded as everyone's responsibility.

1.2.3 The best interests of the child are at the heart of our work to identify and act swiftly on concerns, share information, and ensure that children feel listened to, are taken seriously, and are safe. We will:

- ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off school premises
- be proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online.
- have a Prevent action plan/risk assessment (this is compliant with Prevent guidance). Resources, including Risk Assessment templates, which can be found here: Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism and Risk assessment templates for early years, schools and further education - Educate Against Hate.
- be part of Operation Encompass - a statutory obligation on police forces to share Operation Encompass notifications with schools.
- implement any local or national learning where appropriate, e.g. learning from case reviews or audits.
- ensure that all relevant policies are updated to reflect 'lessons learnt' and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the academy.
- recognise the vital role we play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements working, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- understand our role within local safeguarding arrangements and operate in accordance with the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures, including the local Threshold document.

1.3 Responsibilities of ALL adults in the academy

1.3.1 ALL adults in the academy have a duty to keep children safe by:

- providing safe environments, with secure access, where children can learn and develop
- acting in the best interests of children to protect them on and offline
- identifying children who are at risk of harm or have been harmed, or need additional help to keep safe

- taking swift, timely and appropriate action to safeguard children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm
- adhering to safe recruitment processes to make sure all adults in the academy have the appropriate vetting checks in place
- clearly following managing allegations processes to address any concerns (including low-level concerns) about an adult's behaviour towards a child
- understanding the broader aspects of safeguarding in the context of care and education, such as behaviour, Special Educational Needs, attendance and educational visits.

1.3.2 The academy recognises the strong link between attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing and educational outcomes and will take prompt action where attendance patterns, persistent absence or disengagement indicate possible safeguarding concerns.

1.3.3 All adults in this academy follow the SET Procedures, including the suite of safeguarding policies, information, and guidance to support safeguarding for all Southend-on-Sea Schools, as listed below:

- Allegations against staff, volunteers and people in positions of trust who work with children (SET Procedures Part A, Section 7)
- Sharing Information (SET Procedures Part B, Section 3)
- Safer Recruitment (SET Procedures Part B, Section 12)
- Children Missing from Care, Home and Education (SET Procedures Part B, Section 20)
- Children Missing Education Guidance (to further support the SET Procedures chapter) The academy will submit referrals made using Children Missing Referral Form
- Legra Academy Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- Academy Trust Governance Code
- Belfairs Attendance Policy
- Legra Academy Trust disciplinary and dismissal policies and procedures **[TO COMPLETE: confirm policy titles]**
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Belfairs Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Letter of Assurance for visiting council staff (from the respective Head of Service)
  - Education Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding Team
  - Specialist Support Services
  - SEND, Access & Inclusion Team
  - Early Years Services

1.4 Belfairs Academy commitment

1.4.1 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. All professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred, which means considering, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. This policy is for all staff, parents, governors, trustees, volunteers and the wider academy community.

1.4.2 Belfairs Academy has a whole-academy 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 academy community. Only by working in partnership can we truly keep children safe.

1.4.3 Our academy is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our students is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken
- establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- ensure that students know that there are adults within the academy whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
- ensure students receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating, including identifying emerging problems and those children who may benefit from early help
- include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships
- include in the curriculum material which will help students develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills
- protect children from harm and ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and that promotes respect for all others
- provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and which helps students to understand the values on which our society and system of democratic government are founded
- promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disabilities and sexual orientations
- make parents/carers aware of the academy's safeguarding policies and practice and make every effort to establish open, honest and effective working relationships with parents and with colleagues from partner agencies

- promote positive mental health and resilience (see section 2.7.7), recognising that both mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding. All staff, including support staff, must inform a DSL immediately of any mental health concern that is accompanied by a safeguarding concern
- be committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children from diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

1.4.4 Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We give special consideration to children who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- are young carers
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality, including children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender
- have English as an additional language
- are known to be living in difficult circumstances, for example in temporary accommodation or where there is substance misuse or domestic abuse
- are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or radicalisation
- are asylum seekers
- are at risk due to having family members who have mental health issues
- are looked after or previously looked after
- have a social worker.

1.4.5 **Belfairs Academy is committed to keeping students safe and works in partnership with outside agencies and the police to ensure awareness of county lines, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), and supports the work of the police in counteracting this threat.**

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

1.5 Local safeguarding arrangements

1.5.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. It places a shared and equal duty on the three safeguarding partners (the local authority, the 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 Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB).

1.5.2 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 students of the academy.

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

- Education Act 2002, Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Serious Crime Act 2015
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)
- Searching, screening and confiscation (DfE, 2022) and Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE)
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017)
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement (Home Office, 2015) and Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance (Home Office, 2018)
- Teaching online safety in schools (DfE)
- Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2021).

1.6 Related academy and Trust policies

1.6.1 This policy forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for the academy and should be read in conjunction with the guidance listed above and the following policies:

- Legra Academy Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- Belfairs Behaviour for Learning Policy (including anti-bullying)
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy (including filtering and monitoring arrangements)
- Remote Learning Policy

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Attendance Policy and the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Educational Visits and Trips Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Policy
- Equality Policy.

Section 2: What is abuse?

2.1 Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child which may be caused by an adult, adults or by another child or children inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. The harm can involve:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- exploitation

2.2 Children can be at risk of abuse inside and outside of their home, in their community, inside and outside the academy and online.

2.3 Safeguarding issues can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences or going missing from education, serious violence (including county lines), radicalisation, consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events; in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

2.4 Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from a range of risks. Further information on indicators of abuse and neglect, as well as the safeguarding risks noted above, is available in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). These include the following risks and include abuse perpetrated by other children, as well as by adults:

- any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (or Acts of Omission)
- child on child abuse, absence from school
- bullying, including cyber/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, discriminatory, racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse, including racism and faith-based prejudice (which KCSIE 2026 recognises as safeguarding issues and as forms of child-on-child abuse)
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, including misogyny and misandry and the influence of harmful online content
- harmful sexual behaviours
- sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Including abusive messaging, upskirting and sharing of sexual imagery
- child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, modern slavery
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour or behaviours covered by PREVENT duties

- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- misuse of artificial intelligence tools, including the creation, sharing or possession of AI-generated content, manipulated images, synthetic media or "deepfake" material which may place children at risk of harm, exploitation, bullying, harassment, abuse or reputational harm
- Online harm may include the creation, sharing or use of manipulated images, impersonation technologies, deepfake content, AI-generated sexual imagery, cyber-enabled abuse, online coercion and harmful online influence.
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship' abuse)
- substance misuse – drugs and/or alcohol
- gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- domestic abuse
- faith or culture linked abusive practice such as forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' abuse or adultification.
- children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- homelessness

2.5 This list correlates with the key priorities outlined in The Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy 2024/2027 that can be found here: Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership – One Page Strategy Summary 2024-27 | Safeguarding Southend Partnership. Further information about abuse and support as collated by the Southend Safeguarding Partnership can be found here: *Information for Children | Safeguarding Southend Partnership*.

2.6 For the purposes of this policy, we use the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' as this is in line with KCSIE 2026. As an academy we recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. We will be conscious of this when managing any incident and will be prepared to use any term with which the child is most comfortable. We think carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. The use of appropriate terminology will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with the sensitivity required for each situation.

2.7 Specific safeguarding issues

2.7.1 Our academy recognises that there are a number of specific safeguarding issues about which staff need to be aware. Staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their

awareness and gain knowledge in these areas, and we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support. Government guidance is available on GOV.UK and is linked from Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. Other organisations also provide specialist information, such as the NSPCC and MindEd.

2.7.2 Child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE) and serious violence

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

Some specific forms of CCE 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 or committing serious violence to others. County lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas and seaside towns.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It can happen to boys and girls from any background or community, may occur over time or as a one-off occurrence, and does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

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

We have an identified CSE Champion, Mr Johan Zweistra, who has received training in this area and attends the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership Champions' Forum. Our academy uses the partnership's risk assessment toolkit and reports information to Essex Police on a report form, as well as referring to C-SPOC. We use the guidance set out in Child sexual exploitation: definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE).

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 the academy, 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.

2.7.3 Children absent from education, elective home education and removal from the admission register

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our academy recognises that a child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, sexual and criminal exploitation, and other harms. We will follow the Attendance Policy and the academy's procedures for unauthorised absence and for children absent from education, and will take prompt action where attendance patterns, persistent absence or disengagement indicate possible safeguarding concerns. When not in the academy, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in the academy 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 (Children Missing from Education team, Children's Social Care or the Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the academy, so that we can communicate with someone if we need to.

Our academy complies with the statutory guidance Children missing education, the Southend-on-Sea City Council Children Missing Education Guidance and SET Procedures Part B, Section 20. The academy must inform the Local Authority of any student who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, where the academy has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and has been unsuccessful in tracing the student.

Our academy also complies with the regulations regarding Elective Home Education (regulation 12 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended). We notify the Local Authority's Elective Home Education Team by secure email at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provide a copy of the parents' written notification to home educate and the date the child came off roll.

The academy will notify the Local Authority when it is about to remove a student's name from the admission register under any of the grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. When removing a student's name, the notification to the Local Authority will include:

a) the full name of the student

b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides

c) at least one telephone number of the parent

d) the student's future address and destination school, if applicable, and

e) the grounds in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register.

The academy will make all reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the student's name from the register where the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

2.7.4 Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our academy and/or can occur between children outside of the academy. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact that 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 a better understanding of a child and their family.

2.7.5 Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, and sexual and/or economic abuse. Children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right, including in their own intimate relationships, and witnessing or hearing domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact. We work with other key partners, including through Operation Encompass, and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or may be placing a child at risk of harm.

2.7.6 So-called 'honour-based' abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 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 is a form of child abuse. Our staff are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Teachers (and other regulated professionals) have a personal statutory duty to report known cases of FGM in a girl under 18 to the police; see section 5.15. Multi-agency statutory guidance is available at Female genital mutilation: multi-agency statutory guidance.

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties, where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used. It is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue, and know that marriage or civil partnership under the age of 18 is also of concern.

2.7.7 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. 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 that a child's mental health may be linked to a safeguarding concern, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support the child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that the academy plays a key part in this. We aim to develop the emotional well-being 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 resilience. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance them and promote further growth of resilience. The academy's Senior Lead for Mental Health and Well-being is named in the key contacts. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with the academy so that appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

2.7.8 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 also challenges and risks. Any student can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstances. 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.

The range of online risks can be categorised as:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example pornography, misinformation, disinformation and fake news, suicide, racist, misogynistic or radical and extremist views.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults or others 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 (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and pornography, including AI-generated content), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

All staff are aware of the risks to children online, including risks from generative artificial intelligence, and we help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways. Further information about our approach, including filtering and monitoring (section 4.1), is available in the E-Safety, Acceptable Use and Remote Learning policies.

2.7.9 Prevent duty: preventing radicalisation and extremism

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, 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 is known as the Prevent duty. As outlined in KCSIE, the academy adheres to the following definitions:

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person or people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Under the duty, the academy will teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; be a safe space in which children 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; and be mindful of the existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues. The academy has a Prevent risk assessment and action plan (see section 1.2).

Staff should inform the DSL immediately of any concern about radicalisation or extremism and any action taken. Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The academy works in accordance with local Prevent procedures and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate, and, where necessary, will make a Prevent referral or refer to Children's Social Care and/or the Channel Panel. See the Prevent duty guidance (2023) and The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation.

2.7.10 Private fostering

As an academy we must make sure that privately fostered children are properly and safely cared for. Local authorities are under a legal duty to ensure that the welfare of a privately fostered child is being promoted and safeguarded, and are therefore required to undertake assessments of proposed or actual private fostering arrangements. We will always inform the Local Authority when we are notified about such an arrangement or become aware of one.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say, without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great-aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 (a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage, or a step-parent) will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.

2.7.11 Children who are looked after or previously looked after

Our academy has a Designated Teacher for children who are looked after (CLA) and previously looked after, named in the key contacts. The Designated Teacher attends CLA reviews and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, and liaises with the child's social worker, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and the Local Authority's Virtual School Headteacher, who is responsible for the progress of children looked after. A previously looked after child remains vulnerable, and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

2.7.12 Children who may be at risk of greater harm

We recognise that some children may 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 who are in care or were previously in care, those with a social worker, young carers, and those requiring mental health support. We work with Children's Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and medical conditions. Our academy understands that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges, and that additional 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
- the child being more prone to peer group isolation than others
- the potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Children with SEND may therefore need increased vigilance, targeted support and reasonable adjustments. Children with medical conditions may face similar barriers. An incident linked to the management of a child's medical condition does not of itself require a safeguarding referral, but staff will consider whether it indicates an increased risk of neglect or abuse and will discuss any concern with the DSL.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender. We recognise that these children may be at greater risk of bullying and abuse and may face additional barriers to seeking help. Any request for support with a social transition will be considered carefully, case by case, by the DSL and senior leaders in line with KCSIE 2026. Parents/carers will normally be involved, unless doing so would put the child at greater risk of harm.

Young carers. Young carers may be at risk of neglect, absence from education and impacts on their own mental health. Staff who identify a young carer should speak to the DSL so that appropriate support and, where necessary, early help can be put in place.

Section 3: Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

3.1 All staff, governors and trustees will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe, as set out in KCSIE (2026), by receiving:

- safeguarding training at induction
- safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities and which is regularly updated (including training to level 3 and local requirements for the Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- safeguarding training which will include awareness of emerging safeguarding risks including online harms, generative artificial intelligence, synthetic or deepfake content, cyber-enabled abuse, exploitation and technology-assisted abuse
- online safety knowledge and for children to be taught about safeguarding, including in relation to keeping themselves safe online and digital literacy.
- attendance information, with dedicated attendance training for any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral, or family support staff, and senior leaders
- data protection information (including recording protocols) and cyber security, relevant to the roles staff undertake
- training for those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children including Safer Recruitment
- support and training for those involved with Managing Allegations against staff.

3.2 All staff and governors/trustees know and understand their responsibilities and have knowledge of the policies which are part of the suite of safeguarding policies and related procedures (referenced previously in this policy), as well as the safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse, roles and names of the key staff for safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy/ies, the designated teacher for looked after children and the senior mental health lead etc).

3.3 Staff and governors/trustees receive a paper/electronic copy and read/'sign to say that they have received, read, and understood the following:

- all staff, including those who do not work directly with children, read at least Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). The shortened version of Part one previously provided as Annex A has been withdrawn, so all staff now read the same Part one, together with the relevant further information for their role
- academy leaders, including governors, trustees, proprietors and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies, read all of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- the Legra Academy Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- the Code of Conduct for governors and trustees

3.4 All staff receive regular safeguarding and Child Protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, which should be recorded and monitored by a Senior member of staff to ensure all training is up to date.

3.5 Staff build by their expertise by completing safeguarding training and through managing safeguarding concerns daily and seeking information from safeguarding professionals when appropriate to do so. Staff contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

3.6 Staff induction

Staff, governors and trustees will have induction appropriate to their roles in line with any advice from local safeguarding partners. New staff will also receive information about systems within the academy which support safeguarding, including online safety and copies of policies. All staff undergo safeguarding and Child Protection training, including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring at induction.

Section 4: Academy accountability responsibilities

4.1 Filtering and Monitoring

4.1.1 The academy will ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard children when accessing the internet and digital technologies. The Governing Body will receive assurance that filtering and monitoring arrangements remain effective, proportionate and appropriate to the age range, needs and risks of pupils. The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is reviewed at least once every academic year and the review is recorded. The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for online safety, including understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place, working with the senior leadership digital lead and IT staff. The academy's approach to the use of mobile phones and other personal devices is set out in **our Mobile Phone Policy** and supports a safe environment for children.

4.2 Governance

4.2.1 As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) part 2 'The Management of Safeguarding' the governing body or trustees exercise strategic leadership oversight of all aspects of safeguarding in the academy, in line with statutory requirements. Safeguarding is a standing item at all governing body/trustee meetings and recorded in the minutes. To support this a safeguarding audit is undertaken every two years to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and processes.

4.2.2 The Governor who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding at the academy, following local arrangements, is Dominic Carver (Designated Safeguarding Governor).

4.3 The Governing Body or Trustee Responsibilities

They will ensure:

- compliance to the Equality Act (2010) and the Human Rights Act (1998).
- that the academy adheres to the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- appropriate policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare in line with Section 157/175 of the Education Act.
- an appropriate senior member of staff, from the academy leadership team, is appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- a clear job description for the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in place which clearly sets out their lead responsibility for safeguarding and Child Protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems processes.

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead has the appropriate status and authority within the academy to carry out the significant level of responsibility and duties of the post.
- allocate sufficient time, funding, training, resources, and support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to empower them to carry out the role effectively.
- additional deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) are appointed as required.
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead including any deputies are trained to undertake their role as set out in local requirements those involved in safeguarding work understand and apply the Threshold document, and the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures. They follow the local information sharing protocols to supply information, as requested by the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership, so that partners can perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- staff and governors/trustees have the right to safeguarding training, allowing them to undertake their roles effectively. This includes recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse, mental health concerns, risks associated with non-school attendance, any additional safeguarding barriers for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or specific medical or health conditions, protected characteristics and the use of 'reasonable force'.
- The academy recognises that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, reporting concerns and accessing support and may therefore require increased vigilance, targeted support and reasonable adjustments
- children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online, through a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), which is mandatory for secondary-age pupils.
- procedures for Safer Recruitment are robust, including the hire of any school premises or facilities and the use of any alternative provision provider. The academy remains responsible for the safeguarding of pupils placed in alternative provision and carries out due diligence on providers. Volunteers are appropriately supervised, and the academy follows the KCSIE 2026 requirements on regulated activity and DBS checks for volunteers, including those who regularly teach, train, instruct or supervise children.
- rigorous procedures are in place to report and manage any allegation raised about an adult's behaviour towards a child.
- The academy will maintain procedures for reporting, recording, reviewing and responding to low-level concerns regarding adults working with children and will ensure that concerns are addressed consistently and in accordance with the academy's Code of Conduct and Managing Allegations procedures
- the Designated Teacher (named in the key contacts) works with Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.

- The academy works effectively with the Local Authority in line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education.
- safeguarding policies, staff Codes of Conduct, Managing Allegations procedures, Whistleblowing arrangements and Discipline and Dismissal policies are reviewed regularly and remain consistent with one another

4.4 Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher adheres to the Headteacher Standards (2020) to ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care. The Headteacher ensures that the policies and procedures adopted by their governing body/trust board are understood and followed by all staff. This includes working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, and other senior leaders to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding within the academy and to promote the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker. The Headteacher also ensures that sufficient information is provided to the governance board to enable them to undertake their safeguarding role effectively.

4.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Lead(s) Responsibilities

Training: The Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy have the appropriate training, knowledge and skills required to carry out their duties of their role. This includes how to identify, understand, and respond to specific needs that can increase children's vulnerability, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk. In addition, the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care at the Local Authority. This training is updated at least every two years. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy also undertake Prevent awareness training. Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are at times delegated to a trained deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This lead responsibility is not delegated.

Availability: The Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy is available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will act in their absence, and the unavailability of any individual will never delay appropriate action.

Responsibilities: The Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). These are specifically outlined in KCSIE (2026), and primarily include:

- providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters

- responding to and act on any concerns or disclosures in a timely manner, triaging these against the Local Authority thresholds using all of the available information and refer or seek advice as necessary
- ensuring child protection records are appropriately maintained and updated, including detail about decision making and further actions or outcomes and the threshold level reached in line with local procedures
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children and being a key point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- informing the Headteacher of issues, including ongoing section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- being the lead contact when working with the academy's leadership team for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school by:
- ensuring senior leaders know and have oversight its' cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
- supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential. Recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

4.6 Teachers Responsibilities

4.6.1 Teachers adhere to the Teachers' Standards (2021) to manage behaviour effectively and ensure a good and safe educational environment; this requires teachers to have a clear understanding about the needs of all pupils.

4.6.2 This includes:

- knowing, understanding and following the academy's safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.
- all staff are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times, including when communicating electronically, using social media, engaging in online activity or where conduct outside the workplace could affect the safety and welfare of children, professional suitability or the reputation of the academy
- supporting educational outcomes of pupils subject to safeguarding concerns to be met and following advice when this is provided, such as reasonable adjustments, implementing actions in a statutory safeguarding plan.

4.7 Visitors including Contractors Responsibilities

Visitors, including contractors, will read the academy's safeguarding procedure information (provided upon signing in at the office) so that they can follow protocol. Expectations will be referenced in any lease/letting agreement.

Section 5: Responding to concerns about a child's welfare

5.1 Everyone (including staff, supply staff, governors/trustees, volunteers, visitors etc.) must follow the protocol if they have concerns about a child's welfare:

- take the action necessary in an emergency to help the child, for example, call 999 for medical assistance or if a crime needs to be reported
- report their concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy as swiftly as possible and within the hour, by recording it on Safeguard and handing the green A5 safeguarding form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person (see Appendix D; an example concerns form is in Appendix A and a body map in Appendix B)
- speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy as quickly as possible if the matter is extremely urgent, or they are unsure
- follow the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and remember this information is confidential
- ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate. It should be logged as quickly as possible, on the same day and before the child is due to leave the academy premises
- seek support for the child if they are distressed, through the academy's pastoral team.

Staff must always **immediately** inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy if there are any:

- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, including suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- searching incidents where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a learner was in possession of a prohibited item or where a search has revealed a safeguarding risk
- behaviour or changes in presentation, including changes in school attendance, which gives rise to suspicions that a child may not be receiving adequate care or may be suffering harm
- hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child
- concerns that a person(s) who may pose a risk to children is living in a household with children present
- concerns about online abuse including cybercrime, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing nudes and semi nudes and/or where any adult appears to be sexually communicating (e.g., email, text, written note or verbally) with a child

- concerns about child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment
- information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (this is known as private fostering)
- concerns that a child is at risk of domestic abuse or so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including forced marriage, marriage, or civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, virginity testing or hymenoplasty
- concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, including county lines; or that a child or their parent/carer may be a victim of modern slavery (trafficked)

5.2 There will be occasions when there may be the suspicion that a child may be at risk, but there is no 'real' evidence. For example:

- the child may need support with their mental health.
- the child's behaviour, play and or appearance may have changed
- attendance at school may have reduced
- the child's ability to concentrate and focus may have altered
- other behavioural and or physical indicators but inconclusive signs

5.3 In these circumstances, the adult should try to give the child the opportunity to talk as the signs noticed may be due to a variety of factors.

5.4 It is not the responsibility of the academy or its staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This is the responsibility of children's social care at the Local Authority. All staff however have a duty to recognise where extra support is needed or where there are complex needs or child protection concerns requiring intensive or specialist support.

5.5 Ensure all early concerns are recorded early using Safeguard (see Appendix D). If a child or adult does begin to reveal that a child is being harmed, follow the advice in the section *'If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse'* is to be followed.

5.6 These concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. Do not presume someone else will do this or has done so.

5.7 Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to submit a C-SPOC referral via the online portal website when it is believed or suspected that a child is a:

Child in Need:

- needs more complex interventions from statutory children's services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
- has a permanent and substantial disability which significantly limits their everyday lives

Child in Need of protection:

- has suffered significant harm

- is likely to suffer significant harm

5.8 If a child chooses to tell an adult about a concern or abuse

5.8.1 It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. It is important they are reassured that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be made to feel they are creating a problem, blamed or ashamed for making a report. Reports, particularly those about sexual violence and harassment, should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy); however, this might not be possible in all cases.

5.8.2 If a child or adult talks about any risks to a child's safety or well-being they will need to be told that this information will be passed on – secrets are not allowed to be kept. The point at which you tell them this is a matter for professional judgement.

5.8.3 During the conversation with the child (or their parent/carer or significant adult) the staff member will:

- allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and avid asking leading questions
- keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature (tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- remain calm and do not overreact – they may stop talking if they feel that they are upsetting you
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- avoid admonishing them for not disclosing earlier. For example, saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing'; this may intend to be supportive but be interpreted as they have done something wrong
- do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; this may not be comforting to a child who has been abused
- at an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- tell them what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if not, let them know that this staff member will come to see or contact them before the end of the day

- ensure that children are not asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record

5.8.4 Key points to remember

Any adult with a concern about a child's welfare (from the conversation or beyond this) will:

- in an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- do not assume a colleague or another professional will share information that might be critical to keeping a child safe. Early information sharing is vital in keeping children safe, whether this is when problems first emerge, or when a child is already known to children's social care at the Local Authority.
- report your concern, including any possible private fostering arrangements, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy as soon as possible (by the end of the day at the latest) using Safeguard, and hand the green A5 safeguarding form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person (see Appendix D).
- if you are unsure speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy/report verbally to them.
- if the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy is not present, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the academy that day. The concerns and any action taken must then be shared with the designated safeguarding lead as soon as it is possible.
- if the concerns are about sharing nudes and semi-nudes do not view, copy, print or share the images.
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.
- formally record in writing the conversation or record of concerns and this should be on the same day/before the child leaves the premises using Safeguard and give a copy of the written record to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed. This may be sometime after the disclosure (see sections 5.19 and 5.20)

5.9 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy following identification of concerns

5.9.1 Whenever the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy receives information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications via Operation Encompass, they will:

- review information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, actions to secure a child's immediate safety
- check what is known about the child, for example, when they arrived (or not) at school today, how they present physically and emotionally, any changes in behaviour

- consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to children's services at the Local Authority (targeted Early Help or Social Care)
- consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- inform relevant staff who have a specific need to know, i.e., class/form teacher, relevant support staff
- where appropriate use relevant national, local, and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as: school records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks. and body maps (Appendix B)
    - use national guidance and assessment tools, e.g. Stop it now (sexual behaviours), Contextual safeguarding tools, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (2024). The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool is a safeguarding tool focused specifically on identifying, understanding, and responding to children's sexual behaviours. It is used in situations that involve potential child on child abuse (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) but also in broader safeguarding contexts where a child might be experiencing abuse from an adult.
- not directly approach a child or parent/carer about an incident when the academy have received a domestic abuse notification and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are.
- follow the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and use the Southend Threshold document to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options include internal support vithe academy pastoral systems, Early Help Assessment and referral to statutory services such as the children's services at the Local Authority
- consider whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm
- if unsure about the action to take, including if a Child Protection referral should be made, seek advice from children's social care at the Local Authority or another appropriate agency
- if the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, contact the Local Authority Education Performance, Partnerships and Safeguarding team for advice and where appropriate make a referral to the police Prevent Team
- where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, refer as appropriate to children's services at the Local Authority via agreed processes, providing a copy of the Early Help Assessment, action plan and any other relevant assessments
- notify the appropriate Children's Services at the Local Authority of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is

suitable and safe for the child. Notifications will contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and made in writing

- if a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, referring to the police. See NPCC When to call the police; guidance for schools and colleges. Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including undertaking a police strip search on a child and the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult.; see Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance (2022)

5.9.2 For more information about the Early Help Assessment see the Southend Early Help Framework. The term Early Help Assessment is used in this policy however all settings will have their own arrangements to identify early needs and which informs support.

5.10 Responding to a concern or disclosure

5.10.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead reviews all available information and uses this to triage the case and take appropriate action in line with the local authority thresholds. This includes referring cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the children's social care at the Local Authority and support to staff who make referrals to:

- children's social care at the Local Authority
- the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the police as required (NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police).

5.10.2 Recording concern or disclosure: The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures records are a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern. This includes:

- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome, referencing the local authority thresholds
- ensuring that Child Protection files are kept up to date, stored securely and confidentiality
- keeping concerns and referrals in a separate Child Protection file for each child.
- ensuring a Child Protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, when children leave the academy

- ensuring receipt of a Child Protection file for any pupil new to the academy subject to statutory safeguarding intervention

5.10.3 Where there is concern for the welfare of a child and a professional is unsure whether the need warrants a referral for statutory involvement at level 4, the practitioner can call the C-SPOC consultation line on 01702 215007 Option 1. Pre-contact consultations can be anonymous unless they become of high concern during the consultation, in which case, the professional who sought the consultation will be asked for the child's details or advised to inform the parent to contact Children's Social Care. A contact record will then be created.

5.11 Notifying parents/carers

The academy will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parent or carer. Where an Early Help Assessment would benefit the child and their family the most appropriate member of staff should approach the parent/carer to take this forward. In situations where there are serious needs or Child Protection concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will contact the parent or carer. However, if the academy believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from children's social care at the Local Authority.

5.12 Pastoral support (universal support/low level needs)

In all cases, the academy will consider what support could be offered via pastoral support processes. Support is kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

5.13 Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)

Where a child is likely to require co-ordinated support from a range of Early Help services, or where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will support the completion of an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and if needed, co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF).

Whenever a child and their family are supported via an EHA, the academy will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to improve worsen, consideration will be given to a referral to children's services at the Local Authority.

5.14 Referral to children's social care at the Local Authority

Non urgent concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to children's social care at the Local Authority Children's Services Portal using the agreed referral process as outlined in the Southend Threshold document.

> **If there are concerns that a child is at IMMEDIATE risk of significant harm professionals should telephone the Children's – Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) immediately on 01702 215007.**

Requests for Support made on the telephone must be followed up with a written C-SPOC referral form via the online portal website immediately following the phone referral.

Where there is imminent danger call the emergency services on 999.

Anybody can make the referral!

In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to children's social care at the Local Authority using the online portal; however, they should also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy (as soon as possible).

5.15 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

If the referral is about a 'known' case of female genital mutilation (FGM), in addition to a referral to children's social care at the Local Authority, the individual teacher also has a mandatory reporting duty; see Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation; procedural information (2015). Under this duty, 'known' cases of FGM where a girl under 18 informs the person that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or where physical signs appear to show that an act of FGM was carried out, this must be reported to the police on 101. This is a personal responsibility in addition to the referral to children's social care at the Local Authority and the professional who identifies FGM and/or receives the disclosure should make the report by the close of the next working day.

5.16 Action following a referral by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy

5.17 Confidentiality and sharing information

The academy recognises the importance of information sharing between the academy and local agencies to effectively safeguard our learners. The academy operates with regard to HM Government Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2024), Information Commissioner's Office A 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children (2023) and DDSCP Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners (2022).

All staff will be mindful of the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare, rather, they provide the legal framework under which information can, and in some cases, must be shared.

Academy staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

KCSIE 2026 refers to a new statutory information sharing duty, in force from 30 September 2026, under which information must be shared where it is relevant, necessary and proportionate to do so. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the academy follows this duty and will seek advice from the Data Protection Officer or children's social care where needed.

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or deputy, who will seek advice from the Data Protection Officer as required

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children

All information sharing outside of 'business as usual', should be recorded on the appropriate logs

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises in their absence), Headteacher or Chair of Governors/trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That staff member will decide who else needs to have the information which they will share on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Consent will be sought to share information, where appropriate, however, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as children's social care at the Local Authority in line with the law. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

5.18 Record keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions, should be recorded in writing following the protocols in place by the academy for safeguarding and Child Protection recording (on Safeguard; see Appendix D). This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such children's social care at the Local Authority or the Prevent programme etc. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept in a Child Protection file for each child and stored separately from each child's education file; this file is 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Child Protection files are confidential and stored securely and only made available to relevant individuals.

Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, the rationale for these, and the outcome, as well as a review of any progress made

- any professional differences of opinion about the safety of a child will also be recorded

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of a child leaving the academy, e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

When a child leaves the academy, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure a copy of these records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any school or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained. The Child Protection file transfer will be separate to the main pupil file. This will allow the new provider to continue to support the child and have the support in place for when the child arrives.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, the deputy and key staff, such as the SENCO, will be informed when a child's safeguarding/Child Protection file is received.

All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially (on the Safeguard platform and, where a paper record exists, in secure storage) and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school or educational setting as per our GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Where a student transfers from our academy to another school or educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new setting without delay and separately 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 academy, *unless there is a specific reason for us to keep it, which will be recorded* (for example, there are siblings still in the academy 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 of the date on which 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 that appropriate support is in place when the child arrives. Where a student joins our academy, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment if none are received.

5.19 Support for adults involved in a safeguarding/child protection concern

Child neglect, abuse and exploitation are devastating for children and can result in distress and anxiety for staff involved. Support to [all] concerned is by:

- offering employee assistance, such as providing details of helplines, counselling, or other sources of external support

- responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- nominating a link adult who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- nominating a 'case manager' where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child
- following the procedures laid down in policies, such as whistleblowing, complaints, and disciplinary procedures
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously

5.20 Staff Welfare, Support and Supervision

5.20.1 The academy recognises that safeguarding work can be emotionally demanding. Appropriate welfare, supervision, debriefing and support arrangements will be available to staff involved in safeguarding and child protection matters.

5.20.2 Staff will have access to wellbeing support services, Employee Assistance Programmes (where available), Occupational Health advice and professional supervision where appropriate.

5.20.3 The academy will promote a culture in which staff feel able to seek support following safeguarding incidents, disclosures, investigations or other child protection matters.

5.21 Allegations or concerns about adults working with children

5.21.1 All staff are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are set out in the Legra Academy Trust Staff Code of Conduct. The academy works in accordance with statutory guidance (KCSIE Part four) and the SET Procedures (Part A, Section 7) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity, including supply staff, contractors and volunteers.

5.21.2 The academy has processes in place for reporting any concern about a member of staff or any adult working with children. This policy applies where an adult has:

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

5.21.3 Any such concern or allegation 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 directly to the Chair of Governors or the Chair of the Directors of Legra Academy Trust, who will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5.21.4 The SET Procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Headteacher, senior named person or Chair of Governors must inform the LADO (LADO@southend.gov.uk) using the LADO referral form within one working day. Wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately by email, as they will advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires police involvement, including advice on speaking to students and parents and on HR matters. The academy does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. The academy will manage these procedures alongside its disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the academy's HR Advisor. Where a person is dismissed or leaves the academy because of a risk of harm to a child, the academy will consider whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is required.

5.21.5 **Low-level concerns.** A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt", that an adult working in or on behalf of the academy may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and that does not meet the allegation threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to refer to the LADO. Low-level concerns about any adult, including supply staff, contractors and volunteers, must be shared with the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors/Chair of Directors where the concern is about the Headteacher). The academy will maintain procedures for reporting, recording, reviewing and responding to low-level concerns, so that concerns are addressed consistently and in accordance with the Code of Conduct and managing allegations procedures, and so that patterns of behaviour are identified early.

5.21.6 Staffing matters are confidential and the academy operates within the statutory framework around data protection. The academy's safeguarding policies, Staff Code of Conduct, managing allegations procedures, whistleblowing arrangements and disciplinary policies are reviewed regularly and remain consistent with one another.

5.22 Whistleblowing

5.22.1 All members of staff and the wider academy community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident that any concern will be taken seriously by the academy leadership team. We have whistleblowing procedures in place, set out in the academy Whistleblowing Policy.

5.22.2 Any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or who feels that their concerns have not been addressed, may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 (available 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday) or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk. Parents or others in the wider academy community with concerns can

contact the NSPCC general helpline on 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk.

5.23 Use of reasonable force

5.23.1 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 academy works in accordance with the statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (see section 1.5) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context. Staff receive training on the use of reasonable force as part of their safeguarding training.

Section 6: Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment

6.1 The attitude by all staff and adults of *'it could happen here'* is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reported incidents or concerns does not mean it is not happening.

6.2 The academy recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. This is consistent with the Belfairs Behaviour for Learning Policy, the Legra Academy Trust Staff Code of Conduct and other relevant policies in the academy's safeguarding suite.

6.3 The academy will maintain a clear distinction between behaviour incidents that can be addressed through behaviour management processes and incidents that require safeguarding intervention. Where safeguarding concerns exist, safeguarding procedures will always take precedence.

6.4 The academy take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. All reports and concerns will be responded to, including those alleged to have taken place outside of the academy and online. It is recognised that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

6.5 What is child-on-child abuse?

6.5.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying):
  - abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
  - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
  - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
  - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- discriminatory abuse, including racism and faith-based prejudice
- misogyny and misandry, and gendered harmful behaviours, including those influenced by harmful online content

6.5.2 Incel ideology and its associated behaviours are not legally defined as "child on child abuse" in themselves; rather, they are a radical, extremist online subculture that can lead to behaviours that constitute child on child abuse (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) when they manifest offline.

6.5.3 Child-on-child abuse can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour. Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum, and different forms of abuse may overlap. It can affect children of any age, sex, be between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children. Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:

- those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
- young people in care
- those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
- black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- there is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
- evidence shows that children with disabilities or children identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning are at greater risk

6.5.4 Child-on-child abuse is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children spend their time - home, the academy, peer group, online and community - and is built

upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer.

- child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- while perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

6.6 Preventing child-on-child abuse

6.6.1 There is a whole-academy approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole-academy approach to safeguarding. The academy will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The establishment has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life.

6.6.2 The academy:

- provides a safe environment
- promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour
- takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour
- has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously
- provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities.

6.6.3 This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

6.6.4 All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here'* and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

6.6.5 The academy deals with a wide continuum of behaviour by children on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via academy-based processes. These are outlined in the policies that can be found in the 'safeguarding suite', referenced previously in this policy, as well as policies such as:

- Belfairs Behaviour for Learning Policy (including anti-bullying, and online and prejudice-based bullying) and the academy's screening, searching and confiscation powers, and how they are used safely and appropriately, including police strip searches

- Online Safety Policy and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes and extremist material
- Relationships Education/Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy, E-Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Equality Policy

6.7 Procedures for children to report child-on-child abuse

As outlined in previous sections, even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. Children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse and children may have additional barriers to disclose. Children may show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend, or staff may overhear conversations. All staff will be trained to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it. Children can report a concern to any adult in the academy whom they trust, including their tutor, or directly to a member of the safeguarding team.

6.8 Action following a concern about child-on-child abuse

6.8.1 Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Adults may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a concern is very important. Members of staff will take all concerns seriously and reassure the child/family that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. Conversations should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy) wherever possible, however it is recognised that this may not be possible in all cases.

6.8.2 The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the academy is treated as seriously as that which has occurred within the academy.

6.8.3 Staff must follow discuss the concerns, seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead - see *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare*.

6.8.4 When an allegation is made by a child against another child, staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or Child Protection concerns. See *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare*.

6.8.5 Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- what are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- what is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there

coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? Were other children and/or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmfully sexual behaviours been displayed? Remember there may be other forms of abuse, in addition to what has been reported.

- what is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions, (including anything that might have had an impact on this, e.g. coercion), family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship? Do they live in the same household or setting? Do they attend the same the academy, classes, or transport?
- what are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there are any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- are there any risks to the victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and/or others e.g., other children, adults, students, staff, others in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children around the child), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

6.8.6 Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted.

6.8.7 Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. A risk assessment or plan will lay out how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on the academy premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the academy.

6.8.8 For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, the academy's premises and transport should be considered immediately.

6.8.9 All decisions are made in the best interests of the child/ren involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt by the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the Designated Safeguarding Lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care Local Authority and the police as required.

6.8.10 The Designated Safeguarding lead will refer to guidance and advice, such as, but not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) part five

- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- Behaviour in schools
- School suspensions and permanent exclusion
- Southend Threshold Document
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures

When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges

6.8.11 The Designated Safeguarding Lead may seek further advice from local or national safeguarding contacts as outlined in *Key safeguarding contacts*

6.8.12 Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator/s
- all the other children (as well as staff and adult students) at the academy, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- when information can be disclosed to staff and other adults, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

6.8.13 Whenever children's social care at the Local Authority and/or the police are involved, the academy will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

6.8.14 All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/Child Protection file. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment plans.

6.8.15 Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via Early Help (emerging needs) or through children's social care at the Local Authority (complex/serious needs or Child Protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures.

6.8.16 All risk and needs assessments, and any action plans, whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

6.8.17 Tools used to self-assess our response to harmful sexual behaviour are:

- CPD: Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool (RSE) Course.
- The Contextual Safeguarding School Beyond Referrals Self-Assessment Toolkit & Guidance
- Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

6.8.18 Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the new provider are made aware of any on-going support needs (the most suitable way of doing this is discussed with the victim, and where appropriate their parent/carer), as well as sending the safeguarding/Child Protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

Appendix A: Concerns form

Belfairs Academy must ensure that volunteers, staff, governors and trustees are able to record concerns about:

- the welfare of a child or young person; and
- the behaviour of a staff member, volunteer, governor/trustee or adult connected with the academy.

At Belfairs, concerns about a child are recorded on the **Safeguard** online platform and a green A5 safeguarding form is handed in person to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (see Appendix D). The headings below illustrate the minimum information that must be included in a concerns record, whether it is completed online or on paper.

Statement for the concerns form: Everyone, including staff, supply staff, governors/trustees, volunteers, visitors and contractors, must record any concerns about a child or young person. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the discovery of the concern. If the concern is about:

- the welfare of a child, it must be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy)
- the behaviour of any member of staff, it must be sent immediately to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors. If the allegation is against the Headteacher, it should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors/Chair of the Directors of Legra Academy Trust and to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Please refer to section 5.21.

If the concerns are immediate, please inform an appropriate adult straight away.

Concerns about a child or young person

Child's full name:		**Date of birth:**		**Class/year/form:**	
Concern identified by:		**Role:**		**Date and time of concern:**	
Witness/es:		**Place of incident:**			

Name of alleged person(s) responsible for the harm/potential harm:

☐ Not known	☐ Volunteer	☐ Learner in this academy
☐ Member of staff	☐ Governor/trustee	☐ Family member

☐ Learner in another school/education setting (please specify)	☐ Other (please specify)	

Concern / incident / disclosure: Why are you concerned about this child? What have you observed and when? What have you been told and when? Please provide a description of any incident(s) or anything you see or have been told by a child or another person. Record any visible injuries or ask the child/young person to point to where else it is sore or hurts. Do not remove or lift clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment, and do not take photos of injuries. If photos of injuries are required for evidence purposes, this should be done by the police. Remember to make clear what is fact and what is hearsay/opinion. Note the language and terminology used by the child or adult, and be clear about who has said what. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Has any action already been taken in relation to this concern? For example, child taken out of class, first aid.

Name of person concerns reported to		**Date**	

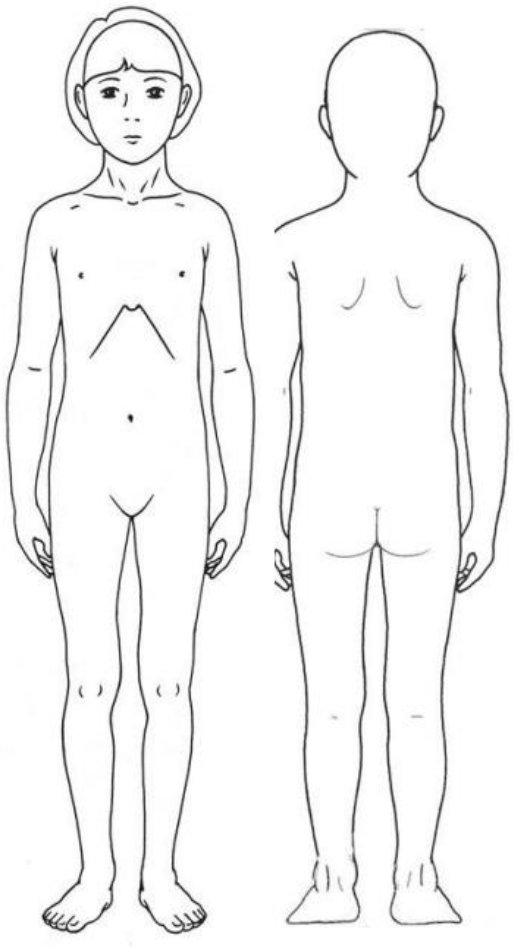
Action to be taken / recommendations from the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name of person completing form		**Signature**		**Date and time**	

Appendix B: Body map

This body map is designed to accurately record any concerns about possible physical abuse, particularly if it is felt that an injury is non-accidental or thought to be following a pattern. Any injuries or marks should be recorded on the body map. The body map should be completed and stored alongside the concerns record, in line with the academy's policy (on Safeguard, the body map is completed within the concern record).

Child's details			
Name		Date of birth	
Person completing the form			
Name		Role	



Body map: front and back outline of a child for recording injuries

Appendix C: Threshold guidance process

The academy uses the Southend Threshold document (Right Help, Right Service, Right Time) to support decision-making about the level of a child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention, as summarised below. Where there is an urgent and immediate need to protect a child, call 999. Where a child may be at risk of significant harm, contact C-SPOC on 01702 215007, or make a referral through the Southend Children's Services Portal.

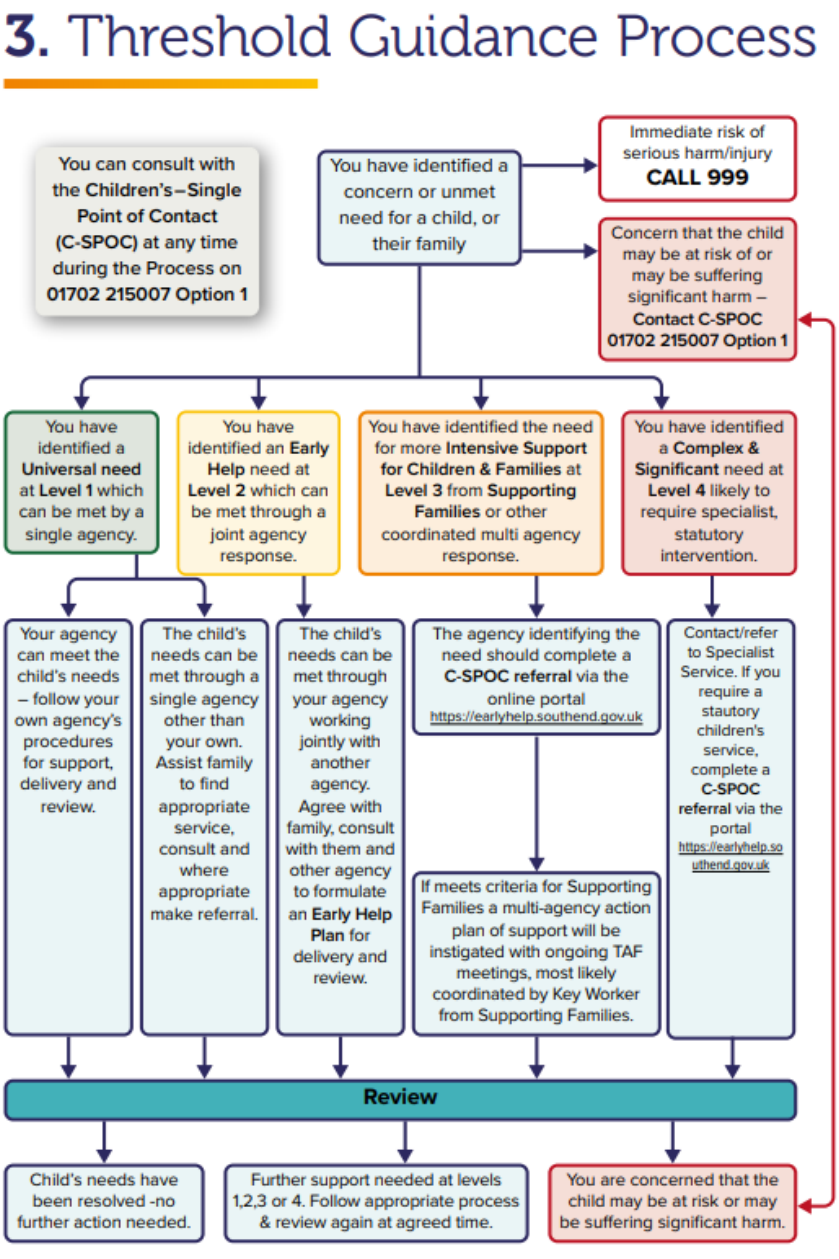


Diagram of the Southend threshold guidance process

Appendix D: Staff Safeguarding Guide for CPOMS

CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) is a secure, cloud-based safeguarding and pastoral recording platform used to record, monitor, and manage concerns about students. The system helps designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), pastoral teams, and senior leaders track patterns, respond to risks promptly, and ensure legal and statutory safeguarding duties are met.

You should use CPOMS to report:

Any Safeguarding concerns you may have including:

- Student disclosures (exact wording must be used)
- Behavioural incidents requiring recording beyond standard classroom management or behaviours that are concerning to you.
- Mental health or wellbeing concerns
- Online safety issues
- Unexplained changes in behaviour

What to Log and What Counts as a Safeguarding Concern

A safeguarding concern is anything that makes you pause, feel unsure, or worry about a student's safety, wellbeing, or home situation. This includes situations where a child may be at risk of harm, experiencing difficulties at home, showing concerning changes in behaviour, or disclosing information that suggests they do not feel safe. You should log any concern that could help build a clearer picture of a student's situation over time, even if the information seems small in isolation.

Examples of concerns to log include:

- Any disclosure a student shares with you - please use their exact words where possible.
- Physical marks or injuries that seem unusual or unexplained.
- A noticeable shift in behaviour - becoming withdrawn, tearful, anxious, angry, or unusually quiet.
- Concerns about mental health or emotional wellbeing.
- Peer on Peer concerns - Including bullying, friendship breakdowns, or social difficulties (including online).
- Anything suggesting instability at home, such as arguments, tension, parental substance misuse or a student expressing fear of home life.

- Online safety worries - unsafe messages, content, or contact.
- Possible self-harm or comments that hint at not feeling safe.
- Sexually inappropriate language or behaviour between students.
- Patterns such as persistent lateness, absence, or being isolated from peers.
- Anything that just doesn't feel right - trust your instincts, if in doubt log it.

Logging your concern?

Logging a concern should feel simple and manageable. Green slips will still continue to be used alongside your CPOMs entry. Here's an easy walkthrough for logging your concern on CPOMS:

- Go to your school's CPOMS login page and sign in.
- Click ***Add Incident*** at the top of your CPOMS dashboard.
- **Student:** Search for the student(s) involved - double-check spelling to be sure
- **Incident:** Enter a clear, factual incident description. Include what was said, observed, and your response. - Please note time and date of incident if this has not happened at the time of writing this report.
- **Categories:** Choose the most suitable category (don't worry - DSLs can adjust if needed).
- **Linked Students:** If there are multiple students involved add these by typing each name - You do not need to write separate entries for each child, if linked it will notify the Safeguarding Team for all students involved.
- **Maps** - complete this for any injuries or marks you have seen linking to the concern you are raising.
- **Assign to:** ensure you assign incident to one of the named DSL's - This is a vital part to ensure that the Safeguarding Team are notified of your entry.
- **Files:** Attach any relevant evidence (screenshots, photos of notes, statements etc.). - If there are linked students ensure that you click ***Share Documents*** so it links to all students involved.
- **Alert Staff Members:** Alert Safeguarding Admin – Nicky Mere to all incidents.
- **Submit Incident:** Review your entry that all steps have been completed them submit.

Writing an Effective Incident Description

A strong written description should be factual, chronological, and free from interpretation or opinion. You should record what you witnessed, what was said, who was present, and what you did in response.

Include the following elements:

- **Factual: observations and quotes;** avoid opinion or diagnosis. - If this is not a direct disclosure be clear that information being shared is "rumours".
- **Specifics:** date, time, place; names/roles of people present.
- **Student words:** exact wording in quotation marks for disclosures.
- **Demeanour:** calm/tearful/shaking/angry; body language and tone.
- **Action taken:** who you informed, where the student went, any first aid.
- **Attachments:** relevant, necessary, lawful (no recordings of students).

Below is a detailed example of a high-quality CPOMS entry:

Student: AA

Description: At 10:45 today during Maths (Room A1), Student AA appeared withdrawn, avoided eye contact, and repeatedly put their head down on the desk. When asked privately if they were okay, Student A said: "I've been feeling really low and I can't talk to anyone at home about it." Student appeared tearful while speaking, Student AB said she has been trying to help student AA for the last few days as they had shared with them that they felt low.

I reassured Student AA that I was there to listen and that support was available. I accompanied them to Wellbeing. Student remained calm and safe. Check in with AB and they were ok just wanted their friend to be ok.

Category: Cause for concern

Subcategory: Emotional / Mental Health Related

Linked Student: AB

Date/Time: 13 March 2026, 11am

Assigned to: DSL – JZ / SP / NR / TF

Alert: NM

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Southend-on-Sea City Council Model Child Protection Policy for Education Providers (2026), which contributed to the development of this policy.