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West Leigh Junior School Child Protection Policy

Date Written/Reviewed: October 2026

Next Review Date: October 2027

Person Responsible: Candy London

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS	**Candy London** **clondon@wljs.porticoacademytrust.co.uk**
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS	**Angela Atkin** **Emma Poysden**
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE	**ROS SANDERS** 01702 987890

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

C-SPOC **Children's Social Care,** **Southend Borough Council:** Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.	**01702 215007 Option 1** C-SPOC@southend.gov.uk mashadmin@southend.gov.uk (For checking status of referrals)
OUT OF OFFICE HOURS: To make URGENT referrals	0345 606 1212
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Allison Francis Phone: 01702 534539 Email: allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR WEST LEIGH JUNIOR SCHOOL

1. INCLUSION

All children deserve to thrive academically and socially. At West Leigh Junior School we adapt our curriculum to ensure it is accessible to meet different needs and high expectations are maintained for all. Inclusion runs through everything we do; it is not a bolt on. We are a community school which strongly believes that we have a duty to provide for the varying needs of our children in order to ensure that they are ready for the next stage of education and beyond.
We have high expectations of **all our pupils**. We firmly believe that with high quality teaching and effective engagement from parents **every child** can meet their academic potential. We are also passionate about the children's social and emotional development and believe that all children should be offered opportunities to ensure that they leave our school with high aspirations for their future.
We believe that all our children have an equal entitlement, and should have an equal opportunity to be supported and challenged to maximise their potential, therefore our curriculum is bespoke and allows children to make progress in a variety of ways.

Every child within our school can thrive and we do everything we can to make sure that happens. That means we:

- provide lessons that meet the needs of every child;
- make reasonable adjustments to lessons and our school environment;
- provide staff training to expand our expertise.

We think about both the long term and the short term. Our ambitions for our children include for them to:

- have personal, spiritual, moral and cultural awareness to learn and achieve;
- have good friendships and relationships;
- live a healthy and independent life;
- be successful in work;
- feel safe and secure.

2. **CONTEXT**

2.1
Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.
2.2
'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' means everyone under the age of 18. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.' (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026)

1.2 This Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school. It should be read in conjunction with:

- '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE, 2026), Part One of which is read by all staff
- The school Behaviour Policy
- The school Code of Conduct
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026)

- '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'* (HMG, 2015)
- The safeguarding response to children missing or absent from education
- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**Annex B** of *KCSIE, 2026*).

The policy should also be read in conjunction with other related policies, including: Portico Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visit Policy, Online Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy and Designated Looked After Child Policy.

1.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, which includes everyone under the age of 18, is defined in ('*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* DfE 2026) as:

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

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 West Leigh Junior School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. "*The welfare of the child is paramount*" (Children Act 1989).

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

3.3 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, trustees, volunteers, students and visitors to our school.

3.4 There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy:
Prevention

- By ensuring that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who work with children;
- Through establishing and maintaining a safe and positive environment and the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils;
- By raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.

Protection

- By following agreed procedures and ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

Support

- To pupils who have/may have been abused or neglected (in line with his/her Child Protection Plan, if appropriate).

3.5 This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

4. SCHOOL COMMITMENT

Our school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- Create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our pupils is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Understand that some children may not know how or feel ready to talk.
- Ensure pupils receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This includes identifying emerging problems and those children who may benefit from early help.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils 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 pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others.
- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government.
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations.
- Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- Promote positive mental health and resilience. Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school wants to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs.

We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter balance and promote further growth of resilience.

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

5. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

5.1 There is government guidance set out in '*Working Together'* (2018, HMG, Updated 2026) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In Southend these arrangements sit under the Southend Safeguarding (Child)

Partnership (SS(C)P), previously the LSCB. The statutory partners are Southend Borough Council, Essex Police and the Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) covering Southend.

5.2 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory responsibility on the governing body/Trust to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

5.3 In Southend, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures 2025 (Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures, 2025).

Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance and advice; this is not an exhaustive list):
'*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE, 2026)
'Working Together' (HMG, 2018 updated 2020 and 2026)
Education Act 2002
'*Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges'* (DfE, September 2021)
Children Act 1989
Children Act 2004
Children and Social Work Act 2017
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (s.74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges (March 2023)
Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015)
Sexual Offences Act (2003)
Data Protection Act (2018)
Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
Guidance on Private Fostering (DFES 2005)
'*Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education'* (May 2019 v2)
'*Behaviour in schools*: *Advice for Headteachers and school staff 2022'* (DfE September 2022)
'*Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools 2022'* (DfE, September 2022)
'*Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies*' (DfE July 2013)
'*Preventing and Tackling Bullying'* (DfE, July 2017)
'Approaches to *Preventing and Tackling Bullying'* (DfE, June 2018)
Positive environments where children can flourish (Ofsted Oct 2021)
'Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement' (Home Office, 2015)
*'Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines guidance (*Home Office, February 2020)
'*Children Missing Education'* (DfE, 2016)
'*Teaching Online Safety in Schools*' (DfE, January 2023)

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 All adults working with, or on behalf of, children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) are shown on page one of this document.

6.2 The Trust ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

6.3 The school publishes its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies on the school website alongside '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE Updated 2026).

6.4 The Designated Safeguarding Trustee (named on the front cover of this document) takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The Trust ensure that, as well as the Designated Safeguarding Trustee, there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one Deputy Safeguarding Lead in place (named on the front page of this document).

6.5 The Trust ensures the school contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

6.6 The Trust ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe. The Trust ensures that this training includes staff's roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and cyber security training.

6.7 The Trust ensure that our pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Since September 2020, our school has been working in accordance with government regulations that make the subjects of Relationships Education and Health Education mandatory. We ensure that that appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage in school are in place. The school actively promotes online safety on its website and signposts to information that will help keep children safe online. Weekly updates from the National College for parents are shared within our newsletter.

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

6.9 The principal works in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Trust are followed by all staff.

6.10 The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for child protection. Their role (set out in Annex B) includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place, undertaking specific safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) has access to these procedures and that they are used appropriately. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff on child protection matters and ensure that timely referrals are made to Children's Services (MASH+ Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) or for Family Help Assessment Team, as

appropriate) in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the Local Authority and other agencies as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

6.11 If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who is trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, will act in their absence.

6.12 All staff in our school have a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it. They are also aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff members are aware of and follow school processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to social care and/or the police, if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy). They should not assume that others have taken action.

6.13 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.
PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes of this Code and any other Code.

PACE also states that If at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a pupil about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on CPOMS.

If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned before questioned about an offence, or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.

A Police Officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence.

The 'appropriate adult' means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
    a. a police officer;
    b. employed by the police;
    c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or

d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions,

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.

The police caution is: *"You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."*

A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g.: (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.

7. PROCEDURES

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

7.2 All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to children who may be in need of help or protection. However, it should be remembered that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, suspects that abuse may have occurred, or is concerned about a child's welfare, **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Leads or, in their absence, one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. This is so that discussion can take place regarding whether any support for the child can be managed internally via the school's own pastoral support process, or if an early help assessment is indicated, or a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The school may seek advice from social care about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond.

7.3 The contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are prominently displayed in the school to ensure that all members of the school community have access to safeguarding support. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. If, for any reason, nobody is available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Any individual may refer to social care/police where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

7.4 All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance and advice:

- The SET Procedures 2026 (Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures, 2026)
- *'The Early Help Family Support Practitioner Toolkit (Threshold Document*)', which can be downloaded from http://www.southendchildren.org Downloads–Children|Safeguarding Southend Partnership
- '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026)
- '*Disqualification under the Childcare Act', 2006* (DfE Aug 18)
- '*Working Together to Safeguard Children'* (HMG, 2018, Updated 2026)

- '*The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers*' (DfE Aug 2015)
- '*Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales'* (HMG April 2019)
- '*Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation'* (HMG Oct 18)
- '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'* (HMG 2015)
- *'Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers'* (HMG July 2018)

7.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse, or allegations, to Children's Social Care (C-SPOC), Southend Borough Council (contact numbers are on the cover sheet of this document) and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the 'SET procedures (2026)'.

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

7.7 The Early Help Family Support Assessment (EHFSA) should be used to support a child protection referral. The EHFSA form and guidance is available on www.southendchildrenspartnership.org.uk and on the Southend Safeguarding (Child) Partnership (SS(C)P) website and Southend Learning Network. A completed EHFSA form contains all the information required for a child protection referral and should be sent to C-SPOC. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure, plus any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.

7.8 The school will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to social care with the parents or carers, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions, advice will be taken from Children's Social Care or Essex Police about when it is appropriate to share information with parents/carers. Parents and carers are informed about our school's duties and responsibilities under child protection procedures on admission and on the school website.

7.9 If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed, or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will press for re-consideration of the case to ensure that the child's situation improves.

7.10 Whilst all staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (or Deputy) with regard to any concerns about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher has a statutory duty to report this personally to the Police. See 12.12, below, and Part One in '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026) for more details.

7.11 When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are given a copy of our school Child Protection Policy, advised who our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies are and informed of their role and how to share concerns with them. They are also made aware of our online safety policy, including the expectations and applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems and procedures within the Trust. Staff are also given a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct, the school Behaviour Policy and made aware of the safeguarding response to children who go missing from

education. Staff are also given a copy of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026). They also have access to *'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'* (HMG, March 2015), which gives helpful advice about how to respond to child protection concerns or disclosures.

7.12 When staff identify websites or search terms which require blocking via our filtering system, this is raised as a ticket via the IT helpdesk which sits on every staff member's desktop. A log of block requests is then kept outlining the details including the reason for the request. The same procedure applies to unblocking websites and search terms. However, in addition, monthly reviews are conducted of the list of unblocked sites and terms to ensure that they should remain unblocked.
Attempts to access blocked websites and search terms triggers an alert that is sent to the IT manager. This information is then passed to the DSL in school. Our school will ensure that users are identifiable through user logins and methods of assigning devices to enable quick identification of the pupils responsible.
Trustees with an oversight for filtering and monitoring will receive regular reports on incidents across the trust.

8. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

8.1 The Designated Safeguarding Leads (and Deputy) will undergo updated Child Protection training specifically for Designated Safeguarding Leads at least every two years, in accordance with '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026). In addition to formal training, the Designated Safeguarding Leads will keep up to date with safeguarding developments and refresh their knowledge and skills regularly, but at least annually.

8.2 All staff members and Trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated. This training includes: online safety; cyber security and understanding the expectations; applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records are kept of all child protection training.

8.3 The school will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy also undertake training in inter-agency working and other matters, as appropriate.

8.4 The Designated safeguarding lead and deputy will provide support and supervision to staff involved in child protection issues.

8.5 All staff are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are referred to in the Staff Code of Conduct.

9. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents/carers or pupils) or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

9.2 Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the Designated Safeguarding Leads or Deputy with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and

where it is in the child's best interests to do so. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held treated confidentially.

10. RECORDS AND MONITORING

10.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

10.2 From 30 September 2026, the new statutory Information Sharing Duty under Section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 requires relevant safeguarding partners, education settings and other specified agencies to share information where they consider it relevant to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child and where sharing may assist another organisation in carrying out its safeguarding or welfare functions. The duty to share safeguarding information is now a legal requirement, rather than solely good practice guidance. Information must be shared where it is relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare and may assist another relevant agency. Practitioners no longer need to wait for a high statutory threshold (such as a Section 47 child protection enquiry) to be met before sharing information.
The school recognises that effective safeguarding depends on timely and appropriate information sharing. Staff must not allow concerns about data protection, confidentiality or parental consent to prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child. The duty creates a presumption in favour of sharing relevant information unless doing so would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing it. Parental consent is not required where information is being shared under the duty for safeguarding and welfare purposes. Concerns about GDPR or confidentiality should not be used as reasons to withhold information that should be shared to protect a child. The only statutory exception is where sharing the information would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing it.

10.3 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate using a body map to record), putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. The source of the information should be recorded, as well as a note of other people involved, for example, as witnesses, and there should be a clear distinction between fact and professional opinion. All child protection issues and safeguarding concerns are recorded electronically on the school's safeguarding software – CPOMS. All records will be dated, detailing the name and position of the person making the record, and will include the action taken. This information is then presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record all discussions and decisions made, and the reason for those decisions.

10.4 Any hard copy records related to Child Protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child, which is separate from the pupil file. All child protection records are stored securely (i.e. in a locked filing cabinet) and confidentially in the Vice Principal's Office and are accessible through the Designated Safeguarding Leads or Deputies. Digital records will be password-protected. Child protection records will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school/educational setting.

10.5 In line with statutory guidance (KCSIE, 2026), if a pupil transfers from our school to another school/educational setting, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting within 5 days, separate from their main pupil file. Care will be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible. We keep a copy of the child protection file until we have confirmation from the receiving school that they have it. Once we have this

confirmation, our copy is shredded, other than copies of the specific records that are pertinent to our school (i.e. not CP Conference reports that are held elsewhere), unless there is a specific reason for us to keep it, which will be recorded. For example, if we still have siblings in the school and the records relate to them too, or there is an ongoing complaint or request for access to records. We will also keep a record of having received confirmation from the receiving school. When a pupil joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

10.6 For records of allegations involving a member of staff, please see paragraph 13.7 below.

10.7 Following requests to block or unblock search terms and websites, a log is kept of the details of each request. This includes the person requesting the change and the reason behind it. Our IT technician in school also logs their monthly checks to ensure that filtering and monitoring processes are working correctly.

11. INTERAGENCY WORKING AND ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES, CORE GROUP MEETINGS OR CHILD IN NEED MEETINGS

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

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

12. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

12.1 Our school is committed to ensuring that our pupils receive the right help at the right time. Staff are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating.

12.2 Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered, harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

12.3 We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in care, or previously in care, or those requiring mental health support. We work with social care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

12.4 Our school will endeavour to support all pupils through:

- The curriculum; to encourage our pupils to stay safe and to develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school's behaviour management policies.
- A consistent approach from all staff that will endeavour to ensure that our pupils know that some behaviour is unacceptable, but that s/he is valued.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the pupils and their families.
- A commitment to develop open, honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child's best interest as paramount.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and special educational needs and/or disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Therefore, staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- Recognition that, in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are vulnerable and may be in need of support or protection.

12.5 Promoting positive mental health and resilience in school

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors that increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter balance and promote further growth of resilience. It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

13. TYPES OF ABUSE & SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

13.1 '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE, 2026) defines abuse in the following way:

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

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

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual and
- Neglect.

13.3 Our school is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware that environmental factors may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap. Staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education including pupils absent from education for repeated or prolonged periods and sexting put children in danger.

13.4 Our school recognises that there are a number of specific and contextual safeguarding issues about which staff need to be aware, including:

- children absent from education
- children missing from education *
- children missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE) *
- cost of living
- county lines
- domestic violence
- drugs
- online safety
- fabricated/induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM) *
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health *
- children with special educational needs and disabilities *
- private fostering *
- prevention of radicalisation *
- trafficking
- child on child abuse*, which may include bullying (including cyberbullying)
- online abuse
- gender-based abuse
- sexting or sexually harmful behaviour including harassment
- harmful sexual behaviour
- filtering and monitoring of in school IT systems

Further information regarding some of these issues can be found below (as indicated*) and these issues are also addressed in Annex A of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026).

A number of additional resources have been included in Annex A of 'Keeping Child Safe in Education' (DfE 2026).

13.5 Whilst the school will ensure that staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their awareness and gain knowledge regarding these areas, we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support in relation to these issues. Government guidance is available on the GOV.UK website and links are provided from *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026). Other organisations also provide specialist information such as:

- NSPCC https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/
- MindEd https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/minded/#dr

13.6 Child-on-Child Abuse

Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. Child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence/sexual harassment, 'up-skirting' 'sexting', (sharing nudes/semi-nudes) or initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. All staff are trained in the signs to look out for and all pupils are supported to report concerns about harmful sexual behaviour.

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Child-on-child abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. There is further information in the schools Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and PSHE curriculum documents. Child-on-child abuse including allegations or sexual harassment, abuse or violence is recorded within its own logging system on Safeguard.

The school will use the guidance set out in:

- KCSIE 2026, Part 5
- *'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies'* (DfE, July 2017) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)
- 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes' UK Council for Internet Safety (December 2020)
- *'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'* (DfE, September 2021)

13.7 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. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns, this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need. Our school has a trained Mental Health Lead, Candy London, Vice Principal, who advises and supports staff.

13.8 Children with SEND

Our school understands that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

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

Further information can be found:

- SEND code of practice 0-25years
- Supporting children with medical conditions
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.
- Mencap

13.9 Children Missing from Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. This aspect also includes those pupils who are absent from education particularly on repeated occasions or for prolonged periods of time. We work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school complies with 'Children Missing Education' (DfE September 2016), and 'Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance' (January 2019). Our school must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the school has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil.

Pupil Does not Attend School on the Expected Admission Start Date

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, we will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. Where the whereabouts are unknown and we have not been notified that the child has started at an alternative setting, we must raise a CME referral to the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Where the whereabouts are known and the parent is refusing to send the child to school, we will follow up using our usual school attendance processes.

Moving Abroad

Where a parent notifies a school that their family are going to move abroad, it is essential that the school takes effective safeguarding steps to ensure that the information that has been received is a true record of what the family intend to do. The principal will meet with the family and establish key information (using the CME Southend guidance).

If, after 10 days from leaving the school and a notification has not been received from the onward destination school after making enquiries with the parents, a CME referral will be made to the local authority where checks will be completed.

EHE

Our school also complies with the regulations regarding Elective Home Education (Regulation 12 of the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' as amended 2016) and Southend's guidance Elective Home Education (EHE): Information for Schools | Southend Learning Network. Our school notifies the Elective Home Education Team via secure email to ehe@southend.gov.uk at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provides a copy of the parents' written notification to home educate and the date they came off roll. A deregistration form is completed before removing the child from roll.

13.10 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

'*It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology*'. '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' (HMG, 2018 – Updated July 2022)

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the named CSE Lead in school on these issues and will work with other agencies as appropriate. Our school is committed to raising awareness of CSE and will use the guidance set out in '*Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and a Guide for Practitioners*' (DfE February 2017).

13.11 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) & Serious Violence

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of harm which is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (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). Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

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

13.12 Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school and/or can occur between children outside school. 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 better understanding of a child and their family.

13.13 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including controlling or coercive, violent or threatening psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

13.14 So-called 'Honour-Based Violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse. As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police personally of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with '*Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation*' (HMG, July 2020) and existing local safeguarding procedures.

Our staff are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or already having suffered FGM. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Staff should note that 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. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the SET Procedures 2025 and in the above guidance that can be found on the GOV.UK website.

A Forced Marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue. Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. Further information can be found in 'The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage' (HMG, February 2023)

13.15 Prevention of Radicalisation

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

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

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

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

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

See: '*The Prevent Duty*' (DfE Aug 2015) and the '*Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales'* (HMG, Updated April 2021).

13.16 Private Fostering

As a school we must make sure that privately fostered children are properly and safely cared for. Local Authorities are under a legal duty to ensure 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. As such, 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, i.e., a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full or half or by marriage) or 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*."

13.17 Looked After Children (LAC)

Our school has a Designated Teacher for pupils who are LAC. The Designated Teacher attends LAC Reviews, PEP meetings and liaises with the child's Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and with the Local Authority 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. Please refer to our Designated Looked After Policy. The statutory guidance for LAC children.

13.18 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

13.19 Filtering and Monitoring on School devices and Networks

At West Leigh Junior School, we have one web filtering solution. Any device connected to the internet within the school goes through Fortigate web filtering. The IT Manager **Iain Nash** has full access to this filtering system. Within the filtering solution, the IT manager is able to block categories (i.e. gambling, explicit content, drugs and alcohol etc.) as well as individual websites. Staff are able to request that a website is blocked or unblocked through the IT helpdesk. If they ask for a site to be unblocked, a check of the site is done beforehand to make sure this is appropriate and checks will be carried out weekly to make sure that it is still safe to remain unblocked for the time period that it is required.

Every 7 days a web filtering report is automatically generated and emailed to a secure email address. Whenever a search is flagged by the filtering system, an email is automatically sent to this address explaining the reason for the flag. The IT Manager monitors these emails and alerts the principal and DSL.

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

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

At West Leigh Junior School, our staff will physically monitor children's online activity by:

- providing effective supervision including watching the screens of users
- taking steps to maintain awareness of how devices are being used by pupils
- reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL

14. ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

14.1 All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct.

14.2 It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when allegations are made about members of staff.

14.3 The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the *'SET procedures (2025)'* in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information regarding this.

14.4 The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). This includes 'low level concerns' (Part 4 of KCSIE, 2025). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the principal who has responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the principal will liaise with the agency, while following due process. Where the concern involves the principal it should be reported direct to the Chair of Portico Academy Trust who will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

14.5 The SET procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the principal, senior named person, or the Chair of Portico Academy Trust must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. For people working with children in Southend, the LADO is Allison Francis, who can be contacted on 01702 534539. There is also the Child Protection Adviser, Sharon Langston, who can be contacted on 01702 534591. The email contact is safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk

14.6 The LADO has overall responsibility for oversight of the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff members. Wherever possible, contact with the LADO should be made immediately, as she will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school will manage these procedures alongside the school's disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the Portico's HR Manager.

14.7 In accordance with '*Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2026), details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, the record should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age, or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. However, cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references.

14.8 The school will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO, should they receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their premises for the purposes of running activities for children.

15. USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

The school recognises that all staff have a legal power to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions only where necessary to prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others, causing serious damage to property, committing an offence, or seriously disrupting good order and safety. Any intervention will be lawful, proportionate, reasonable and used for the shortest time necessary,

with a strong emphasis on prevention, de-escalation and safeguarding. The school will not use force as a punishment and will not use unsafe or degrading practices. In line with the Department for Education's 2026 guidance, Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, the school will record all significant incidents on the same day, notify parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day, review incidents to identify lessons learned, and provide appropriate support to any pupil involved. Individual risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans will be developed where appropriate, particularly for pupils with SEND or additional vulnerabilities, to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being required. Staff will receive appropriate training and guidance to ensure interventions are carried out safely, proportionately and in the best interests of the child. (Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions 2026).

16. WHISTLEBLOWING

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

16.2 All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues in line with the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

16.3 We want all members of staff and the wider community to feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident that any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise these concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

17. USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

17.1 Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using the school premises, the Trust will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection. These services or providers are expected to meet the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Out of School Settings. If the school receives allegations to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purpose of running activities for children, the school will follow its own safeguarding procedures and policy, including informing the LADO.

We recognise there are a number of policies that are relevant to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. These include the following:

- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Equality Duty
- Drugs Education
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs
- Educational Visits
- First Aid and Intimate Care
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

- Online Safety
- PSHE
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Relationships Education and RSE
- Staff Handbook (Guidance on conduct including use of mobile phones and social media)

Acknowledgement:
We acknowledge the Essex County Council model Child Protection Policy that contributed to the development of this model policy.