

SAFEGUARDING

Child Protection Policy

Recognising, responding to and preventing harm



Approved by: Full Governing Board
Approval Date: Autumn Term 2026
Review Date: Autumn Term 2027
Status: Statutory Policy

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	James Garlick
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)	Heather Clark, Suzanne Chamberlain, Liz Plumb, Suzanne Waller
Safeguarding Governor	Andrew Jacobs

These roles should be reviewed annually and updated whenever staffing changes occur.

Our Vision

Grow • Learn • Persevere • Succeed

At Great Leighs Primary School, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We are committed to creating a culture where pupils feel safe, valued, listened to, respected and protected. The welfare of the child is paramount. All staff, governors, volunteers and visitors share a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to act in their best interests at all times. This policy reflects our whole-school safeguarding culture and should be read alongside our Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Online Safety Policy, Attendance Policy and all other safeguarding-related procedures.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

Provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.

- Protect pupils from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online.
- Prevent impairment of children's mental and physical health and development.
- Ensure pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Clarify safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Promote a culture of vigilance, openness and professional curiosity.

2. Statutory Framework

This policy is based on:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026).

Generative AI: product safety expectations (DfE, 2026).

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2026).

Mobile phones in schools (DfE, 2026).

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

Crime and Policing Act 2026.

- Education Act 2002.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Information Sharing Guidance.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.
- Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures 2026; Essex Effective Support for Children and Families and the Essex Effective Support Windscreen of Need; and current Essex local safeguarding partnership arrangements.

3. Safeguarding Principles

The school will:

- Maintain a whole-school safeguarding approach.
 - Operate a child-centred and trauma-informed culture.
 - Act immediately when concerns arise.
 - Listen to the voice of the child.
 - Work effectively with parents and agencies.
 - Promote inclusivity and equality.
 - Safeguard children online and offline.
 - Ensure safeguarding underpins all decision-making.
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Recognise that children may not always feel able, or know how, to tell someone that they are being abused; staff will remain professionally curious and will not rely on a child making a direct disclosure before taking action.

Recognise that abuse, neglect and exploitation may overlap and rarely occur in isolation; staff will consider the whole context of a child's life when assessing concerns.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

- Review safeguarding policies annually.
- Appoint a safeguarding governor.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Ensure filtering and monitoring systems are effective.
- Monitor safeguarding compliance.
- Receive safeguarding reports from the DSL.
- Ensure safer recruitment procedures are implemented.

Ensure statutory pre-employment and other suitability checks are completed and an accurate Single Central Record is maintained.

Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for volunteers, contractors, agency and supply staff.

Ensure pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, through a broad and balanced curriculum and Relationships and Health Education.

Ensure filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed at least annually and that identified risks and actions are recorded.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding procedures are implemented.
- Maintaining a safeguarding culture.
- Ensuring staff comply with statutory guidance.
- Supporting the DSL.
- Managing safeguarding concerns relating to staff.
- Liaising with governors regarding safeguarding matters.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection including:

- Managing referrals.
- Working with children's social care.
- Supporting staff.
- Maintaining safeguarding records.
- Attendance oversight of vulnerable pupils.
- Online safety.
- Filtering and monitoring oversight.
- Early Help and Family Help coordination.
- Multi-agency working.
- Safeguarding training.

Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard and act in the DSL's absence.

All Staff

All staff must:

- Read and understand KCSIE 2026 Part One. All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, are expected to read Part One; the Part One overview is a complementary quick reference and does not replace it.
- Know the school's safeguarding processes.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Maintain professional curiosity.

- Understand indicators of abuse.
 - Never assume somebody else has acted.
 - Reassure children appropriately.
 - Maintain professional boundaries.
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5. Categories of Abuse

Staff should be aware of:

- Physical Abuse - a form of abuse causing physical harm to a child, including where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- Emotional Abuse - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- Sexual Abuse - forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including through physical contact or online activity.
- Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development; neglect may also occur during pregnancy.

Abuse can occur:

- Inside or outside the home.
 - Online or offline.
 - By adults.
 - By other children.
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6. Specific Safeguarding Issues

Staff must be aware of:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - County Lines
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Harmful sexual behaviour
 - Domestic abuse
 - Serious violence
 - Mental health concerns
 - Online abuse
 - Children missing education
 - Prevent and radicalisation
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage
 - So-called honour-based abuse
 - Modern slavery and trafficking
 - Substance misuse
 - Private fostering
 - Attendance concerns
 - Contextual safeguarding risks.
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Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - mandatory reporting

FGM is a form of child abuse. In addition to following normal safeguarding procedures, teachers have a personal statutory duty to report directly to the Police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Concerns that a girl may be at risk of FGM must be reported immediately to the DSL and managed through safeguarding procedures.

Prevent and radicalisation

The school fulfils the Prevent duty by having due regard to the need to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. Staff report concerns about extremism or radicalisation to the DSL, who will seek advice and make referrals through local Prevent, Children's Social Care, Police and/or Channel arrangements as appropriate.

Domestic abuse and Operation Encompass

Children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right. Great Leighs Primary School participates in Operation Encompass. Information received from the Police following a domestic abuse incident involving a child on roll will be managed as safeguarding information and used to ensure appropriate support is available.

Risk in the Community (RIC) and contextual safeguarding

The school recognises the Essex Risk in the Community approach to criminal and sexual exploitation. Staff consider risks beyond the family home, including peer groups, neighbourhoods and online spaces, and share relevant information with partner agencies where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

7. Child-on-Child Abuse

The school recognises that children can abuse other children.

This can include:

- Bullying.
- Cyberbullying.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Upskirting.
- Online abuse.
- Image-based abuse.
- Coercive behaviour.
- AI-generated sexual imagery.
- Intimidation and misogynistic behaviour.

The school operates a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and will never dismiss behaviour as:

- "banter";
- "growing up";
- "part of childhood";
- "boys being boys".

8. Online Safety

Online safety is a safeguarding issue.

The school recognises risks relating to:

- Content.
- Contact.
- Conduct.
- Commerce.

The Governing Board ensures:

- Appropriate filtering systems.
- Appropriate monitoring systems.
- Strategic oversight of online safety.
- Regular review of filtering and monitoring arrangements.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

The school recognises emerging safeguarding risks linked to artificial intelligence.

Staff will remain vigilant regarding:

- Deepfake technology.
- AI-generated nude or semi-nude imagery.
- Manipulated images.
- AI-assisted grooming.
- AI-facilitated exploitation.
- AI-generated harmful content.

Any concerns involving AI-generated imagery will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

9. Attendance and Children Missing Education

The school recognises that poor attendance may be a safeguarding indicator.

Persistent absence, severe absence, repeated lateness and unexplained absence will be considered through a safeguarding lens.

Where concerns arise:

- Parents will be contacted promptly.
- Attendance barriers will be explored.
- Appropriate support will be offered.
- Referrals may be made where required.

Parents/carers are expected to provide at least two emergency contact numbers. Unexplained or repeated absence will be followed up promptly and may result in contact with Education Access, Children's Social Care or Police. The school will follow current Essex requirements for Children Missing Education and the Essex Missing Child Protocol when a child goes missing during the school day.

10. Vulnerable Children

Particular attention will be given to:

- Children in Need.
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans.
- Children in care.
- Previously looked-after children.
- Children with SEND.
- Children with mental health needs.
- Young carers.
- Children experiencing domestic abuse.
- Children who are privately fostered.
- Children experiencing bereavement.
- Children affected by exploitation.

Children with SEND may face additional safeguarding barriers, including communication difficulties, assumptions that behaviour or injury relates to disability, and a greater risk of bullying or isolation. Staff will not allow these barriers to prevent concerns being recognised, heard and acted upon.

For children with a social worker, children in care and previously looked-after children, the DSL will work with Children's Social Care and the Essex Virtual School as appropriate to promote safety, attendance, educational outcomes and stability.

Where a pupil is educated through alternative or off-site provision, the school retains responsibility for safeguarding the pupil and will assure itself that the placement is suitable, attendance is monitored and safeguarding information is shared appropriately.

11. Mental Health and Wellbeing

The school recognises that mental health difficulties may sometimes be an indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding concerns will be considered whenever there are significant changes in:

- behaviour;
- presentation;
- emotional wellbeing;
- attendance.

The school will work with families and agencies to ensure pupils receive appropriate support.

12. Procedures for Managing Concerns

Any member of staff who has concerns about a child must:

1. Act immediately.
2. Record the concern.
3. Report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
4. Continue to escalate if concerns remain unresolved.

Where a child is at immediate risk:

- Children's Social Care will be contacted immediately.
- Police will be contacted if necessary.

No member of staff should ever assume someone else has taken action.

When a child discloses abuse or harm, staff will listen carefully, take the child seriously, remain calm, use open and non-leading questions only where clarification is necessary, and will not investigate. Staff will not promise confidentiality. They will explain that information must be shared with people who can help, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking, record the child's words as accurately as possible and report the concern immediately.

Direct referrals and escalation

The DSL or a Deputy DSL should normally be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If they are unavailable, staff must not delay appropriate action. Any member of staff may make a direct referral to Essex Children & Families Hub/Children's Social Care where necessary. Where a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, the Police and/or Children & Families Hub Priority Line must be contacted without delay. If a member of staff believes that appropriate action has not been taken, they must escalate the concern and continue to do so until satisfied that the child's safety has been addressed.

Essex referral routes

The school follows the current SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures. For immediate risk of significant harm, the Essex Children & Families Hub can be contacted on 0345 603 7627 and the Priority Line requested, or Police on 999. The professional Consultation Line is accessed through 0345 603 7627. Out of hours, the Essex Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on 0345 606 1212. Current contact details and online referral routes must be checked against Essex guidance.

13. Family Help and Early Intervention

The school believes that early intervention prevents escalation.

Where children and families require additional support, the school may coordinate or participate in:

- Family Help.
- Early Help.
- Team Around the Family meetings.
- Multi-agency planning.
- Targeted intervention services.

The school uses the Essex Effective Support Windscreen of Need to help identify the appropriate level of support. Early Help can be provided at Levels 1 and 2; Level 3 intensive needs require a coordinated multi-agency response; Level 4 specialist needs involve severe or complex needs and significant risk requiring statutory intervention. Family Help brings together targeted early help and section 17 support where applicable, with coordinated planning around the child and family.

14. Training

All staff receive:

- Safeguarding induction.
- Child protection training.
- Annual safeguarding updates.
- Online safety training.
- Filtering and monitoring awareness.
- KCSIE updates.

DSLs receive enhanced training in accordance with statutory requirements.

15. Information Sharing

The school recognises that effective information sharing is essential to safeguarding.

Information will be shared:

- lawfully;
- proportionately;
- securely;
- in the child's best interests.

Staff will never promise confidentiality to a child where a safeguarding concern exists.

Safeguarding information will be shared on a need-to-know basis where necessary to protect a child. Data protection law does not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. Decisions to share or not share information, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded.

16. Child Protection Records

The school uses secure safeguarding recording systems.

Records will:

- be factual;
- be timely;
- be stored securely;
- be retained in accordance with statutory guidance;
- transfer securely when pupils move schools.

Records will include the nature of the concern, what was seen or heard, the date/time and context where relevant, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions and outcomes. Child protection records are kept separately from the main pupil file.

When a pupil transfers, safeguarding records will be transferred securely and separately to the receiving setting's DSL as soon as possible, with confirmation of receipt obtained. Where appropriate, the DSL will speak with the receiving setting in advance so that support can be planned.

17. Multi-Agency Working

The school works closely with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Health services;
- Essex safeguarding partners;
- Police;
- Family Help services;
- Essex Virtual School;
- Education Access services.

The DSL will attend relevant meetings and contribute to plans where required.

18. Allegations Against Staff and Low-Level Concerns

The school will respond immediately to allegations against adults working with children.

Concerns may include behaviour which:

- has harmed a child;
- may have harmed a child;
- constitutes a criminal offence;
- indicates an individual may pose a risk to children;
- raises suitability concerns.
- All allegations meeting the harm threshold will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The school also operates separate Low-Level Concerns procedures consistent with KCSIE.

Concerns or allegations about a member of staff, volunteer, contractor, agency or supply worker must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Concerns about the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors. The school will consult/refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the harm threshold may be met and will not investigate before taking appropriate LADO advice.

Low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold must still be shared in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct/Low-Level Concerns procedure, recorded appropriately and reviewed for patterns. Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they believe they may have acted in a way that could be misinterpreted.

Where an allegation concerns supply staff or a contractor, the school will take the lead in safeguarding action with the LADO and will liaise with the employing agency or organisation; it will not simply cease using the individual without following the required process.

19. Behaviour, Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force

The school recognises behaviour as a form of communication.

Where physical intervention is required:

- it will be reasonable;
- proportionate;
- lawful;
- used only when necessary.

All significant incidents will be recorded and reviewed.

20. Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

In line with Mobile phones in schools (DfE, 2026), the school's approach to mobile phones and personal devices forms part of its wider safeguarding arrangements. Pupil use is managed through the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy and any associated mobile phone arrangements. Staff use of personal devices is governed by the Staff Code of Conduct and Online Safety Policy. Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record pupils except where explicitly authorised under school procedures.

21. Whistleblowing

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns regarding:

- safeguarding practice;
- conduct;
- abuse;

- poor practice.

Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Where staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, or believe concerns have not been addressed, they may use the school Whistleblowing Policy or contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

Associated policies, procedures and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's Staff Code of Conduct; Behaviour and Relationships Policy; Online Safety Policy; mobile phone/personal device arrangements; Attendance/CME procedures; Safer Recruitment procedures; Whistleblowing Policy; Low-Level Concerns procedure; procedures for child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour; reasonable force/physical intervention procedures; and the current SET Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures and Essex Effective Support guidance.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board will review this policy annually.

The DSL will provide safeguarding reports to governors throughout the year, including updates relating to:

- safeguarding trends;
- attendance;
- child protection activity;
- online safety;
- filtering and monitoring;
- staff training;