Gosfield School

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Students

Whole School, including EYFS

The policy is next due for formal review by Governors in September 2027. Interim reviews are carried out by the DSL Amanda Gwynne and minor updates reported to the Senior Leadership Team and all staff notified.

To be published on the following: Staff network, School website and the Inspector's portal

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1. Policy statement

1.1 All the School's Governors are responsible for ensuring that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their Safeguarding responsibilities. This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all Governors, members of staff, visiting part-time staff, such as instrumental teachers or coaching staff, contractors and volunteers, is available to parents on request and is published on the School website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with students even where this is away from the School, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit. All adults in the school community are responsible for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We encourage all staff to be vigilant in recognising signs of abuse and to report any concerns to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Amanda Gwynne). It is important to remember that anyone can make a referral if they are unhappy with the way a case is being handled. Gosfield School is committed to acting in the best interests of the child.

1.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 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
- Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care (promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interest of the children)
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

A child centred approach is fundamental to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families, including a regard for contextual safeguarding.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

1.3 Every student should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means protection from multiple harms including any kind of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. This includes the protection of children with regard to disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories and ensuring they understand how to navigate such information. Disinformation is the deliberate creation and spread of false or misleading content, such as fake news. Misinformation is the unintentional spread of this false or misleading content, also the risks around self generated intimate images and/ or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (for further information see 5.1 and Appendix 3). All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs. Extra-familial harm, is harm that occurs to children outside of their family and often occurs during adolescence. We recognise the

impact of witnessing ill treatment of others and understand the need for support for intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

1.4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children There is an important distinction between safeguarding children who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm (where cases should be reported to Children's Social Care immediately) and action required to promote the welfare of children in need of additional support even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

2. Principles

2.1 Gosfield School (the School) is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, Governors and volunteers, supply staff and trainee teachers to share this commitment. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and that students cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. We therefore aim to provide a school environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of self-worth and the knowledge that students' concerns will be listened to and acted upon. The children are taught about Safeguarding and are made aware of who the Safeguarding Team are. Gosfield School prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology, throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, this supports a calm, safe and supportive environments conducive to teaching, and keeping children safe in education.

At Gosfield School All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family Help which means 'support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse', from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Family Help assessments and referrals are guided by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board's *Effective Support for Children and Families* framework. Cases are escalated according to distinct thresholds of need, which dictate whether a family requires universal, targeted, or intensive specialist support.

Levels of Need and Criteria

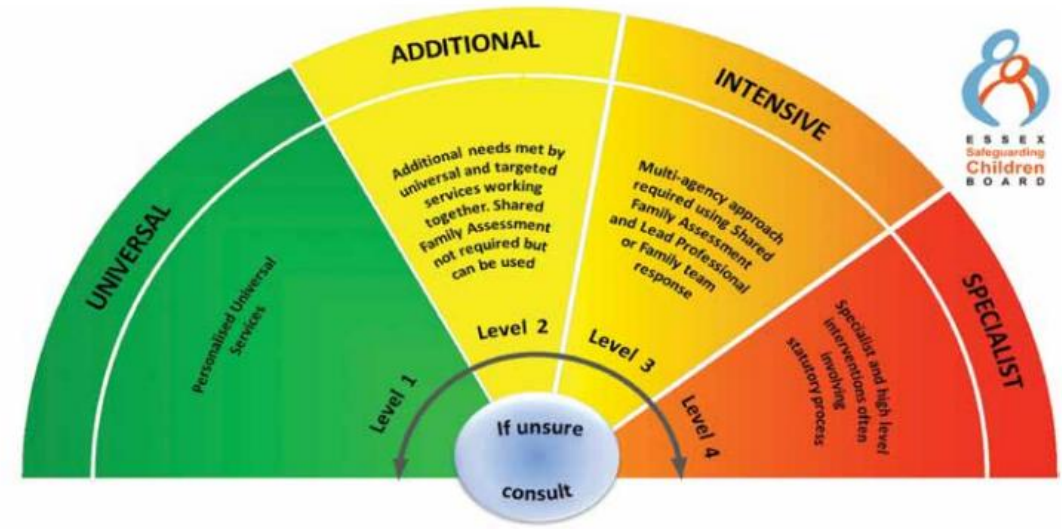
Support is divided into four tiers. Referrals to Family Help support are typically made when a family requires structured, coordinated intervention at levels 2 or 3.

1. **Level 1: Universal Services:** Children and families whose needs are being met through standard, universal services like local GP practices, schools (e.g., Gosfield School), and health visitors.
2. **Level 2: Community-Based Early Help:** Needs are beginning to emerge that cannot be met by universal services alone. Criteria include families requiring a coordinated, multi-agency "Team Around the Family" (TAF) approach, often using a Community-Based Early Help Plan to prevent issues from escalating.
3. **Level 3: Intensive Family Help / Child in Need:** Complex or multiple needs that significantly impact the child's well-being. Criteria include multiple agencies involved, risk of harm/neglect, or failure to progress through Level 2 services.
4. **Level 4: Specialist / Statutory:** Severe needs requiring statutory Children's Social Care or Child Protection interventions.

Staff must refer to the DSL for support as required.

The Essex Effective Support Windscreen

Multi Agency Guidance: Working in partnership to help children and families improve their lives



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accord with their needs.

Staff should be aware of increased need around those students who are at risk because of the following:

• frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

• has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a student referral unit

• has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending.

All staff working for Gosfield School have a commitment to always act in the best interest of the child, staff are trained annually, or as informal updates are required, this includes Prevent training and reading the DfE KCSIE 2026 Part 1 for all staff who work directly with children.

We contribute to inter-agency working and have developed this policy in consultation with the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Local Authority and have taken account of guidance issued by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and the Department for Education. We comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (part 3).

Further details of the framework around which Gosfield School's safeguarding arrangements have been made can be found in the following documents:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2026)
- DFE Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges – Published 23 March 2022 - Updated 29th March 2023
- DFE- Behaviour in schools – Guidance updated October 2022 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- FGM (DFE, June 2019)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (June 2016)
- Home Office Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equalities Act 2010 – advice for schools
- Operation Encompass
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (March 2015)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, July 2017)
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (Prevent, July 2015)
- The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)
- The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (July 2015)
- UKCIS (UK Council for Internet Safety) Guidance on sharing nude or semi-nude images/video December 2020
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities (September 2016)
- The Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) FGM
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)
- DFE - Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges updated March 2025
- Education and Training (Welfare of children) Act 2021
- NSPCC- When to call the police
- Ofsted - Review of sexual harassment in schools and colleges June 2021
- Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019, updated September 2025)
- The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (July 2015)
- DFE - Data protection in schools – updated April 2024
- Gov.UK - Working Together to Improve School Attendance – August 2024
- DFE – Information Sharing – 2024
- DFE – Social Care National Framework 2023
- Online Safety Act 2025
- Martyn's Law – formally the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025
- DFE - Generative AI: product safety expectations - Published 22 January 2025
- Gov.Uk Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework DFE Mobile phones in schools Updated 29 June 2026
- Gov.UK – Modern Slavery Guidance

The School will take all reasonable measures to:

Ensure that we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, volunteers, contractors, and trainee teachers(including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance given in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. Most staff working with children in a school will be engaging in regulated activity relating to children, in which case an enhanced DBS check which includes children's barred list information, will be required.
Using agency or third-party staff we will obtain written notification from any agency, that they have carried out the same checks as the school would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school and confirm the certificate has been obtained by the agency.
Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. If these trainee teachers are engaging in regulated activity relating to children, an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information) will be obtained.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks.

We do not need to request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day.

- As part of the shortlisting process, we will carry out a search (via an online search engine) as part of our due diligence for prospective candidates; the school might want to explore findings with an applicant at interview. All applicants must complete a full application form. CVs on their own will not contain all the information required to support safer recruitment procedures are outlined in the School's Safer Recruitment policy available on the staff network or on request from the School Office.
- Ensure that we carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve on the School's governing body in accordance with the above regulations and guidance given in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026). This includes all recruitment for our Early Years setting and all Early Years students and trainees included in ratios will need to have a valid paediatric first aid (PFA) qualification.
- Ensure that where the School ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer, supply staff or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a detailed report is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as soon as possible after the person has ceased to provide services to the School and in any event within one month of the person leaving the School. The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will also be informed. This includes dismissal, non-renewal of a fixed-term contract, no longer using a supply teacher engaged directly or supplied by an agency, terminating the placement of a trainee or volunteer, no longer using staff employed by a contractor and any relevant instances of resignation and voluntary withdrawal from any of the above. Where a dismissal does not reach the DBS referral threshold, consideration will be given to making a referral to the Department for Education and Teaching Regulation Agency. Reasons for making such a referral would include: unacceptable professional conduct; conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute; or a conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence.
- Ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our students on another site, we have received confirmation that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff and that any such checks do not raise any issues of concern in relation to the suitability of those staff members to work with children. As per new guidance the school will:
    - gain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate staff safeguarding checks have been carried out, as well as written information about any arrangements that may put the child at risk
    - have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend
    - regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. If safeguarding concerns occur, the placement should be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary.

- Where the governing body hires or rents out the school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals the School will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe, including copies of our Safeguarding Policy and procedures, containing information on the names of the DSL and the Safeguarding team.
- The governing body will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and ensure that there are

arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school or college on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll. The school's usual safeguarding policies and procedures will be followed and appropriate referrals to external agencies made.

- Ensure that its safeguarding arrangements follow the procedures and practice of the ECSB - LA and local safeguarding partners as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by it, (the 3 local safeguarding partners the LA, the Integrated Care Board, and the chief officer of police in our area).
- Ensure that Community-Based Early Help is provided as soon as a problem emerges.
- Protect each student from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another student or child.
- Be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside.
- Deal appropriately and promptly with every suspicion or complaint of abuse and to consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Design and operate procedures which promote this policy.
- Design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others within the school community who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.
- Support students who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan where these are in place.
- Be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions.
- Be alert to the vulnerabilities that may face those with SEND.
- Be alert to the vulnerabilities of children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning students and support students by allowing a trusted adult to be in consultation.
- Operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures; see Gosfield School Health and Safety Policy.
- Operate robust filtering and monitoring systems to prevent students from accessing harmful content online, supporting students to use generative AI safely. Staff should report any suspicious activity to the pastoral/ safeguarding team.
- Ensure where there is a need to use reasonable force to protect children, this will be proportionate and controlled to minimise the risk of stress or harm to students. Where a student may be restrained to protect them or others all measures will be considered.
- Take all practicable steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances permit. The school will adhere to the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025[1], also commonly referred to as Martyn's Law, ensuring those responsible for events organised on our premises consider how they would respond to a terrorist attack, in addition where larger events take place, appropriate steps to reduce vulnerability to terrorist attacks will be considered. Risk Assessments will be put in place in consultation with the Head of Operations.
- Have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education (DfE) in accordance with section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and associated regulations.
- Review and consider how students should be taught about Safeguarding.
- Identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified in order to fulfil the Prevent duty.
- Ensure that all Governors and staff are aware of their responsibilities with regards to Safeguarding through appropriate training, which is regularly renewed, and other annual updates.
- Ensure where there is a need to operate remote learning staff are aware of how to contact the DSL and the DDSL, the Principal and the DSL share responsibility for cover at all times.

3. Key Contacts

3.1 Contacts within School

Role	Name	Telephone	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Amanda Gwynne (Assistant Principal Pastoral)	01787 474040	amanda.gwynne@gosfieldschool.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr John Cooper (Vice Principal)	01787 474040	john.cooper@gosfieldschool.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Heather Bougeard (Head of Prep and Nursery)	01787 474040	heather.bougeard@gosfieldschool.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Sophie Delaney	01787 474040	sophie.delaney@gosfieldschool.org.uk
01787 474040	Mr Rod Jackson, Principal	01787 474040	principal@gosfieldschool.org.uk
Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding	Katherine Makaroff	katherine.makaroff@gosfieldschool.org.uk	
Chair of Governors	Katherine Makaroff	katherine.makaroff@gosfieldschool.org.uk	

3.2 Children and Families Hub

All staff should follow the procedures in this policy if they have concerns about a child and speak to the member of staff identified as Designated Lead or her Deputies in her absence. However, all adults have the right to contact Social Services direct via the contacts listed below should they not be satisfied with the actions of the designated persons.

The telephone numbers of the Children and Families Hub are as follows:

ANY MEMBER OF STAFF CAN CONTACT SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECT IF THEY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD:

03330 134079. Secure email: Jacquie.wilkes@essex.gov.uk.cjsm.net.
https://www.escb.co.uk/media/2817/essex-lado-information-poster-april-2021-internal.pdf

Role	Name	Telephone	Email/Online
Call for Advice and Guidance	Children & Families Hub	0345 603 7627	https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/
Online request for **non urgent** support	Children & Families Hub	Complete a Request for Support Form	https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	Jacquie Wilkes Louise Lewington	03330 139797 0333 013 4331	Essex County Council Direct Dial: 0333 013 4331 **Jacquie.wilkes@essex**.gov.uk. louise.lewington@essex.gov.uk **LADO** Duty Email: **LADO@essex**.gov.uk.
Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing	Jo Barclay	07775 030021	Jo.Barclay@essex.gov.uk
Duty LADO *Out of Hours*	Duty Staff: Jacquie Wilkes Louise Lewington Mechelle de Kock Rebecca Scott Carole Fuller	03330 139797	
If a concern is raised outside office hours contact Essex Social Care	Essex Social Care	0845 606 1212	childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk (please note this is not a secure address so any information sent must be password protected)
Allegations against a worker/ volunteer	Essex Social Care	03330 139797	childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk LADO Duty Email: LADO@essex.gov.uk

3.3 Local authorities

The Statutory Partners in Essex who are jointly responsible by law for keeping children safe in Essex are:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police
- Integrated Care Boards covering the County of Essex

These new partnership arrangements will continue to be referred to as the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) keeping its name and identity as it is a well-known and trusted brand. ESCB

ensures the coordination of safeguarding work by all agencies and monitors the effectiveness of child protection work across the three local authority areas.

Further information can be found on the escb@essex.gov.uk website.

Below are contact details for children's social care for authorities near to the School:

Local Authority	Working hours	Out of hours
The Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB)	Room C228, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH. Tel: 0333 013 8936 (General Enquiries) Email: escb@essex.gov.uk If you are concerned about a child, call 0345 603 7627	0845 606 1212 (Emergency Duty Service Number) Email: **Emergency.DutyTeamOutOfHours@essex.gov.uk**
Suffolk Local Authority Designated Officers Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership	Floor 3, Gold Block, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX Tel: 01473 265359, for allegations against all staff and volunteers.	LADO@suffolk.gov.uk LADO: 0300 123 2044 Suffolk Professional Consultation Line **03456 061 499**

4. Child protection procedures - summary

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be taken seriously and in line with published local thresholds will be referred to an external agency such as the Children's Social Care department in the relevant local authority (Essex or Suffolk) or the child protection unit of the police, without investigation within the School. In these cases, the following referral procedures apply:

- If the allegation is against a member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL, the allegation should be reported to the Principal immediately. The matter will be referred by the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is making the referral, she will keep the Principal informed. Any doubts or concerns may be discussed informally with the LADO, initially on a "no names" basis.
- If the allegation is against the Principal, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in his absence the Deputy Chair, without first notifying the Principal. The Chair of Governors, or in his absence the Deputy Chair, will liaise with the LADO and relevant agencies as required. If an allegation is made against the Chair of Governors or another Governor, the allegation should be reported to the Principal. In either case, any such allegations will be discussed with the LADO within one working day before further action is taken.
- If the allegation does not involve a member of staff or a professional person and the child has suffered harm or is at risk of harm, the matter will be referred by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Children's Social Care department where the child lives. Gosfield

School is based in Essex predominantly advice is sought from the Children and Families Hub in Essex or Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing, where recommendations to consult other external agencies in a multi-agency approach the School will work within the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) child protection guidelines and procedures.

5. Management of Child Protection matters

5.1 The Board of Governors ("the Board") takes seriously its strategic leadership responsibility for the School's safeguarding arrangements and upholds the aims of the charity and its duty in promoting an environment in which children can feel secure and safe from harm. At Gosfield School we have a whole school approach to safeguarding, and the training and systems in place operate with the best interests of the child at heart. The training is delivered in house by the DSL and staff also have tasks related to similar scenarios that we discuss to make the training relevant and proportionate to real situations. We listen to all children and support and protect those in need. We have a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding and aim to respond swiftly to disclosures and remain vigilant through supervision in order to monitor behaviour and interactions between children.

The link governor for Safeguarding is Katherine Makaroff, who is also the Chair of Governors and instigates a review of the School's safeguarding procedures on behalf of the Board and reports to the Board annually, making any recommendations for improvements. The nominated Governor also discusses safeguarding matters with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at least termly and reports to the Board at each meeting. All Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction and annual updates. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. The Governing body is aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 21, the Equality Act 2012, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty23), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

5.2 The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed on a day to day basis.

5.3 The School has appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority (Designated Safeguarding Lead) to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. Parents are welcome to approach the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child in the School, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the child's tutor (Senior School) or class teacher (Prep School) or the Principal who will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with these procedures.

5.4 The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are:

- To be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection.
- To act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of Safety and Safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- To refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Children's Social Care.
- To co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the School.

- To maintain an ongoing training programme in line with LSCP advice at least annually or as updates are required including Prevent and on-line safety for all School employees, Governors, volunteers and other individuals working at the school.
- To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection which are kept separate from student records.
- To ensure that notification of further record keeping is marked on the student records.
- The DSL will keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions, this should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent programme
- To liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate, and the Children and Families Hub (Essex).
- To keep parents informed of action to be taken under these procedures in relation to their child in accordance with section 12 of this policy.
- To liaise with the Principal to inform the Principal of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- To monitor records of students in the School who are subject to a child protection plan to ensure that this is maintained and updated as notification is received.
- To liaise with other professionals to ensure that the School contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of Family Help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children who are subject to child protection plans.
- To ensure that locally agreed inter-agency procedures agreed by the Safeguarding Partners and guidance from ESCB in conjunction with SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) procedures are followed. In working with other agencies specifically where the Police are involved the DSL is aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult, with reference made to PACE Code C 2019, in enquiries under the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Key Adult for Domestic Abuse in line with Operation Encompass
- To notify the Disclosure and Barring Service and LADO if the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children
- To advise and act on all suspicions, concerns and/or evidence of the need for children to receive additional support, or of children who have suffered or are likely to suffer abuse and/or neglect, which is reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Where appropriate, to take part in child protection conferences or reviews and to inform Social Services in writing when a child who is subject to a child protection plan moves to another school and to ensure the secure transfer of the child protection file to the student's new school (and that it is sent separately from the main student file).
- To keep and maintain records of staff training on child protection and safer recruitment procedures.
- Liaise with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member.
- To raise awareness for on-line safety and monitor online activity through the school's filtering systems, referring to external agencies where required.
- Have responsibility to manage filtering and monitoring systems with the network manager and review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- To liaise with the local Channel Panel if a child is deemed to be at risk of radicalisation. Channel uses a multi-agency approach to:
- identify individuals at risk
- assess the nature and extent of that risk
- develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned
- monitor attendance to safeguard students from harm

To actively promote a culture where children feel listened to and can approach an adult if they are worried.

The school has the email JustSay@gosfieldschool.org.uk where children can discuss any concerns. This is received by members of the safeguarding/ pastoral team.

5.5 The Designated Person for the School is Mrs Amanda Gwynne (Assistant Principal Pastoral) who may be contacted on 01787 474040.
She will:

- Advise, act promptly upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to her. She will seek advice from the LADO where necessary and advise the Principal on any immediate action required.

- Keep the Principal informed of all actions unless the Principal is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consult with Katherine Makaroff, Chair of Governors , without notifying the Principal first.

- Liaise with Social Services and other agencies on behalf of the School, providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge." In the EYFS setting the lead practitioner is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSP' (DSL)

5.6 If the Designated Person is unavailable, her duties will be carried out by one of the Deputy Designated members of staff who have received appropriate training, the Principal also has access to the DSL's email to monitor any updates in the event of her absence.. The Deputy Designated staff are Mr John Cooper (Vice Principal) who may be contacted on 01787 474040 and Mr Rod Jackson (Principal) who may be contacted on 01787 474040. Mrs Heather Bougeard (Head of Prep) and is a Deputy DSL, and Mrs Sophie Delaney is DSL for EYFS and Nursery, and may be contacted on 01787 474040.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated staff have undertaken Level 3 child protection training and training in inter-agency working and will attend refresher training at two yearly intervals, plus any informal updates. All staff are trained annually and required to read the latest DfE guidance KCSIE 2026, including the Principal, and any informal updates, all staff are required to complete the online Prevent Duty training every two years. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has the appropriate authority and has been given the necessary time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out this role. The Head of Prep and Nursery has undertaken Level 3 child protection training for the EYFS.

5.7 EYFS (Nursery and Reception Class)

The safety and wellbeing of all our students at Gosfield School, from the Early Years Foundation Stage right through to the sixth form, is our highest priority. Photographs of all those entitled to collect children from the EYFS setting are kept on record and children will only be released to those on file. If parents or designated persons are unable to collect a child for any reason, the parents are required to email the School Office giving permission for someone else to collect them. This email must include the full name of the person and a photograph of them.

Children and young people at school often require support in personal care. Children in the early years of school may require assistance in managing their personal needs, such as changing their clothing or using the toilet. All school staff receive child protection training and are DBS checked. Staff encourage children in EYFS to be as independent as possible but may be required to support the

children when changing for PE and Forest School. Please refer to the EYFS Nappy Changing and Toilet Training Policy for guidance on intimate care in the EYFS.

Mrs Heather Bougeard in consultation with the Head of EYFS, Mrs Sophie Delaney, are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of new guidance from the KCSIE September 2026 about child absence in particular prolonged absence, ensuring all contact details are explored in relation to unexplained absence. Any additional training for EYFS will be delivered by Mrs Heather Bougeard or Mrs Sophie Delaney supporting staff re intimate care, safer eating and age appropriate and developmental needs, also ensuring detailed dietary and allergy information is obtained from parents and shared to those caring for the child and preparing food for the child. Awareness around allergy symptoms and treatment must be discussed with relevant staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding children within the School and Mrs Heather Bougeard (Head of Prep) is the Deputy DSL, along with Mrs Sophie Delaney responsible for EYFS and Nursery Safeguarding will liaise with local children's agencies as appropriate. It is essential that Ofsted and ISI are informed as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

Whistleblowing is vital for maintaining high standards of care and ensuring a safe environment for children. It allows for prompt action to be taken if practices fall short of expected standards, protecting children from potential harm. In Early Years settings, whistleblowing involves staff reporting concerns about poor or unsafe practices to protect children. The policy reassures staff that their confidentiality will be respected when raising concerns. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

In the event of disqualification of a person employed in early years provision, the School will not continue to employ that person.

The School will give Ofsted the following information when relevant:

- details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006
- the date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose;
- the body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and
- a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction)

6. Types of abuse

6.1 The definition of 'child abuse' is wide in order to cover all forms of cruelty that children may endure in their lives. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child (in this context anyone who is under the age of 18) by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm, or not properly looking after them. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

'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, this is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and 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.'

There are four types of child abuse which are commonly identified as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

6.2 Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. 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 online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. This may also include abuse and neglect, exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in 'County Lines'. The risk of child sexual exploitation is addressed as part of the PSHEE, RE and RSHE programme of work on sexuality and sexual development, choice and consent, healthy relationships, harmful social norms and abusive behaviours and online safety. https://saferinternet.org.uk/report-harmful-content

6.3 Sharing self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI. This means the sending or posting of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing inappropriate images or information between devices via services such as Apple's AirDrop which works offline. Additional challenges are now evident with the use of generative AI, in 2023, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) The IWF documented a staggering surge in AI-generated CSAM. AI is lowering barriers for perpetrators to create highly specific and violent content. Staff have been trained in line with new guidance regarding Deepfakes, Nudifying platforms and Sextortion. When dealing with incidents of AI generated deepfakes and videos the DSL will ring for advice and in most cases are recommended to refer to the Police.

6.4 'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment. It is not only confined to victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks, shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders.

6.5 Serious violent crime

All staff need to know the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime, including:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
- Significant decline in performance or unexplained injuries
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault/unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts/new possessions - these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs.

- Evidence of misogynist viewpoints, this is also identified as a root cause of harmful sexual behaviour and harassment
- Serious violent crime also includes the carrying weapons.

Staff should report any of their concerns about a child using or carrying a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy, who will assess the risk and take appropriate action). The DSL is also required to de-escalate peer conflict where appropriate.

6.6 Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse, violence against women and girls (VAWG) children may witness misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes, and sexual harassment within family relationships normalising behaviour They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.' The DSL is the Key Adult in the School and has completed online Key Adult Training

6.7 Children with special educational needs (SEN), disabilities, certain health conditions, a mental health need, a parent in custody or is affected by parental offending or children absent from education or unexplained and or persistent absences can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this group of children. The School will consider extra pastoral support for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Students with SEND may be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then may repeat the content/behaviours in schools because of this, so appropriate staff should be involved. Staff are trained to respond to individual needs and to support students by arranging mentoring where necessary. Support and guidance are also available from the School SENCO. The School identifies the need to explore certain behaviours. This can include:

- The need to explore further assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers, and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Use of reasonable force to control challenging behaviours must be in line with a behaviour risk assessment coordinated with the school SENCO to reduce the risk of harm.

Further guidance is given at Appendix 3.

7. Signs of abuse

7.1 Possible signs of abuse include the following (but are not limited to these, and do not necessarily mean that abuse is occurring).

- The student says they have been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference.
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been several injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries.
- The student's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the student's behaviour. For example, they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive or withdrawn.
- The student does not want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.

- The student is having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry.
- The student talks about being left home alone, with carers that appear to be inappropriate or with strangers.

The student is regularly missing from school or education, or 'absent' from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns (including of child criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation)

- The student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
- The student's development is delayed in terms of emotional progress.
- The student suddenly loses or gains weight.
- The student drinks alcohol regularly from an early age.
- The student is concerned for younger siblings without explaining why.
- The student talks about running away.
- The student shies away from being touched or flinches at sudden movements.
- The student demonstrates undue anxiety, over-reacts to problems and demonstrates an excessive fear of making mistakes.
- The student appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed.
- The student is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by parents or carers.
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

8. Preventing Radicalisation

8.1 Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. 'Extremism' is defined in the Prevent strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We will work closely with external agencies to prevent students from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism' Radicalisation is defined as: 'the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence'

Through our PSHEE programme we teach a broad and balanced curriculum which encourages community cohesion, presents balanced presentation of political issues, and provides a safe space 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.

8.2 Signs of radicalisation: There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many ways and settings. Background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with background influences such as family, friends or online, and with needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. Increasingly the use of AI to misinform children with conspiracy theories and galvanise support has been included in our training for staff, with an awareness for an ever-changing landscape on radicalisation.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. As a school, staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately. This may include making a referral to the Channel programme and possibly to Children's Social Care where the child lives through the Designated Safeguarding Lead with whom they should discuss their concerns. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

8.3 **Risk assessment**: The School has assessed the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.

8.4 **Working in partnership**: The Designated Safeguarding Lead will continue existing partnership arrangements and keep open lines of communication with the ESCB and safeguarding partners, (the 3 local safeguarding partners the LA, the Integrated Care Board, and the chief officer of police in our area)

8.5 **Staff training**: The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated staff have undertaken Prevent awareness training and are able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. All staff has been made aware of the Prevent Duty through online training.

8.6 **IT:** Suitable filtering is reviewed to keep students safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school. Students are at risk from disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories, when misinformation is created with the intent to cause harm or to stir up hatred against a person or group, this is called disinformation. Disinformation aims to create a false perception of a person or group, sometimes to support a hateful ideology or conspiracy theory. A piece of news might be disinformation if:

- It makes a false connection between an individual or group, and a social issue.
- It manipulates pre-existing content to support a false story e.g. using a picture from one event and claiming it is from another, unrelated, event.
- 'Imposter content' when another site may try to impersonate a reliable source
- When information is falsified or fabricated about a person or group
- When a pre-existing story is framed in a misleading way to place blame on a certain person or group.
- When content is focussed solely on 'negative' content about groups or individuals, without any acknowledgment of 'positive stories', in order to create a distorted perspective that 'demonises' the group targeted.

8.7 **Procedures**: If a member of staff is concerned that a student may be exposed to radicalisation the normal referral processes apply i.e. they should discuss it with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will follow the safeguarding procedures outlined in this policy and may also make a referral to the Channel programme. Borderline cases will be discussed with the Channel Panel on a no names basis. The School has a visiting speaker's policy and procedures in place for vetting and suitability checks, these are completed by the DSL. All visitors to the school are supervised at all times.

Additional support

The Department has published further advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- http://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferralssupports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
- https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.htmlis aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate, is a government website designed to support school teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free

information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

9. Responsibility of all staff, Governors and volunteers

9.1 Every employee and Governor of the School foster a whole school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that, 'safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development' and that all systems, processes and policies operate 'with the best interests of the child at their heart' 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. 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 interest of the child.'

Every employee and Governor of the School as well as every volunteer, contractor and trainee teacher who assists the School is under a general legal duty:

- To protect children from abuse.
- To be able to identify welfare concerns amongst the students and to be able to identify students who are in need of additional support. 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. Staff should be aware that they must report any concerns to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or one of her deputies.
- To be aware of the School's Child Protection procedures and to follow them including accessing Community-Based Early Help where required.
- To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary.
- To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.
- To report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.'**

9.2 Training All staff will undertake appropriate training including annual refresher training in accordance with advice provided by the ESCB - LA and safeguarding partners for Essex and Suffolk and the DFE guidance Keeping children safe in education 2026. All staff are trained in various aspects of child protection and are aware of the procedures on how to respond and report a disclosure, including child-on-child (including harassment and violence) abuse. The EYFS staff are given support from Mrs Sophie Delaney regarding the implementation of the training specific to Early Years. This will be specific to access arrangements, eating, allergy symptoms and treatment, intimate care, attendance, supervision, and safer eating. The Principal is responsible for ensuring all staff are confident in their understanding of the policies and how to follow/implement them. Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. It is important that all staff consider how to 'build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication' We encourage the need for professional curiosity. If staff have concerns about a child, they should consult the DSL. All staff should be aware that children may 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. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.

The Principal has an open-door policy supporting staff to discuss any issues or handling of Safeguarding matters directly, this encourages a culture that is child centred and safe for staff to

report a concern. Staff are aware they can discuss concerns directly with the DSL and any concerns will be responded to immediately.

In staff training it is reinforced that children who may be exposed to exploitation (criminal, sexual, or other) and those with mental health issues must be identified as potentially vulnerable, including children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning students. 'All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), stalking, emotional abuse, financial exploitation, and domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.' Due to the context of the abuse, this can present complex situations, and all staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be kept safe. Children can also be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting the abuse, sexual harassment or sexual violence. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them. Staff are trained to be alert to the impact of technology and its increased risk and what to do if there is suspected inappropriate material on a device. They understand to refer to the DSL for guidance.

All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, contractors, and trainee teachers are provided with Induction training and all necessary documentation, including this policy (Safeguarding and Promoting the welfare of children) and the New Staff Induction policy. These explain how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will also be supplied with the Staff Code of Conduct, the Staff Acceptable Use of IT policy (including online safety), the Whistleblowing policy, the School's, Behaviour Policy, Attendance including CME policy and the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) Part 1 any updates to this document are circulated to staff. Staff also have a copy of the RSE Policy and Careers, being aware of the content from the RSE Policy supports the content and can benefit vulnerable groups, also the Careers Policy to challenge gender stereotyping, challenging misogynistic/ and homophobic views. In the training PowerPoint, photos of the DSL and the DDSLs are included. These are also displayed throughout the school for students and are included in the handout given to visitors.

During periods of Remote Learning staff are reminded to use only their school email account and device, to not contact students or respond to request for contact on any other social media platforms, and to be reminded of best practise with regard to online professionalism, dress codes, use of a virtual background protect personal identification, location, and other family members working from home. Children are also reminded of their conduct online, the importance of attendance and participation, also appropriate behaviour, dress codes and protecting personal identification.

9.3 Whistleblowing: All staff are required to report to the Principal (or if the Principal is not available and the matter is urgent, a member of the Senior Leadership Team) any safeguarding concern or allegations about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In the EYFS setting staff should be reassured that any concerns they have should be reported to the Head of Prep, or to the Principal. If a member of staff feels unable to raise their concern with the Principal (or a member of SLT), they should contact the

Chair of Governors. Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with the Principal or the Chair of Governors or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may contact the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line. Where a member of staff may believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Principal they must contact the LADO. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence. Further detail on whistleblowing procedures is outlined in the School's Whistleblowing policy.

10. PROCEDURES WHEN A MEMBER OF STAFF IS WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD

10.1 Initial complaint: A member of staff, Governor or volunteer suspecting or hearing a complaint or suspicion of abuse must:

- Stay calm and sympathetic. Listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff, Governors or volunteers should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- Not ask leading questions. That is, a question which suggests its own answer. Ask open questions that will encourage a secure and sympathetic environment for the child, such as "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"
- Reassure the child but do not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff, Governor or volunteer should explain that they need to pass the information to a member of staff who will ensure that the correct action is taken. Staff, Governors or volunteers should not make promises that they can't keep such as 'everything will be alright' but clearly explain what they have to do next and who they will talk to.
- Keep a sufficient and accurate written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. Staff should transfer the information to the MIS MyConcern which will alert the Safeguarding Team and a case review can take place.
- Not take any further action unless specifically requested by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Principal.
- Only share information on a need-to-know basis and must not discuss the matter.

10.2 Preserving evidence: All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved. If CCTV footage is available this should be preserved in case it is required by external agencies. The reasons for contacting the Police or other safeguarding partners must be recorded.

10.3 Reporting: All suspicion, safeguarding concerns or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, or if the complaint/ concern involves a member of staff, to the Principal. Details of procedures for reporting allegations against members of staff are given at section **11** and Appendix 2.

If in exceptional circumstances you are not able to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Designated staff or the Principal, you should speak to your line manager. If there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child and you are not able to follow this referral procedure, contact the Children and Families Hub where the child lives (see section 15 for contact numbers). If there is an immediate emergency, dial 999 and report the matter to the police.

10.4 Members of staff must, as soon as possible after making a report, use MIS MyConcern to record the incident which will alert the Safeguarding team of a new case to review.

10.5 Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead on receiving a notification of concern. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will, when taking action:

- Clarify the issues with the person raising the concern.
- Refer the matter to the Principal in order to agree on the next steps, depending on the seriousness of the suspicion/ concern or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to Social Services and the Police immediately.
- Consider the wishes of the student who has complained, provided that the student is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a student's wishes. Where required a trusted adult will support the student.
- Consider certain health conditions, disability or additional needs. Consider if they have a mental health condition or are at risk of 'honour or faith based abuse', have a parent in custody or is affected by parental offending or are persistently missing from education. A child may have multiple overlapping issues and these must be factored into any action including all extra-familial harms.
- Consider the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the student's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, she may take further advice from the relevant professionals before informing parents. A disclosure to Children's Services may be made without prior contact with a child's parents. 'DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.'
- Depending on the nature of the disclosure, advice will be sought from Social Services as to when to notify the complainant's parents.
- Consider duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.
- The DSL will keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions, this should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent programme.

10.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also categorised as a form of Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage) (HBA). : FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse. As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our School will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing local safeguarding procedures. The staff member should also inform the DSL. Note Gosfield School is a co-educational setting.

Forced marriage: 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 are used and is a crime. Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage) (HBA). Honour encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including practices such as breast ironing and FGM. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include

multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. In addition, 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. Our staff are made aware through training how to report concerns where this may be an issue. The DSL should be informed of any concerns.

Types of referral: There are different types of referral procedures according to the nature of the disclosure made:

- Where a child has suffered or is at risk of significant harm and the matter does not involve a member of staff, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care where the child lives within 24 hours. Where there are concerns about a member of staff's suitability to work with children, a referral will be made to the LADO. When deciding whether to make a referral, the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead will not draw their own conclusions over what appear to be borderline cases and if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, and depending on the nature of the case, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with either the LADO or the Children and Families Hub, without identifying the family.
- If the child is considered to be a concern and is not at risk of suffering immediate significant harm but requires additional support, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer the child to Children's Social Services department where the child lives. Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment for Family Help , and procedures will be put in place by Children's Services to arrange this. The School will coordinate with the local inter-agencies involved and safeguarding partners.
- As soon as concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours). If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will confirm the referral in writing to Social Services within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact Social Services again.
- Where a disclosure relates to the mental health of a student and they are at risk from themselves rather than a third party, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of the student. In some cases, parental consent is sought and referrals may be made to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS/ SET CAMHS) or private health care professionals.

10.7 Where a child is deemed to be at risk of radicalisation, the above procedures will be followed and a referral may also be made to the Channel programme. In some cases it may be preferable to seek parental consent but where radicalisation is concerned the School will proceed without consent if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child is at significant risk of harm.

10.8 Inter-agency working: The School will work with external agencies and in accordance with guidance outlined in Working together to Safeguard Children (2026). This will include contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans and allowing necessary access for Children's Social Care. If required, the School will also supply information to ESCB and safeguarding partners so that it can perform its function as required under the Children Act 2004.

11. Allegations against staff

11.1 The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, including the Principal (and Governors, volunteers, contractors and supply staff, trainee teachers, who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff, Governors, volunteers, contractors, supply staff, and trainee teachers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures (which are set out fully in Appendix 2) follow part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) and work in accordance with the SET procedures section 7 (ESCB, 2019 updated 2025) and will be used where the member of staff, Governor, volunteer, contractor, supply staff, or trainee teacher has:

- Behaved in a way that has significantly harmed a child, or may have significantly harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of significant harm to children.

11.2 Staff guidance: Guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of significant harm or of allegations of significant harm to a student. Where students may display very challenging behaviour the School will assess the needs of the student and develop an IEP (Individual Education Plan) with advice from the SENCO to minimise the risk of needing to use restrictive interventions. Staff should attempt to deescalate challenging behaviour considering any known SEN needs of the child, if there is cause to isolate a child for their own safety or use restrictive interventions this must be recorded on the Log held by the DSL. This Log records specific details of the incident and ensures the parents of the child are immediately informed. Staff should also be particularly careful in situations where they are alone with students providing one-to-one tuition. This guidance is conveyed at safeguarding training for staff and a Staff Code of Conduct document is issued to staff and published on the staff network.

11.3 Any concern about a member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and trainee teachers) should be raised with the Principal immediately regardless of how unlikely it seems that there would be any substance to the concern. No further action may be necessary but it is important that the information is brought to the attention of the Principal in the first instance. In some circumstances Gosfield School may have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them; for example, supply teachers, trainee teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. Gosfield School remains responsible for gathering the facts and managing the safeguarding process, while working closely with the employment agency or business. The school will refer to external agencies as required and report any misconduct to the agency (KCSIE 2026) Where there are concerns/allegations about the Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors, where staff may feel there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Principal, they should go to the LADO directly, Email: Jacquie.wilkes@essex.gov.uk, Phone: 03330 139797

There are two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to in the guidance as 'low level concerns'.

11.4 Our procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance.

Further guidance is given in Appendix 2.

12. Allegations of Child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) All staff must report any concern to the DSL immediately. All staff must challenge abusive behaviours between children and not assume this is someone else's responsibility. Child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) is unacceptable, and we have a duty of care to take any reports seriously and investigate any concerns raised.

12.1 All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence). Children can abuse other children. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); sexual harassment and sexual violence; abuse in intimate personal relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party, upskirting, consensual and non-consensual self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes. Engaging in 'hazing type' violence and rituals is abuse. Hazing is terminology that refers to a ritual that involves risk, pain, or harm to gain some form of initiation. It is recognised that girls are more likely to be a victim of child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) and boys are the perpetrators, any abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Different forms of child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) can also include, physical assault and harm, or threat of harm with a weapon.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate support whether this is at the point where problems first emerge or where a child is already known to the local authority Children's Social Care. Early intervention may be required where a child is identified as being in need of support, not meeting the threshold of being at significant risk, the School may use approaches such as the 'Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or 'Team Around the Child' (TAC)
- reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be kept safe, and that a victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting the abuse, sexual harassment or sexual violence Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them. The school recognises all staff must be vigilant to this behaviour and not assume that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence abuse, that it may still be taking place.
- making clear that sexual harassment and sexual violence are not acceptable, that the school has a zero-tolerance approach and this will never be tolerated. "Harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB) the term has been widely adopted in child protection, HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously
- never tolerating or dismissing sexual harassment or sexual violence as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- challenging and reporting incidents of misogyny and misandry.
- encouraging an open culture children will be heard if they wish to discuss their experiences, this can be supported through the tutor programme, PSHEE, RSHE and assemblies.
- https://shorespace.org.uk/ Shore is a space is a confidential online platform offered to teenagers worried about their own or others sexual behaviour. Shore has anonymous advice

and support to help manage worrying thoughts and learn more about living safely both online and offline.

- Thinkuknow from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online - https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- NAPAC – Supporting Recovery From Childhood Abuse: Support line 0808 801 0331 - https://napac.org.uk/
- • LGFL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders. - https://undressed.lgfl.net/

Procedures for dealing with child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence

Gosfield School has a contextual whole school approach to preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse, which includes a clear understanding to staff, children and young people and their parents about everyone's responsibility in managing any child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) incidents. This will include both our prevention measures as well as our response to any incidents of harm. Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) as identified earlier, our procedures set out a supportive response to the issues.

We adopt the key principles of the Children's Act 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document that focuses adult thinking towards the views of the child is Working Together 2026, highlighting that every assessment of a child, should 'reflect the unique characteristics of the child within their family and community context' (Working Together, 2026).

Any response to child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) must consider the range of possible types of child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. This can be done by adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach, this acknowledges the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online, this can feature violence, exploitation and abuse, we must ensure that our response to incidents of child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) takes into account any potential complexity. Abusive behaviour can happen to students in schools and settings, and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/ assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE 2026). Research suggests that child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

• Assumptions those indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;

• Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;

• The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and

• Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, where identified Gosfield School will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND and disabilities particularly when investigating any form of child-on-child (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) abuse.

Expected action taken from all staff
All staff should be alert to the well-being of children and young people and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by child-on-child abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which children will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ (Farrer and Co. 2017). Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

Procedure:

- Deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively.
- Gather the information as soon as possible to get a true, accurate account of the facts around what has happened, so that nothing is forgotten. In cases specifically relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence, Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026 states that two members of staff (one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be present to manage the report, where possible.
- In all circumstances, staff need to speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account.
- It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example; do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. In all cases of child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to young people and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner.
- Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.
- Staff should also be mindful of contextual safeguarding and that wider safeguarding concerns may influence the child's account of the event(s). Alongside this peer pressure and the impact of sharing information about the incident(s) may also influence a child's account.

Consider the intent (begin to Risk Assess)
Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Next course of action
- If from the information gathered the DSL believes any young person to be at risk of significant harm, they will make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). This action would, in most circumstances be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead but in the event of their absence the referral can be made by another member of staff.
- Advice on how to proceed can be taken from the Children and Families Hub, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing Jo Barclay or the LADO.
- If social care and the police intend to pursue this further they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also.

- It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take. It may also be that social care feels that it does not meet their criteria and the School can conduct its own investigation.
- It is important to inform parents that a disclosure has been made and the allegations will be investigated. Support for those with additional needs; emotional, SEND, adoption, LBGTQ may wish to have a parent or adult present with any further questioning. Once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care we will inform parents as soon as possible.
- If services are not going to be involved the school will work with parents and staff to ensure all involved are safe and protected from harm. This will need to be risk assessed and this will need to be consulted and agreed with parents, implementation and monitoring will be in place until the investigation is complete.
- The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another. Is the student 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines. https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child -rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/
- In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

Points to consider

- What is the age of the children involved? How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however, should not be overlooked.
- Where did the incident or incidents take place? Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred? Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?
- What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred? Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?
- Repetition, has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

- For the young person who has been harmed It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary

that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

- If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.
- Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE, RSHE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.
- If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.
- For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. Particular support from identified services may be necessary through a Family Help referral process.
- Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. Exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident.

Preventative Strategies

The School does not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We recognise that we have a responsibility to minimise the risk and we raise awareness about child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) through PSHEE 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 that way towards them.

12.2 Staff are trained in how to manage and report incidents of child-on-child (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) abuse and identify symptoms of serious violent crime. Where an allegation of abuse against one or more students has been made or where a member of staff, Governor, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher is concerned about child-on-child abuse, the Child Protection procedures set out in this policy should be followed and the Designated Safeguarding Lead informed. When responding to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed are especially important. The student(s) accused of abuse and the victim of abuse will both be supported and treated as at risk and a referral will be made to Children's Social Care in respect of either child if that child is suffering or is at risk of significant harm.

All staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. Including:

- Unexplained gifts/new possessions - these can indicate children have been approached by/are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs
- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault/unexplained injuries
- Misogyny or Misandry attitudes
- Carrying a weapon or threatening to carry a weapon
- Should staff raise a concern that a student may be at risk of serious violent crime. They must report this to the DSL who will liaise with the ESCB and the safeguarding partners ensuring the right people between and within agencies are consulted.

12.3 A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour will apply. The School will take advice from the Children and Families Hub on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. The context of the offence is really important and the School will gather together all the relevant information prior to making a decision whether or not to report to the police. Sharing appropriate information between and within agencies is vital. Record keeping should include a comprehensive summary of concerns, details of follow-up, the resolution, any action taken and the outcome for the child. The decision and the rationale behind reporting to the police will also be recorded. Should there be any vulnerability or known patterns of behaviour occurring in school or the community, this will be reported to the police. Concerns should be shared with Children's Social Care, passing on any relevant information about the child's background in the broadest sense.

12.4 If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of the Children and Families Hub, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of students whose parents are abroad, the student's guardian will be requested to provide support to the student.

12.5 Support for those involved in child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) both parties will be offered support through the school pastoral team, with regular monitoring by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If Children's Social Care has been involved, then support may be provided through the Family Help process or wider safeguarding partners. Special consideration should be given to those with special needs, disability or certain health conditions, including mental health issues. Staff must be aware of situations where several issues overlap, and be vigilant in reporting the details.

In the event of a disclosure, the accused and the victim will be kept apart and be supported by members of staff. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school will be especially important when considering any immediate actions. The School will consider the proportionality of the response and support will be tailored on a case-by-case basis. Separate files for all children involved will be kept and a summary of the resolution and actions taken. The outcomes for all children will be recorded.

Informing parents

Parents will normally be kept informed, as appropriate, of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the DSL will need to consult with the Principal and/or the LADO, Children's Social Care, the Police before discussing details with parents.

13. Confidentiality and information sharing

13.1 When considering what information to share, the protection of the child must always be the most important consideration. Where, as practitioners, we need to share special category personal data, the Data Protection Act 2018 includes 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Extra-familial threats might arise at school from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as 'County Lines'; trafficking; online abuse; teenage relationship abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. They can be at risk from 'honour or faith-based abuse' such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage. The school is co-educational and staff are trained to be alert to the signs of FGM, they are informed or their legal duty to report to the Police, where a member of staff has good reason not to refer they may still discuss with the DSL and then a decision can be made. The School will refer to guidance from the document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 in relation to the Social Care assessment process and the Serious Case review process to ensure all children are supported and records are comprehensive.

13.2 **Student Child Protection records:** The School will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The School will co-operate with Police and Social Services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and in accordance with the requirements of Working together to Safeguard Children (2026). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that if a student who is subject to a child protection plan moves to another school, their child protection file will be transferred securely (and sent separately from the main student file) to a designated contact at the new school and confirmation of safe receipt obtained. 'Where children leave the school, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. On receipt of new student files, the School will ensure key staff such as the DSL, and SENCO are aware as required.' The School will follow the guidelines for the deletion of student records once the student has transferred schools

13.3 Allegations against staff: Where allegations have been made against staff, the School will consult with the LADO and, where appropriate, the Police and Social Services will agree the information that should be disclosed and to whom. A case manager will be assigned - usually the Principal or the Chair of Governors if the allegation concerns the Principal. The School's procedures will be followed.

14. Other safeguarding arrangements

Beyond the Child Protection procedures outlined in this policy, the School has put in place arrangements to safeguard students and to promote their welfare. These include the following:

14.1 Safer recruitment: The School takes seriously its responsibility to recruit staff, Governors, volunteers and supply staff that are suitable to work with children. The Recruitment and selection policy sets out the recruitment procedure from start to finish and outlines the checks that are carried out on staff including the s128 for those in management positions of responsibility, including obtaining written notification from any agency, or third party organisation they use that the organisation has carried out the DBS checks. Where the position requires a barred list check, this must be obtained by the agency or third party prior to appointing the individual. The School will also check that the person

presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. The recruitment procedures will include members of the Senior Leadership Team who are safer recruitment trained. The school is required to inform shortlisted candidates they will be subjected to online social media searches as part of due diligence checks. The school will comply with guidance regarding Alternative Provision and Agency employed staff (KCSIE 2026) regarding any reported allegations and follow the procedures.

14.2 Private fostering: The School takes seriously its responsibility to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. The School monitors the progress of looked after children and previously looked after children.

14.3 Safeguarding on educational visits: The School will undertake the necessary safeguarding checks in accordance with guidance given in the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026). This guidance includes requesting a written statement from the provider that they have completed vetting and barring checks on all their staff. Also when operating Home Stay - Exchange visits that DBS checks for the accommodating parents have been completed and for those families with children aged 16 and 17yrs living in the house to have further DBS checks on the children if the School deems this necessary. The School reserves the right to exclude a student from a visit on medical/mental health and wellbeing grounds.

14.4 The use of mobile phones and cameras in the EYFS: Given the complex nature of the School, teaching and support staff (except those working in Reception and in the Nursery) are permitted to keep phones on their person, and available for use. Reception and Nursery staff are required to keep their mobile phones in a locked drawer whilst working in Reception and Nursery. With the wider use of other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, e.g. smart watches, have imaging and sharing capabilities, these should also be restricted to personal use only separate to the EYFS and Nursery setting.

14.5 Listening to students: The School provides a range of opportunities for students to be listened to. Tutor groups throughout the School are small and there is regular contact time between tutor and tutees at daily registration and in extended tutor periods. Weekly PSHEE lessons for Years 5 and above are led by specialists. Student Parliament meets every half term and all year groups are represented. The school has the email JustSay@gosfieldschool.org.uk where children can discuss any concerns. This is received by members of the safeguarding/ pastoral team. Drop-in sessions with the pastoral team are available on a weekly basis in the Pastoral Hub, and other opportunities like the Hot Chocolate and Chat group and the Chill and Chat group promote a safe space for students to discuss issues, opinions and ideas.

14.6 Medical Staff: The School employs a medical practitioner who works full time during term time. Students may self-refer to the First aid practitioner.

14.7 Teaching students about Safeguarding: Students are taught about a range of Safeguarding issues (including online safety, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, grooming, mental health and bullying, respect including awareness of derogatory behaviour, misogyny and misandry, also tolerance, including racism) through PSHEE/ RE and RSE lessons, in Computing lessons, assemblies, the tutor programme and by visiting speakers. Students are taught how to make informed decisions about the use of the internet and appropriate behaviour. We take appropriate action to sanction any poor conduct or risky behaviours with all types of media. Any acts of bullying, intimidation, racism, inappropriate language or blackmail will not be tolerated. The School regards preventative education as the most effective and we aim to prepare students for life in modern Britain creating a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual harassment/ violence. The school actively challenges such behaviours and the RSHE curriculum tackles age-appropriate issues such as: healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent,

stereotyping, prejudice and equality, body confidence and self-esteem, how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, modern slavery and so called honour or faith based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. Students are taught how to adjust their behaviours in order to mitigate these risks and build resilience. Resilience to radicalisation is taught through PSHEE by promoting Fundamental British Values and enabling students to challenge extremist views. Students are made aware of the Safeguarding Team and the DSL. They are also informed that they can speak to any member of staff with a concern.

14.8 Online Protection: The School has suitable and robust filtering and monitoring in place to protect students from online abuse. Children and parents are advised to activate filtering on their devices to protect them from accessing inappropriate material on 3/4/ 5G networks. The School also raises awareness to recognise and report abuse online, highlighting the support from CEOPs (The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command). Whilst we advise students about the risks of online abuse, we also raise awareness of the dangers of the use of technology. Through assemblies, the tutor programme, workshops and the PSHEE curriculum, students are taught how to report an issue, how to protect their devices with appropriate settings, how to protect their identity whilst using social media platforms and how best to use age-appropriate gaming platforms and websites. The internet and social media provide a perfect platform for hoaxes, especially hoaxes about challenges or trends that are said to be harmful to children and young people to be spread quickly. The DSL will consult with the Principal the best approach to managing such incidents. Students are also taught about navigating generative AI platform including deepfakes, this is sensitive to age-appropriate use and understanding, we may consider involving the police in a deepfake incident, especially if the content is harmful, illegal, or could potentially endanger or compromise students or staff. We continue to share useful links supporting parents in the newsletter and on our website for families during school closure. During any remote learning parents will be informed of which platforms the School uses to monitor online safety for their child. Students are also informed about the risks attached to the sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes. The School will investigate any abuse and impose sanctions as appropriate. The School will also seek the advice of the Children and Families Hub with regard to how to proceed should the content be deemed very serious. We will also report to safeguarding partners where necessary to protect all parties. Parents will also be informed; procedures will be followed, and all parties will be supported. Students are encouraged to be curious but to stay safe and to tell an adult if they are concerned about something they have seen.

Gosfield School remains alert to further safeguarding responsibilities outlined here; staff should be aware to the signs of further risks to children and report to the DSL any concerns regarding this list identified in the DfE KCSIE Annex B (2026)

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include;

• unauthorised access to computers (illegal ‘hacking’), for example accessing a school’s computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;

• denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and,

• making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence,

including those above. Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), will consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing.
It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.
Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK

For more information see our Acceptable Use of ICT policy.

Homelessness Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

In most cases school staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. Hidden homelessness is identified in the KCSIE 2026, this has no real format or alert that notifies a school when a family is struggling to find housing. We monitor attendance daily and for any patterns over time and at half term points. We have strong relationships with our families but remain aware of vulnerabilities in the challenging financial climate.

Shelter gives advice on getting help from your local council.
Essex Local Housing link: https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200622/housing

14.9 Children absent from education: A child absent from education or has unexplained and or persistent absence is a potential indicator of abuse. Our School recognises that a child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation and will follow the School procedures for unauthorised absence and for children absent from education. A child who is a young carer is at risk of exploitation although it may not be recognised, school staff should report any concerns to the DSL who can refer to services for additional support through the Family Help process. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence.

All staff should be aware that children who are absent from school, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including modern slavery and involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of , '*honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)* or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

Our School will inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without School permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Schools must inform the local authority (where the school is situated) when a student is unable to attend, or is expected to be unable to attend, for 15 days because of sickness (whether consecutive or not). The Schools Attendance champion is Mrs Amanda Gwynne (DSL)

Parents must ensure the school has two emergency contacts for their children. Regular attendance reviews take place and it may require meetings between parents and the School to establish support for those with poor attendance, our Attendance Champion is Mrs Amanda Gwynne DSL with the support of the SENCO and Heads of Section in half termly reviews. Procedures are outlined in the Attendance policy.

County lines: County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, student referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Child abduction and community safety incidents: Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

http://www.clevernevergoes.org/

Children and the court system Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/ywp-5-11-eng.pdf
http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/ywp-12-17-eng.pdf
https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/

Children with family members in custody or is affected by parental offending: Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent in custody or is affected by parental offending each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism: Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - http://www.gov.uk/

14.10 Risk Assessment: The School recognises that the evaluation of risks and putting in place steps to mitigate these risks contributes to promoting the welfare and protection of students. We will continue to implement immediate strategies regarding regulatory compliance. The care for students is complex and requires special measures to support the emotional wellbeing of students and staff, as well as the implementation of any necessary practical arrangements required at the time. Risks presented by onsite events that require further assessment for safety and terrorism will be reviewed by the Operations Manager Mr Andrew Deaves, and the procedures within Martyn's Law adhered to.

For hazardous activities and curricular and extra-curricular activities that may pose specific risks, risk assessments are carried out in accordance with the School's Health and Safety policy and reviewed as required by the School's Health and Safety Committee. Risk assessments for school trips and visits are reviewed by the Vice Principal for Activities, with the support of the Trips and Visits coordinator Mr Mick Pitts. In the case of students at risk of significant harm, they are referred to external agencies in accordance with the School's procedures. If the student is at risk of harm from themselves, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the risk and may put in place an Individual Care Plan (ICP) that may be shared with relevant teachers.

14.11 Visitors: The School has a Visitors' policy which outlines procedures for managing visitors on site. All visitors must sign in on arrival at the School Office and sign out on departure and are escorted whilst on School premises by a member of staff or an appropriately vetted volunteer. All visitors are given a name badge with the title 'Visitor' which must be clearly displayed and worn at all times whilst on the School premises.

14.12 School Premises: The School takes all practicable steps to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit. The Vice Principal for Activities also ensures any other use of the school facilities for non-school activities have the appropriate safeguarding measures in place with the support of the Operations Manager Mr Andrew Deaves.

14.13 The following policies should be read in conjunction with this Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy:

- Acceptable Use of ICT by Staff and Students
- Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices
- Anti Bullying
- Attendance including Children Missing from Education
- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions
- Code of Conduct for Staff

- Confidentiality of Students
- Critical Incident
- Educational Visits
- Equal Opportunities
- Induction of New Staff in Child Protection
- Lockdown Policy
- Missing Students
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND
- RSHE Policy
- Tackling Extremism
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children
- Visiting Speakers
- Whistleblowing

15. Monitoring and review

15.1 Any child protection incidents at the School will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School (which will include a review of this policy) to determine whether any improvements can be made to prevent a similar event from occurring in the future. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the LADO will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the School's procedures. This will include a review of the School's cooperation and communication with local agencies.

15.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures. Review of low-level concerns will be monitored by the Safeguarding team and SLT. All Low-Level concerns are recorded and the records are maintained by the DSL.

15.3 The Governors will undertake an annual review of this policy and the School's safeguarding procedures. The Governor conducting the annual review on behalf of the Governing Council, will meet with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other senior staff and take into account any issues raised as a result of any review within the School. The outcome of the review is reported to the Governing Council annually. As part of their review, Governors will monitor how efficiently duties have been discharged and will make recommendations for any changes to policy and procedures necessary.

15.4 The Governors will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding arrangements at any time are remedied without delay. The network manager and the DSL will monitor the school filtering provider and ensure the School is protected from CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content to protect all users.

16. Other Contacts

Prevent/counter-extremism contacts:

Local Police Force	Essex Police	101 (non-emergency) 999 (emergency)	To refer someone to Channel, a referral form should be completed and returned to prevent@essex.pnn.police.uk
Anti-Terrorist Hotline		0800 789 321	

DfE dedicated non- emergency helpline		020 7340 7264	counter- extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
Essex County Council The Education Lead for PREVENT in Essex is Jo Barclay, Safeguarding Manager for Schools and Early Years.	Prevent	Contact details below	Any concern should be discussed with the Children and Families Hub in the first instance

If the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated staff or Principal are not available and there is a risk of immediate serious significant harm to a child anyone can report abuse or discuss concerns in relation to children and young people. The Children and Families Hub can be contacted on 0345 603 7627. Out of office hours the emergency duty team can be contacted on 03330 397971. For children living in other local authorities see below for contact numbers. In an immediate emergency dial 999 and report the matter to the Police.

The following telephone numbers may also be useful:

Organisation	**Telephone**
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line for professionals	0808 800 5000 0800 028 0285 Email help@nspcc.org.uk
Operation Encompass: Teacher Helpline (Domestic Abuse)	0204 513 9990
Refuge: National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Ofsted's Whistleblower Hotline	0300 123 3155
Kidscape (Anti-bullying helpline for parents)	0845 120 5204
Child Exploitation Online Prevention (CEOP)	0870 000 3344
Samaritans	116 123
Colchester Police Station	01206 762212
Ofsted	0300 123 1231 (General Enquiries) inquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS),	03000 200 190
Department for Education	0207 340 7264
Independent Schools Inspectorate	0207 6000 100

This policy complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 and DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

APPENDIX 1: REPORTING FORM

1. Introduction

1.1 This form comprises part of the School's safeguarding documents and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding (child protection) policy, which is available on the School's website, and shared staff area on the One Drive.

This form is designed to be completed by any member of staff who receives information raising child protection concerns either through observation or direct disclosure, from a student or from another source. The purpose of this form is to ensure that an adequate amount of information is recorded at the outset. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the information is received even where this happens away from the School, for example, on an educational visit.

Do not allow the completion of the form to delay notification of the concerns to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead but pass the completed form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Principal or Chair of Governors as appropriate, as a matter of urgency. Alternatively, staff can use the MIS MyConcern to report safeguarding concerns or disclosures.

1.2 The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection is Mrs Amanda Gwynne (Assistant Principal Pastoral).

1.3 The LADO for Essex is Jacquie Wilkes. The contact number to be used is 03330 134079. Secure email: Jacquie.wilkes@essex.gov.uk.cjsm.net. Out of Hours Duty LADO contact: 03330139797 North Essex. (Louise Lewington – louise.lewington@essex.gov.uk)

1.4 If for any reason you are not able to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, her Deputies or the Principal, you should speak to your manager**. If you are not able to follow this referral procedure and there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child you should contact the Children & Families Hub on 0345 603 7627. Out of hours: (Mon-Thurs 5.30pm-9am. Fri & Bank Holidays 4.30pm-9am) 0345 606 1212** If there is an immediate emergency, dial 999 and report the matter to the Police.

1.5 When completing the reporting form remember especially when a second staff member is present, care must be taken to remain engaged and not appear distracted. It is essential a written record is accurate as the notes may be used in statutory assessments and/or criminal investigations. Ask "open" questions and not leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.

- Listen carefully and keep an open mind, record only what the child says, without interpretation or personal opinion.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Do not take a decision as to whether or not the alleged abuse or neglect has taken place.
- All information **MUST** be transferred using the MIS **MyConcern** system Report A Concern tab and follow the prompts to successfully report the incident. This will alert the DSL and the Safeguarding Team to the new incident.
- Any notes or forms, must be passed to the DSL and should be signed by the person making the disclosure, use full name avoiding initials.
- **Do not promise confidentiality.**

2. Data protection information notes

2.1 The School holds personal information about students in order to safeguard and promote their welfare, promote the objects and interests of the School, facilitate the efficient operation of the School and ensure compliance with all relevant legal obligations.

2.2 **The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018**. The content of this form, when completed, will contain personal information which is subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. Students, and in certain circumstances their parents, have the right to request access to personal information about them held by the School, including the content of this form, although exemptions may apply depending on the circumstances. Legal advice should be sought before any information of this nature is disclosed to students or parents.

2.3 **Confidentiality** The School will keep this record confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. For example, where, in the professional opinion of the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it is deemed necessary we may share this information with the Social Services or the Police for the purpose of child protection investigations.

APPENDIX 1

Safeguarding Record Sheet

Class/ Tutor	Student Name:	Parent/Guardian:
Date: Time:		Contact Numbers:

Detail: (Use body map if applicable)

Full name signed by the student:

Further Action Taken:

Relevant contacts informed	Principal	
	Head of Prep	
	Head of EYFS and Nursery	
	Member of the Safeguarding Team: DSL	DDSL
	Assistant Principal Pastoral	
	Referred Children and Families Hub or Police	
	Other	
Staff Signature		**Date:**

APPENDIX 2: ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Allegations against staff: Where an allegation/ concern or complaint (no matter how small) or allegations that do meet the harm threshold is made against any member of staff, Governor, supply staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher, the matter should be reported immediately to the Principal. This should also take into account situations where a person's behaviour outside school may suggest 'transferable risk into the School' in particular where the School may have appointed supply staff, volunteers, contractors or trainee teachers. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt the School will seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

There are two levels of allegation/concern:
Allegations that may meet the harms threshold: The guidance in KCSIE 2026 should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working in the school that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

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

Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to in the guidance as 'low level concerns. The guidance in KCSIE 2026 should be followed, staff are trained regarding their responsibility for referring any low-level concerns to the Principal, and staff are aware that a log is kept including any decisions made by the Principal. This is to identify any patterns of behaviour may emerge regarding a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or Governor.

Our procedures are consistent with local safeguarding procedures and practice guidance. The School has a responsibility to look after the welfare of the child - the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and for referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Children's Social Care. We also have a responsibility for supporting the person subject to the allegation and in dealing with this we will apply common sense in our judgement. We will deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, and provide effective protection for all.

Where appropriate, the Principal will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or her Deputies and all concerns/ allegations will be discussed. Before contacting the LADO, the School should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts and to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. The LADO will be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria or are made directly to the Police. All discussions with the LADO should be recorded in writing. A case manager will be appointed this will be either the Principal or, where the Principal is the subject of an allegation, the Chair of Governors will lead any investigation and follow the guidance in Part Four of Keeping children safe in education 2026 and further guidance from the LADO. Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or local authority children's social care is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial assessment decides that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the case manager.

Allegations against the Principal, Chair of Governors or other Governor: Where an allegation/ concern or complaint is made against the Principal, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in their absence the Deputy Chair, without first notifying the Principal. The Chair of Governors, or in their absence the Deputy Chair, will liaise with

the LADO and relevant agencies as required. If an allegation is made against the Chair of Governors or another Governor, the allegation should be reported to the Principal. In either case, any such allegations will be discussed with the LADO within one working day before further action is taken. The LADO will guide the School through the subsequent procedures.

Disclosure of information: The Principal will inform the accused person of the concern/ allegation as soon as possible after the LADO has been consulted. The Parents or carers of the child[ren] involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. Where the LADO advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the Police or the Local Authority's Social Care Services need to be involved, the Principal should not inform the accused person or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed. The parents or carers should be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. This information will be given in confidence and the School will consider its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018

Confidentiality: Section 13 of the Education Act 2011 prohibits the publication of any material to the public at large or any section of the public that may lead to the identification of a teacher accused of committing a criminal offence against a student at the School until such time as the accused person is charged with an offence. In all such cases the School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality to comply with these restrictions and will seek advice from the LADO, Police and Children’s Social Care Services as appropriate and parents will be informed of the requirement to maintain confidentiality.

Support: A school has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and explained the likely course of action, unless external agencies object to this. A representative will be appointed to keep them informed of the progress of the case and to consider what other support is available for the individual, as appropriate.

Action to be taken against the accused: Where an investigation by the Police or the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services is unnecessary, the LADO will discuss the steps to be taken with the Principal (or the Chair of Governors where the allegation is against the Principal). The appropriate action will depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in the future. If after the sharing of initial information, there is no further action to be taken, the LADO and the person in School managing the case should record the justification, and consideration will then be given to what should be communicated to the staff member concerned and the person who made the initial allegation.

Further Investigation It may be necessary to undertake a further investigation to determine the appropriate action. If so, the LADO will discuss with the Principal how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. The appropriate person will usually be a senior member of staff, but in some instances, it may be appropriate to appoint an independent investigator as advised by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

Suspension: Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation and should only be considered in a case where:

- there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the School is or are at risk of significant harm; or
- the allegation warrants investigation by the Police; or
- the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

If immediate suspension is considered, the Principal (or Chair of Governors) will always consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. The case will also be discussed with the LADO who will gather the views of Children's Social Care and the Police. The professional reputational damage that can arise from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or malicious must be considered. It may be that the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements, for example, redeployment. In any event, the School will consider suspension on a case-by-case basis and after evaluating the risks. Suspension without prejudice may be considered to allow the school the time to complete an investigation.

If suspension is necessary, the rationale and justification will be recorded, and the member of staff being suspended will be informed in writing within one working day. At the point of suspension, the member of staff will also be informed of who their point of contact within the School will be during the period of suspension and how they will be kept informed.

In cases where the School is made aware that the Secretary of State has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual at the School, it will be necessary to immediately suspend that person from teaching pending the findings of the Department for Education and Teaching Regulation Agency investigation.

Outcome of allegation investigations: In accordance with statutory guidance from the Department for Education, the following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of investigations:

Substantiated: There is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation.
False: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
Malicious: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.
Unsubstantiated: This is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
Unfounded: This reflects cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Criminal proceedings: The School will consult with the LADO following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case, including the result of the police investigation or trial and the standards of proof applicable.

Return to work: If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, the School should consider how to facilitate this, for example, a phased return may be appropriate and/ or the provision of a mentor to aid in the short term. The School should also consider how to manage the contact with the child[ren] who made the allegation. In any event a Risk Assessment will be put in place to safeguard all and to minimise risk and impact.

Ceasing to use a person's services: If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff or a person that had been engaged to work at the School (including temporary staff and those on fixed term contracts, staff employed via a contractor, or a Governor, volunteer or trainee teacher) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Disclosure and Barring Service within one month of the person leaving the school. Separate consideration will be given to whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (via the Teaching Regulation Agency) for a prohibition order, the reasons such an order would be considered are: 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that brought the profession into disrepute' or 'a conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'. Any such incidents

will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay. In **no** circumstances should the School decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome.

Resignation: If a member of staff, including the Principal (or a Governor or volunteer) tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the School. Resignation or ceasing to provide services will not prevent contact being made with the LADO or a prompt and detailed report being made to the Disclosure and Barring Service in appropriate circumstances.

Timescales: All allegations must be dealt with as a priority to avoid any delay. Where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, the case should be resolved within one week. It is generally expected that 80% of cases of allegations of abuse against staff will be resolved within one month, 90% within three months, and all but exceptional cases being completed within 12 months. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Principal should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, it should be held within 15 working days.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations: If an allegation by a student is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the LADO will refer the child to Children's Social Care Services to determine whether the child needs support. Where an allegation by a student is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Principal will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Behaviour policy.

Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – 'low level concerns'.

The school seeks to create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below expected professional standards.

Responding to low level concerns the school aims to:

- ensure that staff are clear about, and confident to distinguish between, expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – in themselves and others, and the delineation of professional boundaries and reporting lines
- empower staff to share any low-level concerns with the Principal
- help staff address unprofessional behaviour and help the individual to correct such behaviour at an early stage
- identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour – including any patterns – that may need to be consulted upon with (on a no-names basis if appropriate), or referred to, the LADO
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- help identify any weaknesses in the organisation's safeguarding system.

A low-level concern is **any** concern – **no matter how small**, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' (i.e. they *believe* it could be a concern) – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Defining a Low-Level Concern

Gosfield School is committed to creating a school culture of openness and trust. It will also protect adults working in school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings**.** A low-level concern is one that **does not** meet the harm threshold as stated in this policy. That is, when anyone working in a school (including governor, volunteers, supply staff or contractor) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (which includes behaviour that may have happened **outside** school posing a transferable risk to children).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Responsibilities of staff

It is important that **all** staff are clear of the expectations the school stipulates from them as contained in the Staff Code of Conduct. This is covered annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and as part of the school's induction for new staff. The School trains staff on low level concerns, what the behaviours may look like and the process of reporting, ensuring their staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, in themselves and others

- empowering staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns (see below)
- addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- handling and responding to such concerns sensitively and proportionately when they are raised, and
- helping identify any weakness in the school or colleges safeguarding system

It is crucial that **any** concerns in relation to a staff member's behaviour, including those which do not meet the harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the Principal. This should be done without delay.

Where there are concerns/allegations about the Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors (whose contact details can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy document).

Staff members who are concerned about how their behaviour may have been interpreted, or, on reflection, re-evaluate their behaviour as one that may have been in contrary to the school's code of conduct and expectations, they self-refer to the Principal.

Dealing with Low-Level Concerns

All low-level concerns may be shared verbally with the Principal in the first instance but must then be recorded in writing.

The record should include:

- details of the concern
- the context in which the concern arose
- action taken

The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, but if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Where the low-level concern is provided verbally, the Principal should make an appropriate record of the conversation, either at the time or immediately following the discussion, paying heed to the details above. Records will be signed, timed and dated. Records will remain confidential in accordance with the school's Data Protection policies and GDPR.

Responding to a Low-Level Concern

The Principal will in the first instance satisfy themself that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as a higher-level concern/allegation and dealt with under the appropriate procedures set out previously in this policy.

The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified are where:

(a) the threshold is met for a higher-level concern/allegation
(b) there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to a higher-level concern/allegation or
(c) there is other information which when considered leads to a higher-level concern/allegation.

Where the Principal is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the LADO, if necessary, on a 'no-names' basis.

Having established that the concern is low-level, the Principal will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary and collect as much evidence as possible. The name of the person reporting should be noted respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Principal or the DSL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help them to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All of this needs to be recorded along with the rationale for their decisions and action taken. Reports about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers/ agency, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training etc. In dealing with a low-level concern with a member of staff, this will

be approached in a sensitive and proportionate way. In many cases, a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the individual about whom the concern has been raised.

Details of the concern will be recorded in writing the context in which it arose, along with the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Any conversation with a member of staff following a concern will include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question. Ongoing and transparent monitoring of the individual's behaviour may be appropriate. An action plan or risk assessment may be required. Some concerns may trigger the school's disciplinary, grievance or whistleblowing procedures, which will be followed where appropriate.

Monitoring of Low-Level Concerns
The Principal will securely retain confidential files on low-level concerns. A central log will be shared and monitored by the school's Senior Leadership Team monthly to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately, and that any potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour are identified. A record will be kept of this review within SLT Minutes.

No record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file (and no mention made in job references) unless either:

(a) the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as a higher-level concern, or

(b) the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure, if it is found to meet the harms threshold a referral to the LADO will be made.

If a pattern of behaviour is identified, the School must consider if there is any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of occurrence. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the School should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.'

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation, the Principal will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the school on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.

Whether or not the person making the allegation is a student or a parent (or other member of the public), the School reserves the right to contact the Police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Record keeping: Details of an allegation including how the allegation was followed up and resolved, summery of the allegation, and a record of any action taken and decision reached will be recorded on the employee's file and retained at least until the employee reaches the normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer. A copy will be provided to the person concerned where agreed by children's social care or the police. This will also include a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference. If the allegation was found to have been malicious all details will be removed from the employee's records. Substantiated allegations will be included in references, factual content only.

References: Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference.

APPENDIX 3: FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE TYPES AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

All schools should be aware that abuse, neglect, and exploitation with regard to safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Types of abuse, neglect and exploitation (as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026):

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. 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.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, 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. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of wt they say or how they communicate. Further levels of abuse may include criticism, belittling, and name calling. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration including with an object (for example rape) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence between children: Sexual harassment or sexual vioelnce can occur between two children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, jokes, and online sexual harassment may happen as standalone incidents or be part of a broader pattern of abuse. Sexual violence includes rape, *assault by penetration (or penetration with an object)*, stealthing and sexual assault. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted contact of a sexual nature that can occur online and offline. Harmful sexual behaviour is defined as problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours that are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. The School will respond to all reports of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence including those that have happened outside of school and/ or online. We will always act in the best interest of the child. This will require the support of external agencies.

Gosfield School takes the view that such incidents could happen to our students and recognises the damaging impact of harassment and abuse. This may be overt or subtle and staff must be vigilant, and not necessarily rely upon a disclosure. We must recognise that young people may not always make a direct report, and information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes. The School has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child-abuse (including harassment and violence) and students are encouraged to report harassment or abuse. The DSL will report to the Principal and, in serious cases following a properly conducted investigation, take advice from the Children and Families Hub. A referral to the police will be made where abuse is suspected and the use of technology has been involved. In such cases the key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) Is a form of child sexual abuse and 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 including the use of AI and other platforms.

Child Criminal Exploitation including Modern Slavery: Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. We are aware that boys and girls may experience criminal exploitation differently. Staff must in all cases be supportive and ensure that the child feels safe.

Grooming: grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Mental Health: *"Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." (World Health Organisation)*

Mental health is the overall wellness of how you think, regulate your feelings and behave. Mental health disorders in children are generally defined as delays or disruptions in developing age-appropriate thinking, behaviours, social skills or regulation of emotions. These problems are distressing to children and disrupt their ability to function well at home, in school or in other social situations it can cause distress or disrupt a person's ability to function.

The School has a duty of care to protect and promote a child or young person's mental or emotional wellbeing, we promote the mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing of all our students. All staff work closely to monitor student's wellbeing, should they identify a concern the Tutor/ Head of Section, the Pastoral Assistant or the Assistant Principal Pastoral, and the First Aid Practitioner will work closely with all parties, students, families and services where required to support individuals. They may need to implement specific strategies to reassure the safety of an individual in the form of an individual care plan or a risk assessment, this is discussed with relevant staff, SENCO, First Aid Practitioner, and DSL if applicable

Through the School's PSHEE programme raising awareness for good mental health is a priority, this is supported by our assemblies, charity initiatives, and the tutor programme. Through physical activity, mental and emotional health benefits of exercise are well documented, and the school actively encourages sport for all, along with outdoor learning and Forest School which are inclusive at Gosfield School. We ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and mental health charities.

Some of the warning signs of poor mental health are:

Significant changes in behaviour
Ongoing difficulty sleeping
Withdrawing from social situations
Not wanting to do things they usually like
Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves
If members of staff feel the child is in danger, there is an additional requirement for staff to call 999 or take a child to A&E immediately (or call 111 if it is not an emergency). See our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Gender Questioning Pupils The School will not initiate a social transition for any pupil. However, where a pupil or parent requests support, we will consider the individual circumstances carefully and respond in a supportive, balanced, and measured way.
A social transition may include changes to a pupil's name, pronouns, uniform, or appearance. Any agreed changes relating to uniform or personal presentation will be at the Principal's discretion and must remain consistent with the School's uniform requirements.

Requests relating to social transition in the Prep School are expected to be rare. Any such request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the welfare of the individual pupil, the impact on others, and the School's safeguarding responsibilities.

The School will follow its established process for responding to requests, including assessment of any safeguarding risks and, where appropriate, early involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Decisions will be fully documented and, in most cases, discussed with parents. Parents will be kept informed unless doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm. Given the high threshold

for excluding parents from such discussions, any decision to do so will be supported by clear, evidence-based safeguarding reasons and made with the involvement of the DSL.

Sports and Gender Questioning Pupils

As pupils get older, some sports and physical education (PE) activities may be organised in single-sex groups. This is permitted under the Equality Act 2010 where differences in physical strength, stamina or physique mean that mixed-sex participation would affect safety or fairness.

Where a sport or activity is separated by biological sex for safety reasons, the School will not make exceptions.

In other sports, where single-sex participation is provided to ensure fair competition, the School will consider any request relating to participation on a case-by-case basis. In doing so, the School will consider the individual circumstances, the pupil's welfare, the impact on other pupils, and the need to maintain safe and fair participation for everyone. Any decision will be made in line with the School's procedures for considering requests relating to social transition and with appropriate safeguarding advice.

Signs of abuse

The information given here has been taken from the NSPCC Child Protection factsheet. The guidance notes are not meant to be exhaustive, and staff should not jump to conclusions because of the presence of just one of the factors below. Every case is different.

Physical abuse	
The physical signs of abuse may include: • Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body or injuries which the child can't explain. • Serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon • Multiple bruises - often on the upper arm or outside the thigh. • Cigarette burns. • Human bite marks. • Broken bones. • Scalds especially those with upward. • Splash marks suggesting that hot water has been thrown over the child. • Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse may include: • Fear of parents being contacted for an explanation. • Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts. • Flinching when approached or touched. • Reluctance to get changed, even, for example, in hot weather or for sporting events. • Withdrawn behaviour. • Running away from home.

Emotional abuse	
The physical signs of abuse may include: • Use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect them to know for their age. • Struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts. • Seem isolated from their parents. • Lack social skills or have few, if any, friends.	Changes in behaviour that can indicate emotional abuse may include: • Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, rocking. • Being unable to play. • Fear of making mistakes. • Sudden speech disorders. • Self-harm. • Fear of parent being approached regarding behaviour. • Anxiety due to stalking
	• Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress. • Extremist views.
Sexual abuse	
The physical signs of sexual abuse may include: • Pain or itching in the genital area. • Bruising or bleeding near genital area. • Sexually transmitted disease. • Vaginal discharge or infection. • Stomach pains. • Discomfort when walking or sitting down. • Pregnancy.	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate sexual abuse may include: • Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn. • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people. • Having nightmares. • Running away from home. • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level. • Sexual drawings or language. • Bedwetting. • Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia. • Self- harm. • Saying they have secrets which can't be told to anyone. • Substance misuse. • Not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence). • Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.
Neglect	
The physical signs of neglect may include: • Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others. • Constantly dirty or 'smelly'. • Loss of weight or being constantly underweight. • Inappropriate clothing for the weather conditions.	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate neglect may include: • Complaining of being tired all the time. • Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments. • Having few friends. • Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Child Sexual Abuse	
The physical signs of child sexual exploitation may include: • may avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends • they could appear frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them • they might be promiscuous • sexually transmitted infection (STI) or pregnancy	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate child sexual exploitation may include: • Unexplained gifts or new possessions. • Associating with other young people involved in exploitation. • Having older boyfriends or girlfriends. • Changes in emotional well-being. • Misuse of drugs and alcohol. • Missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late. • Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education.
Grooming	
The physical signs of grooming may include: • Pain or itching in the genital area. • Bruising or bleeding near genital area. • Sexually transmitted disease. • Vaginal discharge or infection. • Stomach pains. • Discomfort when walking or sitting down. • Pregnancy	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate grooming may include: • Wanting to spend more and more time online. • Being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit. • Possessing items (such as electronic devices or phones) that parents have not provided. • Being emotionally volatile. • Having older boyfriends or girlfriends. • Going to unusual places to meet friends. • Having access to drugs and alcohol.
Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage) (HBA).	
The physical signs of **FGM** may include: • Difficulty walking, sitting or standing. • Severe pain. • Bleeding. • Shock. • Inability to urinate. • Infections such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C.	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate FGM may include: • Spending longer than normal in the bathroom. • Unusual behaviour after an absence from school. • Particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations. • Asking for help but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Forced Marriage and Honour or Faith-based Abuse	
Some families force their children to marry or act with violence because they: • think it's an important part of religion or culture • are worried about the family's reputation and honour (in some cultures also known as 'izzat') • want all the family's money to stay together • want to marry their children off in exchange for money • don't approve of their child being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (gender questioning • don't want their children to have relationships or sex	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate Forced marriage is due to take place may include: • Evidence of physical abuse • Stressed emotional state • Leave the family home • Lack of trust in peers and adults The "One-Chance" Rule All practitioners working with victims of forced marriage and honour or faith-based abuse need to be aware of the "one chance" rule. That is, they may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and thus they may only have one chance to save a life.
Domestic Abuse	
Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence - domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, financial, psychological or verbal abuse. Children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse are vulnerable and where the Police are aware they will inform the school. Operation Encompass is a nationwide initiative to provide support for victims, and families dealing with domestic abuse.	Changes in behaviour that can also indicate Domestic Abuse is taking place may include: • Become aggressive • Display anti-social behaviour • Suffer from depression or anxiety • Demonstrate learnt behaviour, verbal abuse, explicit language older than years.
Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. Relationship Abuse: Violation of Women and Girls, patterns of behaviour within a household of misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes, normalising abusive behaviour and control.	• Not do so well at school – due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges. • Lack of aspiration, self-worth and confidence, impact on attendance and long-term economic status.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines and Gangs including Serious Violent Crime	
The physical signs of child criminal exploitation may include: • absence for long periods of time, *children being forced to work in cannabis factories* • unusual or frequent journeys to unfamiliar locations, *being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country* • forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. • sexual and criminal exploitation • modern slavery: when a person is controlled, exploited, and deprived of their personal freedom for financial or personal gain through force, coercion, or deception	Changes in behaviour that indicate children are at threat from criminal exploitation may include: • Being secretive about who they are with and who they are talking to • Missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late. • Possessing items (such as electronic devices or phones) that parents have not provided. • Going to unusual places to meet friends. • Having access to drugs and alcohol • Part of a gang culture uses an abuse of power to threaten children to carry out rituals, this is encouraged as a sign of loyalty and solidarity to the gang, this can be acts of violence/ humiliation, peer on peer abuse/ psychological abuse.
Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. Typically, gangs use mobile phone lines to facilitate drug orders and supply to users. They also use local property as a base; these often belong to a vulnerable adult and are obtained through force or coercion (known as 'cuckooing'). Children as young as 12 are being targeted. Gangs 'recruit' through deception, intimidation, violence, debt bondage and/or grooming into drug use and/or child sexual exploitation. Gang Culture: Initiation/ hazing type violence and rituals. Serious Violent Crime: the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime.	Changes in behaviour that indicate children are at threat from serious violent crime may include: • Increased absence from school • Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups • Significant decline in performance or unexplained injuries • Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing • Signs of assault/unexplained injuries Unexplained gifts/new possessions - these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs It isn't possible for a child to consent to being exploited, abused or trafficked, as they may not understand that exploitation is happening to them. Children with SEN are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Further guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues are available on the NSPCC website www.nspcc.org.uk.

Guidance and advice is also available in the DfE's, What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DFE March 2015). The guiding principles are:

1. No matter where you work, you are likely to encounter children during the course of your normal working activities. You are in a unique position to be able to observe signs of abuse or neglect, or changes in behaviour which may indicate a child may be being abused or neglected.

2. You should make sure that you are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, that you question the behaviour of children and parents/carers and don't necessarily take what you are told at face value. You should make sure you know where to turn to if you need to ask for help, and that you refer to children's social care or to the police, if you suspect that a child is at risk of harm or is immediate danger (see below information re Children and Families Hub for further information).

3. You should make sure that you understand and work within the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that are in place in your area. In doing so, you should be guided by the following key principles:

- children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility
- it is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging
- children and families are best supported and protected when there is a coordinated response from all relevant agencies

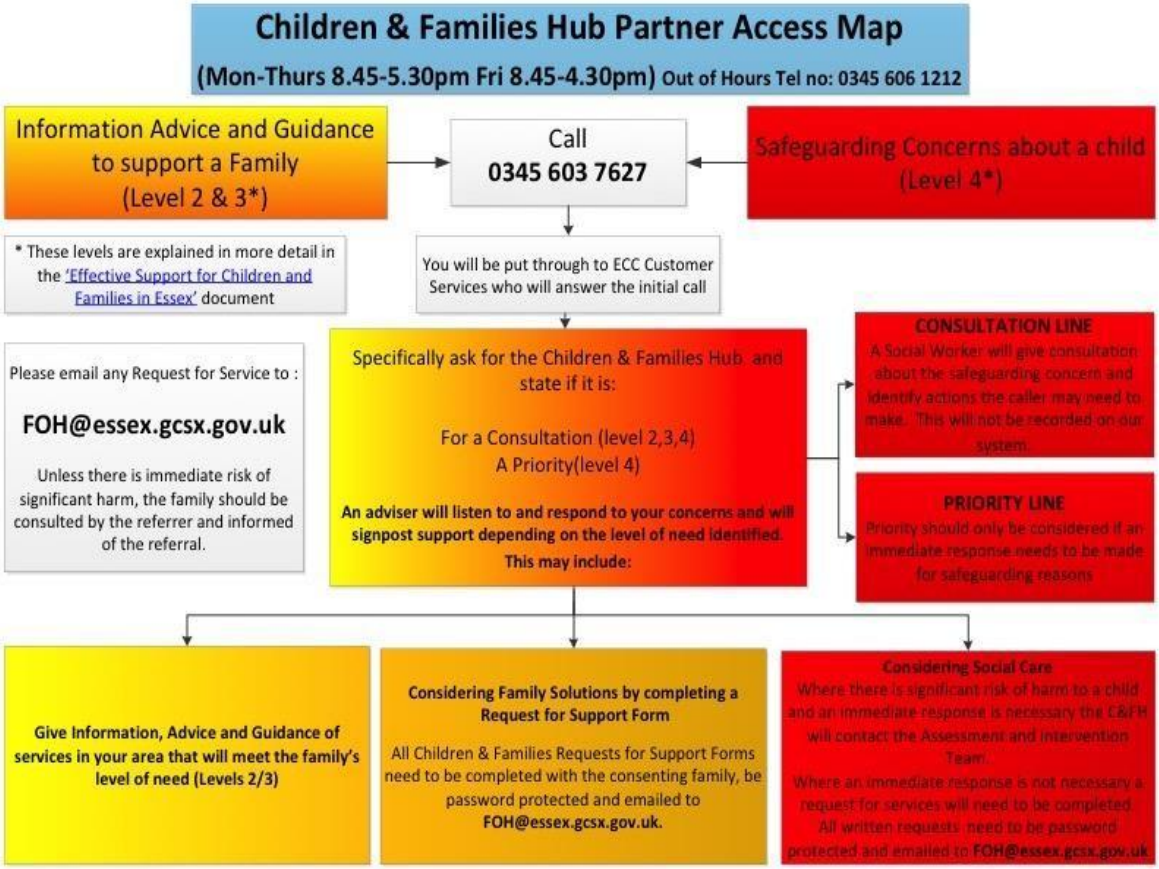
4. You should not let other considerations, like the fear of damaging relationships with adults; get in the way of protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. If you think that referral to children's social care is necessary, you should view it as the beginning of a process of inquiry, not as an accusation.

Broad government guidance on the following is also available via the GOV.UK website (see Part one Keeping Children Safe in Education and Annex B (September 2026):

- Child missing or absent for long periods of time from education, or has experienced multiple suspensions, thus being at risk of permanent exclusion from school or AP
- Child missing from education, home or care
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying, and discriminatory bullying
- Domestic abuse/ violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Honour based abuse
- Mental health
- Missing children and adults' strategy
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation

- Youth produced sexual imagery
- Trafficking
- Serious Violent Crime
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence, stalking
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and the court system
- Children with family members has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending in custody or affected by parental offending
- Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Cybercrime
- Homelessness/ Hidden Homelessness
- Additional Support

APPENDIX 4: Children and Families Hub Contact details



Contact details (Mon-Thurs 8.45-5.30pm Fri 8.45-4.30pm)
When you telephone **0345 603 7627** - please specifically ask for the Children and Families Hub and state if it is for the:

- Consultation Line (Social Worker will give advice but not record the call)
- Children and Families Hub
- The Priority Line (because an immediate response is necessary)

By telephoning **0345 603 7627** and asking specifically for the Children and Families Hub, you will speak to a Family Adviser who will discuss with you and help identify the right services that will help to meet the family's needs.

Enquiries and requests for information from Children and Families can also be made through an online portal: www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk. Using this online portal will assist those partners who do not have access to secure email accounts.

Contact details: Out of hours
Friday and bank holidays 4.30pm – 9am
Telephone: 0345 606 1212

For concerns regarding immediate risk contact the Essex Safeguarding Children Board on 0345 603 7627

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then contact the Police on 999, or from within school 9 followed by 999.

APPENDIX 5:

Induction of New Staff in Child Protection

Whole School, including EYFS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Gosfield School. We hope that you will not feel new for too long. We believe that a comprehensive induction programme helps all of our new members of staff to settle into the school as quickly as possible, and to start to make an effective contribution. All new teaching staff are allocated a mentor in their first year whose role is to provide informal support and assistance.

INDUCTION PROCEDURES ON CHILD PROTECTION

Every new member of the teaching and non-teaching staff, including peripatetic musicians and sports coaches, cleaners and volunteers, will receive a safeguarding briefing before the commencement of their duties and contact with children. They will receive a copy of the School's safeguarding policy together with a copy of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2026 and will be expected to read, and sign to say they have read and understood Part 1 in full. of this document as part of all staff induction.

All staff members are also required to complete the government's online Prevent training programme. Thereafter, they are required to complete further in-house training by the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** within the first half term. The only adults who work or visit the School who are exempted from this requirement are:

- Occasional visitors, including occasional speakers and contractors, who sign in and are given a security badge by our receptionist, who are escorted throughout their visit.
- Contractors such as electricians and cleaners, working on a designated site that is physically separated from the rest of the school, who are required to sign in and out at their site office and to always wear security badges.
- Contractors working during the school holidays.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs A Gwynne, the Assistant Principal Pastoral, is Gosfield School's **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. She has been fully trained for the demands of this role and regularly attends courses with other child support agencies to ensure that she remains conversant with best practice and that our policies and procedures are current and follow best practice. She receives refresher training in child protection and inter-agency working every two years. She reports every term to the Board of Governors on child protection issues.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE TRAINING?

Child protection is always our top priority.

Every member of staff needs to be confident that he or she understands his or her role in:

- Keeping children safe
- Promoting the welfare of students
- Promoting equal opportunities and inclusion
- Preventing bullying and harassment, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Challenging Misogyny, harmful sexual behaviours, sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Preventing students from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring the right advice and support
- Monitoring the mental health and wellbeing of all students

  All staff are vigilant to the risk's online, staff must understand what filtering and monitoring is, and that it is in place to prevent children accessing inappropriate and harmful content online while students are in school. Staff must be aware of the roles regarding monitoring and filtering and the processes they should follow. DFE link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges

  Staff should be vigilant in understanding the impact of AI generative platforms and the risks this poses to children, from a child-on-child perspective, CSE, grooming coercion, and exploitation. Training has included reference to AI platform 'Nudify', the Manosphere and Misinformation, Disinformation and Conspiracy Theories.

The Principal and all staff (including volunteers, Governors, contractors, supply staff, and trainee teachers) are required to take part in the training, regardless of their previous background or level of expertise. Refresher training in child protection for all staff (including the Principal) is held every year.

WHAT TOPICS DOES THE TRAINING COVER?

Our induction training will tell you about:

Our student welfare systems
Starting with the roles of the following structures:

- *The Board of Governors formally consider child protection every term, with day-to-day issues being delegated to Mrs A Gwynne DSL, who, in turn, has Mr Jackson (Principal), Mr John Cooper (Vice Principal), and Mrs Bougeard (Head of Prep) as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads*
- The Senior Leadership Team and the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
- The regular pastoral meetings, which includes Heads of Section Leads and Heads of House, tutors and class teachers
- The regular monitoring arrangements by Mrs A Gwynne, DSL and Assistant Principal Pastoral, the Head of Prep, Head of Section leads, and the Heads of House
- The Pupil Parliament
- Our partnerships with parents and guardians

We will describe our arrangements for providing additional support for students with SEND including those for whom English is an additional language.

The Legal Framework for our Safeguarding/ Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies. We describe the legal framework briefly and introduce you to our policies relating to safeguarding. All

new staff are expected to read Part 1 in full, of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2026, and work through the online Prevent training producing a certificate demonstrating completion and understanding along with reading our policies on:

- Acceptable Use of ICT by Staff
- Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices
- Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Students
- Staff Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy
- The Whistle Blowing Policy
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy
- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy including Rewards and Sanctions
- Attendance Policy (including Children Absent from Education)
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 1 including Annex B, DfE September 2024
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Careers Policy

Teaching staff have a particular responsibility for supervising students and ensuring that they always behave with consideration and good manners; but all staff need to be made aware of the School's policies in these areas. All staff are reminded of their key role in building positive relationships, identifying risks, and keeping everyone safe, the responsibility for Safeguarding is **everyone's** duty. Staff have a duty to promote the welfare of children and report any concerns to the pastoral team or the DSL immediately. Staff must also be aware to share any concern or complaint (no matter how small) regarding any member of staff, governor, supply staff, volunteer, contractor or trainee teacher should be reported immediately to the Principal. Staff should also consider situations where a person's behaviour outside school may have 'transferable risk into the School'. The School will respond appropriately to any concern brought forward, where the concern does not reach the threshold, it may be necessary to record the incident on our Low-Level Concern Log to monitor any emerging patterns. Staff should also report any potential risk within the use of technology and social networking sites.

Understanding Challenging Behaviour
We draw upon national guidance relating to the safeguarding and protection of children, the signs of abuse, and the duties of staff, as well as the role of specialist agencies. We explain our expectations of how staff should respond in a difficult situation, why they cannot promise confidentiality to a student.

Visitors and Site Security
This covers the need for visitors to be signed in at Reception and to be escorted about the school. Visitors should wear a visitors' badge at all time.

Effective Record Keeping
Why effective record keeping matters and the individual teacher responsibility for adding any incidents to the school file of individual students. All Pastoral Logs are updated by Mrs Gwynne, individual student records are held on a central data base, and the Safeguarding records are kept by Mrs Gwynne DSL, monitored by the Safeguarding Link Governor. All staff are trained on how to use the MIS system (Bromcom) for access to student records including communication with parent/ carers and how to use MyConcern system for reporting a safeguarding concern. This is monitored by the DSL and the Safeguarding team. The DSL should keep written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions, including the rationale for those decisions, this should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent programme.

Refresher Training

The session concludes with reminding staff that refresher training is given at yearly intervals and by inviting all staff to certify in writing that they have completed the training session.

APPENDIX 6:

PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF PUPILS AGED 18 AND OVER

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Gosfield School recognises that pupils who reach the age of 18 years whilst at school may then require different support and additional consideration to those pupils who are under 18.

Whilst all people receiving an education at Gosfield are termed as "pupils", those who have attained the age of 18 or above are no longer considered to be "children" in the eyes of the law or other services. Therefore, in order to ensure that Gosfield pupils over the age of 18 have access to the services and support they may need, a specific policy is required.

REGULATORY STANDARDS

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSR) apply to all pupils at the school aged 3 and over, including those pupils aged 18 and over. Whilst there is no requirement to have separate policies and procedures in place for pupils aged 18 and over, it is useful to have best practice in a policy format. Practices in place to meet the regulatory requirements will generally be whole school arrangements. However, a school with pupils aged 18 and over on the roll should be mindful of other statutory procedures that apply to children only.

SAFEGUARDING

Schools have a duty of care to all pupils and are required under the ISSR and NMS to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. However, the requirements in key safeguarding guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education) ***only*** apply in relation to pupils **under** 18.

Gosfield's internal safeguarding and pastoral procedures apply to all pupils but the reporting requirements to external agencies in safeguarding matters involving pupils aged 18 and over require additional consideration. For example, a concern involving an adult pupil will need to be considered in the context of concerns for their welfare and it may be necessary to refer such concerns to the Local Safeguarding Adult Board, especially if that pupil is deemed to be vulnerable. Such a pupil will not be able to access the services offered by Social Care.

For example, a pupil aged 18 and over who lives in a chaotic and abusive home can be signposted to local and national support services but cannot be assessed to be a "Child in Need" or subject to a Section 47 Child Protection Plan.

Specific Safeguarding- related Issues

https://www.isc.co.uk/media/9316/isc_census_2023_final.pdf

- Statutory FGM reporting requirements apply only with regard to victims under 18 years
- Parental responsibility ceases when a child reaches 18 years of age. (Note that parents who are signatories to the contract for the provision of educational services will retain the right to certain information under the terms of the contract, irrespective of the age of the pupil.
- For students aged 18 or over, the School will:
  Respect the student's right to confidentiality and autonomy, where appropriate
- Seek consent to share information whenever possible.

- However, information may be shared without consent where:
  There is a risk of significant harm to the student or another person
  There are concerns regarding mental capacity
  There is a safeguarding risk within the wider school context, including risks to younger pupils

RISK ASSESSMENTS

The ISSR requires schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by drawing up and implementing effectively a written risk assessment policy and taking appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16 of the Schedule to the ISSR).

A school's policies, procedures and risk assessments should include consideration of the risks associated with educating and accommodating older pupils alongside those under 18. In any event, the school should risk assess the adverse welfare implications and record the action taken to minimise those risks.

Risk assessments for educational visits should include consideration of the risks associated with the participation of pupils aged 18 and over, particularly for trips involving overnight accommodation or long periods of free time. Schools have a duty to take reasonable care of pupils, and it is not recommended that pupils are involved in the supervision of their peers or count in supervision ratios, regardless of their age.

CONSENT

The ability of pupils to provide their own consent in various circumstances is something schools will need to consider long before the pupil turns 18. However, this is something to be aware of as pupils get older and their own rights should be balanced with the rights of parents by virtue of their parental responsibility (which ceases when the child turns 18) and / or under the terms of the parent contract.

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

All pupils should be expected to comply with the school's behaviour and discipline policies and procedures. While pupils aged 18 and over may be legally able to purchase alcohol and tobacco products, this does not mean that they are entitled to do so contrary to the school rules.

CRIMINAL LAW IMPLICATIONS

Through its Sixth Form PSHE provision, pupils aged 18 and over are aware of the law surrounding relationships. The offence of abuse of position of trust under the Sexual Offences Act applies in relation to children under the age of 18 only and will therefore not apply to pupils aged 18 and above. However, Gosfield ensures that its staff code of conduct clearly sets out expectations about the behaviour of staff and volunteers in relation to all pupils, including those aged 18 and over.

Schools should also be aware that the potential consequences of criminal proceedings will be different where pupils aged 18 and over are involved; for example, a pupil aged 18 and over who has a sexual relationship with a pupil under 16 is considered to have acted against the law and will be treated as an adult.

The fact that they are both pupils is irrelevant and the KCSIE guidance on Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse does not apply as one of the parties is not under the age of 18.
Equally, pupils over 18 who send nudes or semi-nudes to other, consenting adults are not deemed to be breaking the law.

MENTAL HEALTH

It is recognised that as a child turns 18, their access to external mental health support changes. Agencies such as CAMHS do not accept referrals for those 18 and over. Therefore, it is necessary

to ensure that our pupils over the age of 18 have access to the appropriate support. At Gosfield all pupils have access to pastoral support, medical care and mental wellbeing support.

Sources

- **Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools - GOV.UK**
- **Pupils Over the Age of 18 in Schools** (ISBA Guidance)
- **https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagersyoung-adults-and-students/student-mental-health-counselling/**
- **https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagersyoung-adults-and-students/bereavement-and-young-people/**
- **https://www.youngminds.org.uk/**
- **https://mnessexmind.org/**
- **Papyrus suicide prevention https://www.papyrus-uk.org/aboutus/**
- **Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/ Call 116 123**

Apps:

- Mindshift (anxiety/depression)
- Calm Harm (self-harm support)
- https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/s

Ratified by the Governing Council of Gosfield School

Signed K Makowell Date: 14.9.26
Chair of Governors

Signature: Date: 14/9/26
Principal

Next Review Date: September 2020