



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

Approved by Trustees –
Policy to be Reviewed –

17 July 2024
September 2025

Plume Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We place high expectations on all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. Please visit our website for our policies and procedures that outline our safeguarding commitment, including our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We take the safeguarding of our stakeholders extremely seriously at Plume Academy and we believe that everyone has a role to play in especially keeping our students safe, although there are certain key people with particular responsibilities of course:

	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mr Ash Stoneman, Deputy Head Teacher	a.stoneman@plume.essex.sch.uk
Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Kirsten Darcy-Smith	k.darcy-smith@plume.essex.sch.uk
Alternate Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Ruth Clark – Joint Head of Academy	R.Clark@plume.essex.sch.uk
Designated Safeguarding Trustee:	Mrs Denise Gray	d.gray@plume.essex.sch.uk

Our three main strands for safeguarding include:

- Creating a safe environment for students to share their worries and to talk as and when they feel the need to do so.
- Creating a safe environment for staff to do their best work.
- Creating a safe enough space for students to learn.

Our moral purpose is to endeavour to provide an **outstanding education** to all students who attend our academy. We will always aim to be fully inclusive with our provision regardless of social background, ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexuality.

The academy also remains proactive in its work with external agencies in our combined efforts to safeguard children and young people. We will also look to share information and work in collaboration with these same external agencies whenever there are concerns about a child's welfare.

Plume Academy also remains dedicated in terms of ensuring that children and young people are valued, respected, listened to and taken seriously especially with regard to their safety and wellbeing. Therefore, the academy encourages young people to report any concerns, issues or worries they may have and we continue to provide the appropriate support whilst encouraging individuals to adapt safe and responsible practices at the same time.

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1. Introduction

The academy and its staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

- *(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2024)*

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- The academy’s Behaviour Policy.
- The academy’s Staff Behaviour Policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct).
- The safeguarding response to Children Missing from Education
- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Annex C of KCSIE)

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

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Our academy has a whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all systems, processes and policies. It is important that our values are understood and shared by all children, staff, parents / carers, governors and the wider school community. Only by working in partnership, can we truly keep children safe.

2. Statutory Framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the Trustees to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students of the academy.

In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures \(ESCB, 2022\)](#). Our academy also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
[Working Together \(DfE, 2018\)](#)
Education Act (2002)
[Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(ESCB\)](#)
[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
[Serious Crime Act 2015 \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
Children and Social Work Act (2017)
[Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
Sexual Offences Act (2003)
Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006
[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
[Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE, 2018\)](#)
Children Act (1989)
Children Act (2004)
[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(DfE, 2021\)](#)
[Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB, 2018\)](#)
[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)
[Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
[Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2018\)](#)
[Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - good practice for schools \(ECC, 2021\)](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our academy are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the Child Protection Policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The Trustee for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This Trustee takes strategic responsibility at trustee level for safeguarding arrangements in our academy. The Trustee ensures there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one Alternate Safeguarding Lead in place (also named on the front cover).

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

The Trustee ensures that all adults in our school who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

Will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, giving the DSL the additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out their role effectively.

The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the filters and monitoring system in place, managing them effectively and know how to escalate concerns if required to do so.

The Trustee ensures our students are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We continue to work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age students) and Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age students) and Health Education (for all students in state-funded schools) mandatory.

The Trustee and academy's Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring the academy follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. They will also ensure that the academy manages any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns), about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors). It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in the academy.

The Joint Heads of Academy

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Joint Heads of Academy work in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Trustees are followed by all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Assistant / Deputies / Alternates)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in the academy has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in the academy (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures (<https://www.escb.co.uk/media/2737/set-procedures-may2022.pdf>). They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Assistant/Alternate's will act in his absence.

All Academy staff

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

4. Types of Abuse / Specific Safeguarding Issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024) describes abuse in the following way:

“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 another child or children”

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

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Our staff will always reassure children who report abuse / victims of abuse that they are taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor make them feel they are causing a problem.

All staff in our academy are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and / or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual / non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images can be signs that children are at risk.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and

female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. In Essex, the definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

"Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our academy is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate. This [one page process map](#) sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

Children Missing from Education

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

Parents / carers should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency ([Education Access Team](#), Social Care or Police). Parents / carers are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the academy, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our academy must inform the local authority of any student who has been absent without academy permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Please refer to our [Attendance Policy](#)

We work in accordance with the Essex Protocol for children who go missing during the school day (see Appendix C), to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our academy. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Our academy recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

FGM

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/student already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
 - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
 - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
 - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems

- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from the academy, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
 - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
 - Having limited level of integration within UK society
 - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
 - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
 - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
 - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
 - Being unexpectedly absent from the academy
 - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fm@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

Mental Health

Our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns, this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community, and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our academy aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all students and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

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

Online Safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any student can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our students with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

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

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying

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

Filtering and monitoring processes

Appropriate systems are in place within the academy to ensure that filtering and monitoring processes are in line with the latest guidance. ICT Support and the Director of ICT Systems have technical responsibility for procuring, maintaining, reviewing, and providing reports on filtering and monitoring systems. All policies, procedures and strategies are reviewed regularly, with external agencies utilised to audit effectiveness. Filtering systems block inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning, with specific KCSiE reports automatically generated. Monitoring systems allow for detailed and appropriate reports to be created.

All staff in our academy are aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Online Safety / Use of Technology Policy.

Child on Child Abuse

Our academy may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at the academy, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our academy recognises that some children may abuse their peers and that this may happen in the academy, or outside of it. Any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

Our academy recognises that, even though child on child abuse / harmful sexual abuse may not be reported, it is likely that it is occurring, and we are clear there is a zero tolerance to inappropriate or abusive behaviour. We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these.

Child on Child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in the academy and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur – we do not normalise abuse, nor allow a culture where it is tolerated.

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is, and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our academy understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so.

Please refer to our Child-on-Child Abuse Policy as found on our [academy website](#)

Prevention of radicalisation

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

It requires schools and academies to:

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

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

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

Serious Violence

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

5. Children Potentially at Risk of Greater Harm

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

Our academy understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and / or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

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

Please refer to our SEND Policy

6. Procedures

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

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the academy who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2022)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to the academy must refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via [Essex Effective Support](#). The academy may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for another agency to meet with a child in the academy, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Assistant) is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the academy to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

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

7. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Assistant / Deputies / Alternates) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Joint Heads of Academy, all staff members and trustees receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all staff members and other adults

working with children in our academy receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors.

The academy ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Assistant) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

8. Professional Confidentiality

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

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Assistant) with other relevant staff members. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

9. Records and Information Sharing

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

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it on the school safeguarding platform, MyConcern as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and will include the action taken. This is flagged up to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Assistant), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the student file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the student's date of birth, or until they transfer to another academy/educational setting.

In line with statutory guidance, where a student transfers from our academy to another school / academy / educational setting (including colleges), their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy

any copies held in our academy. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may also make contact with the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

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

10. Interagency Working

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the academy is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the academy has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their academy attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the academy is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the academy is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

11. Allegations About Members of the Workforce

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Behaviour policy / Code of Conduct. The academy works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The academy has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Joint Head of Academy, as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Joint Heads of Academy will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

Where the concern involves the Joint Heads of Academy it should be reported direct to the Chair of Trustees.

The SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Joint Heads of Academy, senior named person or the Chair of Trustees must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to students and parents and HR. The academy does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

Staffing matters are confidential and the academy operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

12. Use of reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use

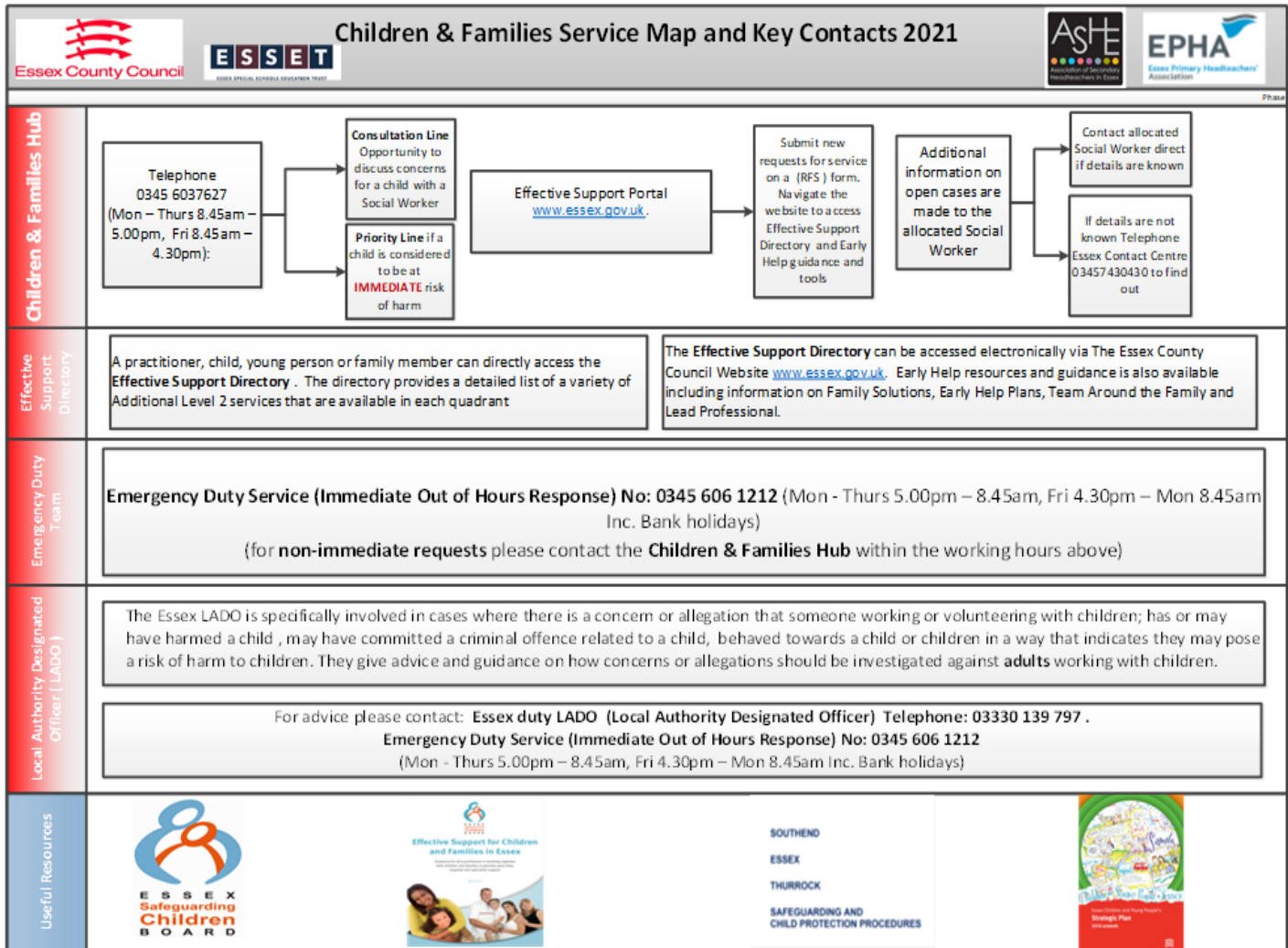
reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed. Our academy works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*see section 2*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

13. Whistleblowing

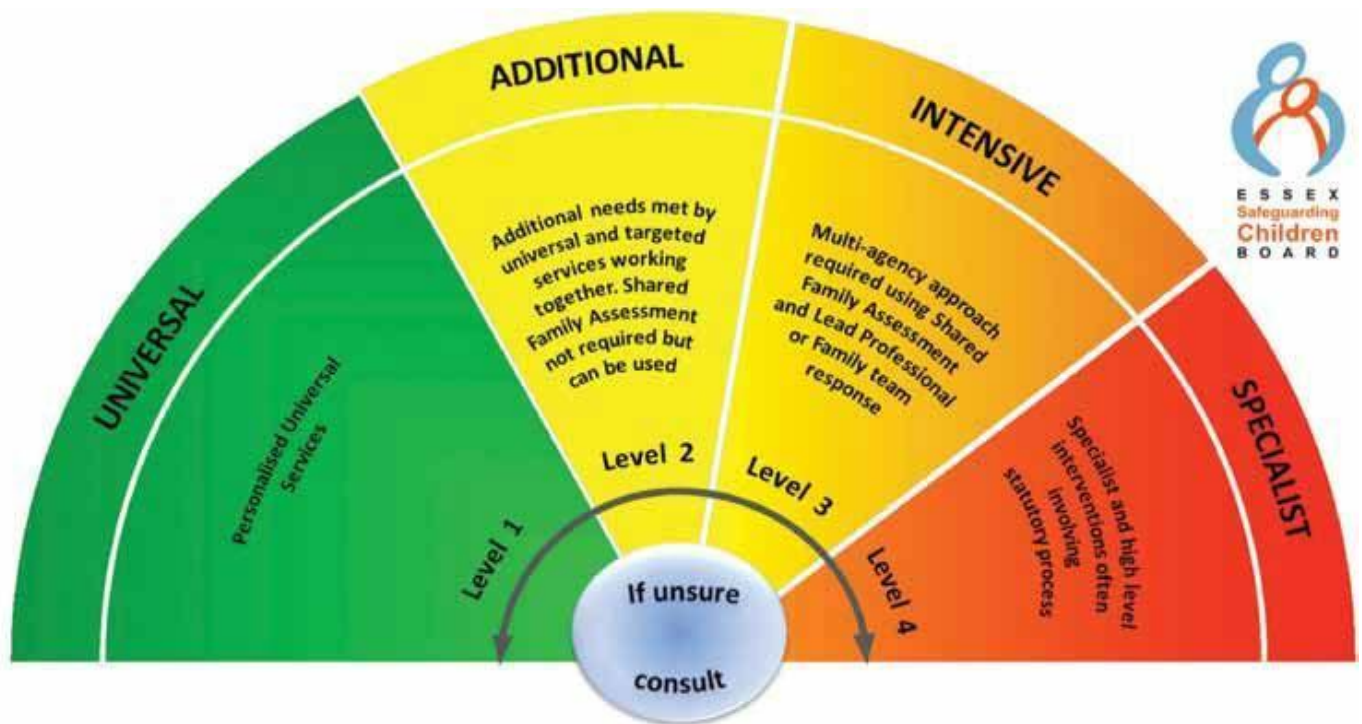
All members of staff and the wider academy community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place, and these are available in the academy Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing) on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Parents / carers or others in the wider academy community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



Appendix B: Essex Windscreen of Need and levels of intervention



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

Children with **Additional** needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools, organising additional support with local partners as needed. When an agency is supporting these children, an Early Help Plan and a Lead Professional are helpful to share information and co-ordinate work alongside the child and family.

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

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

Appendix C: Missing Child Protocol

Arrangements for Children Who Go Missing During the School Day

Definition of Missing

The definition of missing used in Essex is 'anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and his or her well-being confirmed'.

(College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance)

1. Introduction

This guidance sets out the procedures to follow when children go missing from schools / academies and other educational settings, hereafter referred to as educational settings.

Missing children are among the most vulnerable in our community. Sometimes children go missing from educational settings; when this occurs, it is important that action is taken quickly to address this, and in line with local procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with the educational setting's Child Protection Policy, and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures (SET Procedures).

- [Essex Schools Infolink](#) – for the model Child Protection Policy and other resources
- [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) – for the SET Procedures and other resources

A child going missing could be a 'one-off' incident that, following investigation, does not need further work. However, a child going missing frequently could be an indicator of underlying exploitation or other forms of child abuse.

Educational settings should consider missing episodes like any other child protection concern and take action as appropriate, for example, by contacting parents/carers, the Children & Families Hub consultation line, and in an emergency, the priority line or the police. It may be appropriate to use the Early Help Procedures (including holding a Team Around the Family meeting) to address the issues and prevent escalation. Advice should be sought, and concerns should be escalated if there is no improvement.

Where children missing frequently are open to Children's Social Care, a Missing Prevention Plan may be in place. Where this is the case, the educational setting may be set actions as part of the Missing Prevention Plan and should receive a copy if consent has been provided.

2. When a Child Goes Missing

When it is suspected that a child is missing from an educational setting this must be addressed immediately. Active steps to locate the child should be taken, for example, searching the premises and surrounding areas, contacting the child by phone, text and social media, and contacting their parents/carers. If none of these actions locate the child, then they must be

reported missing to the Police by dialling 101, **or 999 if there is a belief that the child is immediately suffering significant harm.** It is important that the police are informed of any checks already completed as it may save time and prevent duplication of tasks set by the police to locate a child.

Staff at the educational setting must inform the child's parents/carers that the child has been reported missing. Where there is a Social Worker allocated to the child, they should also be informed.

After a child has been reported missing, any further information should be communicated to the police by telephoning 101 and quoting the incident number that the police would have provided following the initial report. Further information must be passed to the police as soon as possible, as officers will continue to search for the child until informed of their return.

3. When the Child is Found

If the child is found by educational setting staff, or if the child returns to the premises of their own accord, the police must be notified immediately by dialling 101 or 999 if the matter is an emergency. It is important that this action is prioritised, as the child will remain classified as a missing person until seen by the police.

4. Essex Police

On receiving a report of a missing child, Essex Police will classify the child as missing and will respond based on the level of risk involved.

Essex Police will conduct a vulnerability interview for all children who have been missing and have returned. It may be that the child refuses to engage or speak with police. On these occasions the parents/carers can assist by reporting to officers their observations on the child's return, e.g., did the child shower, have gifts, appear unwell or under the influence of any substance, etc. The setting may also be able to contribute to this process and should provide the police with any relevant information or observations.

Each child that returns from missing will be offered a 'missing chat' (an independent return from missing interview) by a person not involved in their care. This will be facilitated by the Local Authority with responsibility for the child. Missing chats are offered to all children from Essex who go missing.



Plume, Maldon's Community Academy – Safeguarding – Student toilets and staff entry

As an academy we take the responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of our students as our main priority when the students are within our loco-parentis. Students are permitted to use the campus student toilet facilities across the academy day, and this may see them place themselves in a locked and secure location, the toilet cubicle.

To maximise our ability to safeguard students, staff are expected to follow clear guidelines as to when they enter the toilet area. The academy has taken steps to ensure we reduce the need for staff to enter the student domain of the toilets, such as CCTV cameras being placed in the sink areas of the toilet area as well as vape alarms above toilet cubicles to ensure we are aware of students that may well be placing themselves or others at risk of harm.

On the rare occasion it may occur, students may find themselves located within a toilet cubicle and may not wish to exit or they may need to be asked to exit due to the possible risk that another student maybe placing them within. Therefore, the academy staff are expected to follow the below guidelines to ensure that they do not breach any student's privacy requirements or our own safeguarding policy;

1. When entering the toilets, staff should be aware that all walkways and waiting areas outside of the individual toilet cubicles are monitored on CCTV footage.
2. Staff can enter the toilets however where possible they should seek support from a fellow colleague to support.
3. Staff should not enter the opposite gender toilet area unless it is in the case of emergency. If the purpose of entry is in the case of emergency, the staff member must state their reasons for entry and loudly state across the toilet area at the doorway.
4. If there is reason for concern regarding a toilet cubicle, a student missing or any other such reason that may place a student or others at risk, then staff in the first instance should knock on the door of the cubicle and make themselves known to the person/s in the cubicle.
5. If there is no response to the first attempt of knocking, then the staff member investigating should knock for a second attempt and state that they are concerned about the well-being of the person/s in the toilets and that they should exit the cubicle immediately.
6. If there is no response to the previous attempts, the member of staff should state loudly and clearly, they will be left with no other option but to look over the top/or underneath the door of the toilet cubicle to ensure the safety of the person/s in the cubicle.
7. If after looking under or over the top of the toilet cubicle, if a person/s is unconscious, unable to respond or to exit the toilet cubicle, a forced entry maybe needed to ensure the safeguarding of that person/s.
8. At the point of entry, the staff member would then ensure the door is open and accessible for all stakeholders to ensure support can be provided to the relevant person/s.

These measures are only ever taken in the interest of student safety, well-being and safeguarding and all staff within the academy have had this information given to them if they are required to take any such action.

If a staff member was to not follow this procedure, our relevant policies for staff conduct and safeguarding would be implemented as led and deemed appropriate by the Joint Heads of Academy and the assigned investigating officer.