Doucecroft School Services

Child Protection Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Autism Anglia: Alan Bicknell

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children’s Services: Louise Parkinson

Designated Safeguarding Officers for Doucecroft School: Hayley Fraser, Mandy Spragge, Gayle Jones, Samantha Lawrence, Kuben Reddy

Link Trustee: Andy Beevers and Judith Winfield

Last Reviewed by: DS team

Date: May 19

Ratified by Governors:

Next Review date: September 2019
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DOUCECROFT SCHOOL

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. 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, 2018)

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018)
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the school 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 B of KCSIE)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (everyone under the age of 18) (all students at Doucecroft School will be protected via the child protection policy regardless of age, unless signposted to Adult safeguarding by the Child Protection Hub). is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s 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

2. Statutory framework

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

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Essex are the responsibilities of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Procedures (ESCB, 2018).

Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):
Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018)
Working Together (HMG, 2018)
Education Act (2002)
Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB, 2017)
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)
Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015)
Children and Social Work Act (2017)
Education (Pupil 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, 2018)
Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide (ESCB, 2018)
Keeping pupils and staff safe – management of behaviour in schools, including use of physical contact and restrictive / non-restrictive physical intervention to address difficult and harmful behaviour (ESCB, 2018)

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 are:-

- Louise Parkinson - Head Teacher
- Kuben Reddy – Assistant Head Teacher
- Samantha Lawrence – Assistant Head Teacher
- Mandy Spragge - Care Manager
- Gayle Jones - Behaviour Support Team Manager
- Hayley Fraser – Head of F.E

Photographs and names of DSL and DSO are displayed in all settings across the school and residential services.

All the above members of staff undertake the Designated Person training and, where appropriate, the refresher training every two years. DSL training includes safeguarding children with disabilities.
It is the shared responsibility of the Designated Officers to ensure that all child protection procedures are followed within the school services, and to make appropriate, timely referrals to Essex Social Care in accordance with SET procedures.

It is the responsibility of the Designated Officer to ensure all staff employed, including temporary staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors within the school services are aware of the school's child protection procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.

Autism Anglia's Designated Lead for Safeguarding ensures there is an effective child protection policy in place and that this is updated annually. Trustees will not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached.

The Head Teacher and Care Manager working with Autism Anglia's Director of Human Resources, is responsible for ensuring that the school follows safer recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children/young people (see Recruitment Policy). All managers involved in the recruitment process, plus the HR administrator for the school have undergone the Safer Recruitment Training.

The Head Teacher provides an annual report for the governing body and trustees detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by all staff and other relevant issues.

The Head Teacher and Care Manager will ensure an annual Safeguarding Audit is carried out in line with their responsibilities under sections157 of the Education Act, 2002.

The School Services will publish its Child Protection policy on its school website alongside 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2018)

The school services will actively promote online safety on its website and signpost stakeholders to information that will keep children safe online (see E-Safety Policy).

The school services provide e-safety training to all staff, and it is made available to parents.

The governing body

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

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The governing body ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and at least one designated safeguarding officer in place to act as deputy (also named on the front cover).

The governing body ensures the school contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.
The governing body ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The governing body ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place. Our children will be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and safeguarding team)

The designated safeguarding lead in school takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (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 (Family Operations Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and other agencies as required.

If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, a member of the safeguarding team of designated officers will act in their absence.

The Head teacher

The Head teacher works in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, she ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

All school staff

Everyone is our school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. 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 school 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 a designated safeguarding officer— they do not assume that others have taken action.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues
Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018) defines abuse as the 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 another child or children”

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Our school is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). Staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

**Peer on peer abuse**

Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of peer on peer 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.

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, ‘sexting’ or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. 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 school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

Doucecroft School provides a high level of staff supervision to ensure that the difficulties student shave with social interaction does not impact on their safety and wellbeing. The school has robust Anti Bullying procedures and the PSHE curriculum supports student understanding of their own behaviour and that of others.

**Children with special educational needs**

**Safeguarding children with Autism**
The Special Needs of Children/Young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

This policy document has been developed recognising the needs of children/young people with ASC. Consideration is given to the profile of needs of children/young people with ASC with regard to the application of the major elements of this policy: Doucecroft School recognises that children with disabilities have additional vulnerabilities.

- An awareness of an individual child/young person’s strengths and difficulties.
- Children/young people may present with unpredictable, unprecedented, uninhibited and impulsive behaviour without regard to, or understanding, the consequences of their actions.
- The nature of autism, with particular needs in the areas of communication, social interaction, and creativity/flexibility, including problem-solving, places children/young people in a position of vulnerability. These difficulties may not be outwardly apparent to others and in safeguarding each child/young person, significant demands are placed upon staff and carers.
- Individual Risk Assessments identify the potential risks and detail the controls and actions required to minimise risks.
- Children and young people have the right to have times of being alone and in private, and it is neither appropriate nor desirable for staff to be with the child/young person at all times in either school or residential. Levels of support and supervision are based on regular assessments and reviews of each child’s/young person’s needs.
- Children and young people are entitled to exercise their independence on a gradual progression towards self-advocacy, self-reliance and the acquisition of life skills is promoted.
- Children and young people with ASC can display behaviours that may be interpreted as possible indicators of abuse, e.g. rocking, self-injurious behaviour. Therefore, having knowledge of a child’s/young person’s profile is important in order to recognise behaviours that are unusual for that child/young person.
- Social communication difficulties in children/young people with ASC means that they do not always mean what they say, or say what they mean. However, disclosures must be taken seriously.
- Working with families must take into account that families may have difficulty communicating with their child, there may be increased challenges in supporting their child at home and families may be reluctant to report concerns as they may fear services will be lost as a result.

We welcome individuality and provide a safe and positive learning environment, to enable our students to thrive and meet their full potential preparing them for their future.
• Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip children and young people with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, to be healthy, to enjoy life and achieve, to develop skills for economic well-being and to develop healthy relationships

• Include in the curriculum material which will help children and young people develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills

• Protect children and young people from harm and to ensure that they are taught across both school and residential in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others

• Provide a 24 hour curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs across both school and residential.

• Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies

• Provide an environment in both school and residential that supports and encourages children and young people to develop independence and to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their life.

• Ensure information on outside agencies such as “Childline” are displayed for children and young people around the school and the residential setting.

• Provide a staff/student ratio appropriate to the needs of the child/young person. Staff are trained and have an awareness of child protection issues, e.g. indicators, procedures etc. It is important to remember that staff have a duty to refer concerns or suspicion of harm or abuse. Withholding information could place a child/young person at greater risk and result in disciplinary action.

• Ensure staff are trained to keep children safe and that this knowledge is regularly updated through workshops, questionnaires and annual safeguarding training days.

• Provide robust arrangements for the site security, which is understood and applied by all staff

Children missing from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, so we are able to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

The school record attendance twice daily and unexplained absence is followed up (See attendance policy) absence is reported to funding authorities.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. 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 school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate. This one page process map sets out arrangements for CSE in Essex.

Child criminal exploitation

Child criminal exploitation is a geographically widespread form of harm which is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity (county lines is when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas and seaside towns). Our school works with key partners locally to prevent and respond to child criminal exploitation.

Domestic abuse

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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 local safeguarding procedures.

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 is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

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

It requires schools to:

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

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 school works in accordance with local procedures for PREVENT and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate.

Our school assesses the risk of these safeguarding risks for the students at Doucecroft School

5. Procedures

Our school works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help 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 school 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, a member of the safeguarding team).

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, 2018)
Any staff member or visitor to the school will refer any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy 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 referred to the Children and Families Hub via the Essex Effective Support portal. Wherever possible, the school 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 the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. 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, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (member of the safeguarding team) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school 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 (member of the safeguarding team) and how to share concerns with them. Staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. There may be other adults in school who rarely work unsupervised, more usually working alongside members of the school staff. However, the Designated Lead will ensure they are aware of the school's policy and the identity of the Designated Leads.

Abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to a Designated Lead.

The Designated Lead will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Family Operations Hub by telephone and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the SET Procedures (ESCB, 2018) and in ‘Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex’ (ESCB, 2017).

The telephone referral to Family Operations Hub must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours on the Family Operations Request for Support form. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of the person who initially received the disclosure plus any advice given.
The school will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with the parents/carers unless to do so could place the child/young person at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Family Operations Hub and/or Essex Police.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child/young person and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration of the case with the Designated Lead.

Safeguarding details will be kept prominently displayed in the school to ensure that all staff have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

**Doucecroft School Services Procedures using the ‘Pink and Blue Form’ System**

Form A (Pink) is used to raise a concern about:

- Poor attendance
- Changes in appearance and dress
- Changed behaviour
- Unexplained or recurring health problems
- Emotional well-being of the child e.g. uncharacteristically withdrawn or nervous
- Deterioration in educational progress
- Any discussion with parents or carers about concerns, including their response and information about home conditions.
- Peer on Peer abuse

Sequence of Actions using Form A:

For staff:

- To delay in reporting a suspicion of significant harm could be very serious; time is crucial. It is imperative that any form must be completed as soon as possible and submitted within a short period of time.
- All staff have a duty to co-operate fully with any inquiry that may be necessary.
- Listen to and accept what the child/young person tells you – **do not ask leading questions.**
- Any concern must be put in writing (using Form A – Pink Form).
- Forms are accessible on the shared drive, in the classrooms, boarding houses and in the School office.
- The form must be in a sealed envelope with ‘Child Protection safeguarding team written on it.
- It is important that concerns are not discussed with either the child/young person or with colleagues
- Staff must not make any physical examination or pursue enquiries beyond the initial statement.

For Designated Leads:
The Designated Leads make a decision as to how to proceed, having assessed the nature of the concern; the decision will depend upon the nature of the concern itself and other relevant factors, such as knowledge of the child/young person's background, previous history, and current circumstances. Two designated officers will consult on what action is appropriate.

It may be necessary to seek advice from the Child Protection Team or to make a referral.

Once the Designated Lead has Form A, the appropriate pro-forma will be completed, noting the reasons for the decision being made, the monitoring and reviewing arrangements, any response to action taken and any further action required.

The Designated Officer who received the form will acknowledge receipt of the form via email within 24 hours of receipt but staff may not receive feedback on the outcome.

Any case of child abuse must be dealt with in accordance with the approved Guidelines and Procedure – no action should be taken beyond what is set out.

It is important to remember that the child/young person’s welfare and safety is paramount.

All action taken should be in the child/young person’s best interests.

Listen to and accept what the child/young person tells you – do not ask leading questions. However, it may be necessary to ask a non-leading question to clarify what is being said, e.g. ‘Daddy was really bad to me’ would need to be clarified to be assured of the need to refer, or not.

Form B (Blue) is used if there is a suspicion or belief that a child/young person has suffered significant harm.

**Sequence of Actions using Form B:**

- Once completed, the form B must be handed to a Designated Lead in a sealed envelope.
- The on-call rota should reflect which Designated Lead should be contacted in the event of an urgent child protection issue.
- Concerns must not be discussed with either the child/young person or with colleagues.
- The Designated Lead is responsible for co-ordinating action within the school and for liaising with outside agencies.
- It is imperative that any action is taken quickly and decisively when staff refer matters of suspected significant harm.
- Where Authorities have sent a copy of their Child Protection Procedures (held in the office) such procedures must be followed once steps 1 and 2 below have been carried out.
- Where Authorities have not sent a copy of their Child Protection Procedure, steps 1 and 2 must be followed then the procedures of Essex Social Services adhered to.

**Step 1**

If the child/young person is in need of urgent medical attention, arrange for this to be undertaken at the nearest hospital immediately – Colchester General. Parents should be notified. At the same time inform the Social Services Department in whose area the school and the child’s/young person’s home is situated (in that order). Whenever a child/young person is taken to hospital, and it is suspected that they have suffered significant harm, the medical staff need to be informed, and the involvement of a paediatrician or police surgeon may be required. This applies to all categories of harm. All information must be recorded.
and a report of the referral completed within 24 hours and sent to the Family Operations Hub / or the Children’s Social Care Department in the area in which the child is living. Use of Inter Agency Referral Form (Children & Young People) is required. This form may be posted, transmitted by fax, or sent as an email, password protected.

(b) Step 2

In all other cases, any concern made to the Designated Lead must be considered impartially. If there is evidence of significant harm or reasonable suspicion that significant harm has occurred, immediate contact with the Social Services Department in whose area the school (Essex) and the child/young person’s home is situated is made (in that order) to outline the facts and to determine the next steps according to their Child Protection Procedures. Essex and the child’s/young person’s home authority will then discuss and agree which of them should lead any investigation/inquiry. Once a referral has been accepted by the Essex Social Care, it becomes their responsibility for determining what action is to be taken, including advising the parents and the Children with Disabilities team. It may not be appropriate for staff to notify parents. This should only be done when this does not place the child or young person at an increased risk of significant harm. All information must be recorded and a report of the referral completed within 24 hours and sent to the Family Operations Hub/ or the Children’s Social Care Department in the area in which the child is living. This form may be posted, transmitted by fax or sent as an email, password protected.

6. Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and members of the safeguarding team) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Head teacher, all staff members and governors 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 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 is kept for all staff and governors.

The school ensures that the designated safeguarding lead (member of the safeguarding team) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate

7. 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 pupils), or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding 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 lead (member of the safeguarding team) 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.

8. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school 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 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 signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (member of the safeguarding team), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

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

Where a pupil/young person transfers from our school to another school / 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 school. 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 pupil/young person joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

In the interests of confidentiality, reports relating to concerns about a child/young person’s welfare or suspicion of abuse must not be recorded in their Day Book.
In Doucecroft School Services the Designated Leads hold monthly meetings to discuss any issues and ensure consistency in procedures. They contribute to a wider Autism Anglia Safeguarding steering group.

9. Interagency working

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference 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). Whoever attends will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If a child is subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the school 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.

10. 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 school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2018) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information on this.

The school 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 will be referred to the Head teacher (or the Assistant Head teacher/Care Manager in their absence). This role is distinct from the designated safeguarding lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the school operates within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

Where the concern involves the Head teacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governors.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2018) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Head teacher, senior named person or the Chair of Governors 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 pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

11. Promoting positive mental health and resilience in school

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

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

The school has two mental health champions and a number of staff who have completed mental health awareness training.

Supporting Vulnerable Pupils and Young People

Our school recognises that children/young people who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

Our school may be the only stable, secure, safe element in the lives of children/young people at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn or display behaviours towards other children and young people.

Our school will endeavour to support all children and young people through:

- The curriculum to encourage our pupils/young people to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils/young people and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school's positive behaviour management policy
- A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure the child/young person knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the children and young people and their families.
- A commitment to develop open and honest and supportive relationships with parents/carers, with the child's/young person's best interest as paramount
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in all child protection situations
• Recognition that children/young people with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are vulnerable to abuse so staff who work in any capacity with children/young people with disabilities will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse
• Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children/young people may also be vulnerable and in need of support or 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 school 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. The school has a comprehensive Positive Behaviour policy and an Appropriate Positive Touch policy.

13. Whistleblowing

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

All staff members are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the school’s Code of Conduct / Whistleblowing policy.

We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection / safeguarding concerns. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
Appendix A: Children and Families Hub flow chart
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: PREVENT REFERRAL FLOW CHART.

Safeguarding concerns about extremism or radicalisation are discussed with the Children and Families Hub. Where there is a radicalisation risk, a referral to Channel Panel may be required (school will be advised if so). A 'Vulnerable to Radicalisation' referral form to be completed and sent to Essex Police

Referrals received by Essex Police - Essex Police gather information to provide to partners to enable them to check their own records

Essex Police assess risk and liaise with local authority PREVENT Lead

Prevent Adult Lead to review the referral for adults
Prevent Children and Families Lead to review for children

Prevent coordinator to make checks on local authority case management system and formally request information from partners on Channel Panel and/or other agency as required

Agencies/partners return information to the Police via Prevent secure email - information is provided to Police by the PREVENT Lead for Education (Jo Barclay, Safeguarding Adviser to Schools)

Essex Police risk re-assess and decide with Channel Chair whether Channel Panel required - school to be invited to attend if appropriate
Appendix D: Definitions

1. Definition of a Child:

A child/young person is a person under the age of 18 unless national laws recognise the age of majority as younger (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Any reference to a child/young person include in addition to a person under the age of 18 ‘a person aged 18, 19 or 20 who … (b) has a learning disability’ (Children Act 2004, Section, (2) (b))

2. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child/young person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child/young person’s health or his/her development. It may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment). It may involve failure to protect a child/young person from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s/young person’s emotional needs and failure to ensure educational needs are met. Possible indicators are:

- Poor growth for which no medical cause is found, with a dramatic improvement on a normal diet away from home
- Dirty appearance, unkempt
- Medical needs of a child/young person unmet, eg failure to seek medical advice, missed immunisation, failure to give prescribed medication
- Developmental delay
- Repeated failure to prevent (accidental) injury

3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child/young person. This is known as Fabricated Illness. Repeated injuries may be an indication of abuse. Possible indicators are:

- Bruising. Uncommon sites for accidental bruising are the back of legs, buttocks, mouth, cheeks, behind the ear, stomach, chest, under the arm, genital/rectal area, neck, grasp/finger marks, outline bruising (belt marks, hand prints), symmetrical bruising (ears, eyes), different age bruising (especially in the same area).
- Bites. Clear impressions of teeth, oval or crescent in shape. If the mark measures more than 3cm across it is likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.
- Burns/scalds. Difficult to distinguish between accidental/non-accidental burns. Suspicious burns may be those with clear outlines, burns of uniform depth over a large area and also splash marks above the main burn.
- Fracture/joint injuries. Rib fractures, skull fractures, single fracture with multiple bruising.
• **Fabricated or Induced Illness.** Characterised by a child/young person receiving medical attention for symptoms that have been either falsified or directly induced by a carer, e.g. non-accidental poisoning, with a view to causing a child/young person illness; fabricating symptoms which result in extensive medical investigations being carried out or inappropriate medication given; alleged severe disease due to allergies but no objective evidence of food intolerance or allergy; deliberate suffocation to simulate respiratory distress or failure; failure to thrive due to withholding food from a child; unexplained or recurrent illness; discrepancy between medical findings and history given by carer; unexplained presence of drugs/chemicals in the child’s blood, stools, urine or stomach fluids; unexplained presence of blood in the child’s urine, stools or stomach fluids; symptoms that do not occur when the child and carer are separated.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involved forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, e.g. involving a child/young person in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging the child/young person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Possible indicators are:

- **Physical.** Difficulty walking, sitting down, stained or bloodied underclothing, pain or itching in genital area, bruising, bleeding, injury to external genitalia, vaginal discharge, pain in passing urine.
- **Behavioural.** Age inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, promiscuity, wary of adults, running away from home, unusual avoidance of touch, over compliance with requests of others, frequent complaints of unexplained abdominal pain, self harming, and mutilation.

There may be cases when a child/young person does not exhibit any signs or symptoms, but concerns arise from other sources.

5. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/young person, which causes severe adverse effects on the child’s/young person’s emotional development. It may be conveyed to the child/young person that they are unloved, worthless or inadequate. It may involve causing a child/young person to feel frightened or in danger or conversely over-protecting the child/young person so that they prevent normal social contact or physical activity. Emotional abuse may have devastating long-term effects on a child’s/young person’s mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. Possible indicators are:

- Excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- Low self-esteem, apathy, fearful, withdrawn, seek to please, over-ready to relate to anyone (even strangers)
6. Significant Harm

This section can be difficult to define. Harm is described as ill treatment, impairment of health (physical or mental) and development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural). The significance of harm is made by comparing the child’s/young person’s health or development with a standard health or development reasonably expected of a similar child/young person. Suspected harm should be viewed in the context of ‘reasonable’ and ‘good enough’ parenting. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and extent of harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect and the degree of threat and coercion. Significant harm may be as a result of a single traumatic event, or a compilation of events over a longer period of time.

7. Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding (University of Bedfordshire, Carlene Firmin 2017)

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore children’s social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

The pupils/young people at Doucecroft School come from two funding authorities, Essex and Suffolk, with similar numbers from each authority. As a school based in Essex we work closely with Essex children’s safeguarding board and with social workers from both Essex and Suffolk to support young people and keep them safe. All pupils/young people at Doucecroft have an autistic spectrum condition. Many pupils/young people live in rural communities however a significant number live in more urban areas such as Colchester, Ipswich, Chelmsford and Braintree. These areas all pose risks from “County lines” type activities which put students at risk. The majority of students are transported to school by their local authority with the rest being brought in by parents, no pupils/young people travel to school independently.

Students at Doucecroft have complex autisms which for many creates additional vulnerabilities linked to their disability. However for many it also means that they do not freely access their local community and, as they get older, become more socially isolated therefore less likely to be at risk from their peers. The context for these students remains very much within the Child, home and family sphere.
For a small number of pupils/young people who seek peer interaction and mix more widely in their local community either physically or on line contextual risk are a real threat to their safety. Autism creates a level of social naivety which makes it difficult for students to judge the intent in others. They may seek acceptance in social groups through agreeing to action for which they cannot imagine the consequences. They may be easily led by the promise of reward and acceptance by a group. The dangers on line are many fold for students who may have IT skills way beyond their ability to understand the consequences of their actions. For these pupils/young people the contextual issues may spread beyond home and family into peers and neighbourhood. Due to high levels of staff supervision and robust Anti bullying strategies school is a low risk area for these pupils/young people.

To support pupils/young people the school:-

- Works closely with local safeguarding teams
- Has a robust e safety curriculum which helps to educate pupils/young people on staying safe on line
- Has a PSHE curriculum and Behaviour Policy which supports student understanding of themselves and others
- Work with parents to help them recognise the risks their child faces.
- Trains all staff to help them to understand the additional vulnerabilities’ of pupils/young people with Autism
- Monitors school attendance closely
- Works with transport providers regarding journey’s to school