

ESSEX OUTDOORS - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

• Introduction

Local authorities have overarching duties to safeguard both children and adults from abuse. It is everyone's responsibility to recognise suspected or actual abuse and to take appropriate action.

In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child/vulnerable adult-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child/vulnerable adult.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2019)

This Child Protection Policy is for all staff. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for Essex Outdoors. It should be read in conjunction with the Essex Outdoors Code of Practice 2022.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children 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

The Care Act 2014 provides the statutory framework for adult safeguarding and for Safeguarding Adults Boards. Chapter 14 of the Care Act Statutory Guidance covers safeguarding and replaces the No Secrets guidance. Essex Outdoors is committed to maximising people's choice, control and inclusion and protecting their human rights by ensuring that safe and effective working practices are in place.

• Statutory framework

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on educational settings 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) for children and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) for

vulnerable adults. In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the SET Child Protection Procedures (ESCB 2022)

Our Centre works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)

Working Together (2018)

Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB,

2015) Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2015)

Data Protection Act 1998

Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Guidelines

Care Act 2014

Mental Capacity Act 2005

SET MCA policy and guidance 2016

- **Definitions of a vulnerable adult (taken from Care Act**

2014): Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of these needs),
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

- **Roles and responsibilities**

All adults working with or on behalf of children/vulnerable adults 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 Centres and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection/vulnerable adult procedures. The names of those in our Centre with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The designated safeguarding lead in Centre takes lead responsibility for managing child/vulnerable adult protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection/vulnerable adult policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in the Centre (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, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

All staff

Everyone in our Centre has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children/vulnerable adults can learn and participate. All staff members are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and liaising with the designated safeguarding lead to report any concerns. All staff members are aware of and follow the processes 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.

• **Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues for children**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019) 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 (e.g. via the internet). They 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 centre staff 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.

Peer on peer abuse

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), on-line abuse, gender-based abuse, 'sexting' or sexually harmful behaviour. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in the Centre and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

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

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- SEND children can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. 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 Centre is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE

and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead is the named CSE Lead in Centre on these issues and will work with other agencies as appropriate.

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 Centre will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing 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 providers 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 staff understand how to identify those who may benefit from this support and how to make a referral.

- **Types of abuse/specific safeguarding issues for Vulnerable Adults**

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect

- **Procedures**

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 Safeguarding Adult Board Guidelines (ESAB, 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2015)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our Centre they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) and how to share concerns with them.

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the Centre 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 deputy designated safeguarding lead).

The designated safeguarding lead or the deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Family Operations Hub by telephone and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the SET procedures (ESCB, 2022) and in 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2015).

The telephone referral to the Family Operations Hub will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours with 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 plus any other relevant information or advice given.

The Centre will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with the parents or carers, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Family Operations Hub and / or Essex Police.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child/vulnerable adult and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the Centre to ensure that all staff have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

- **Training**

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. In addition, all staff members receive relevant safeguarding and child protection updates and training as required.

- **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 a pupil/vulnerable adult

and will not agree with a pupil/vulnerable adult to keep a secret as, where there is a safeguarding concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

All staff members are informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way is held and treated confidentially.

- **Records and information sharing**

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 1998 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 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.

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

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record 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 (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

- **Interagency working**

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the Centre is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference called for children 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 Centre has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

- **Allegations about members of the workforce**

Allegation concerning staff or volunteers must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). LADOs give advice and guidance on how concerns or allegations about adults working with children should be investigated. The LADO should be contacted if you have concerns or receive a complaint or allegation that a worker/volunteer has:

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

There are four LADOs for Essex County Council and they are based within the Children's Safeguarding Team. They can be contacted by phone on **03330 139 797** or by e-mail: lado@essex.gov.uk (Please note this is not a secure address so any information sent must be password protected).

Any referral should be followed up with a referral form. This can be accessed via the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board website](#).

If a concern is raised outside of office hours, and an immediate referral to Social Care is required, this should be made to Essex Social care on 0845 606 1212. The LADO should then be informed at the first available opportunity.

Whistleblowing

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

All staff are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with Essex County Council'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

Contact Information

