

SKILLS ACADEMY SOLUTIONS LIMITED

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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. 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, 2016)

This Child Protection Policy is for all staff, parents, volunteers and the wider academy community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our academy. It should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016) and all other relevant academy policies.

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

2. Statutory framework

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

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, 2017).

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016)

Working Together(HMG, 2015)

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)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2015)

Data Protection Act 1998

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)

Searching, screening and confiscation (DfE, 2014)

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, 2017),

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)

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 our academy and our partnership provider who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our academy and our partnership provider with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding leads) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

The Directors

- The Directors ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our academy are effective and comply with the law at all times. They ensure that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.
- The Directors ensure there is a named designated safeguarding lead in place.
- The Directors ensure 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 Directors ensure 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 Directors ensure that students are taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that that appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place. Our students will be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The Directors and academy managers are responsible for ensuring the academy 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. It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The designated safeguarding lead in the academy takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. She ensures 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 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 partnership provider designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

Academy Managers

The Academy managers work in accordance with the requirements upon all academy staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Director are followed by all staff.

All Academy staff

Everyone in our academy has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our students can learn. All staff members are prepared to identify students 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 (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to if there is a need to do so.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016) 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 academy is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, so we are able to identify students who may be in need of help or protection.

Peer on peer abuse

Our academy may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of students 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 students. Our academy recognises that some students 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.

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 academy and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use tutorials to help students 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 peer on peer abuse.

Full details of the academy’s arrangements for prevention of and response to issues relating to peer on peer abuse can be found in the Learner Handbook and our Learner Resource Packs.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

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

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the student’s disability, without further exploration
- Students with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Childs 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 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 is the named CSE Lead in the academy 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 academy 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 us 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 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. (*Appendix B*)

5. 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, 2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015)
- ‘Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex’ (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

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

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 partnership provider designated safeguarding lead).

The designated safeguarding lead will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Children and Families Operations Hub by telephone (*Appendix A*) and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the SET procedures (ESCB, 2017) and in 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017).

The telephone referral to the Family Operations Hub will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours with the Children and Families Request for Support form. Essential information will include the student's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the student's parents are aware of the referral plus any other relevant information or advice given.

Wherever possible, the academy will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a student 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 student at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to seek advice from the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police in making decisions about when it is appropriate to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a student 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 school to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

6. Training

The designated safeguarding lead undertakes Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Academy managers and all staff members 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 students effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff.

7. Professional confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with the students, 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 lead (or deputy) 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

Where there are concerns about the safety of a student, 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 academy is clear about the need to record any concern held about a student or students within our academy, 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 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, 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 student transfers from our academy to another educational setting 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 a student joins our academy, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

9. 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 child protection conference called for students on the academy 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 student 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 student's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the student at further risk of significant harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead will inform the student'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 Handbook and Code of Conduct.

The academy works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2017) 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 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 will be referred to the Directors (or the Academy Managers 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 academy managers, it should be reported direct to the Directors

SET procedures (ESCB, 2017) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Directors 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. The academy does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

11. Whistleblowing

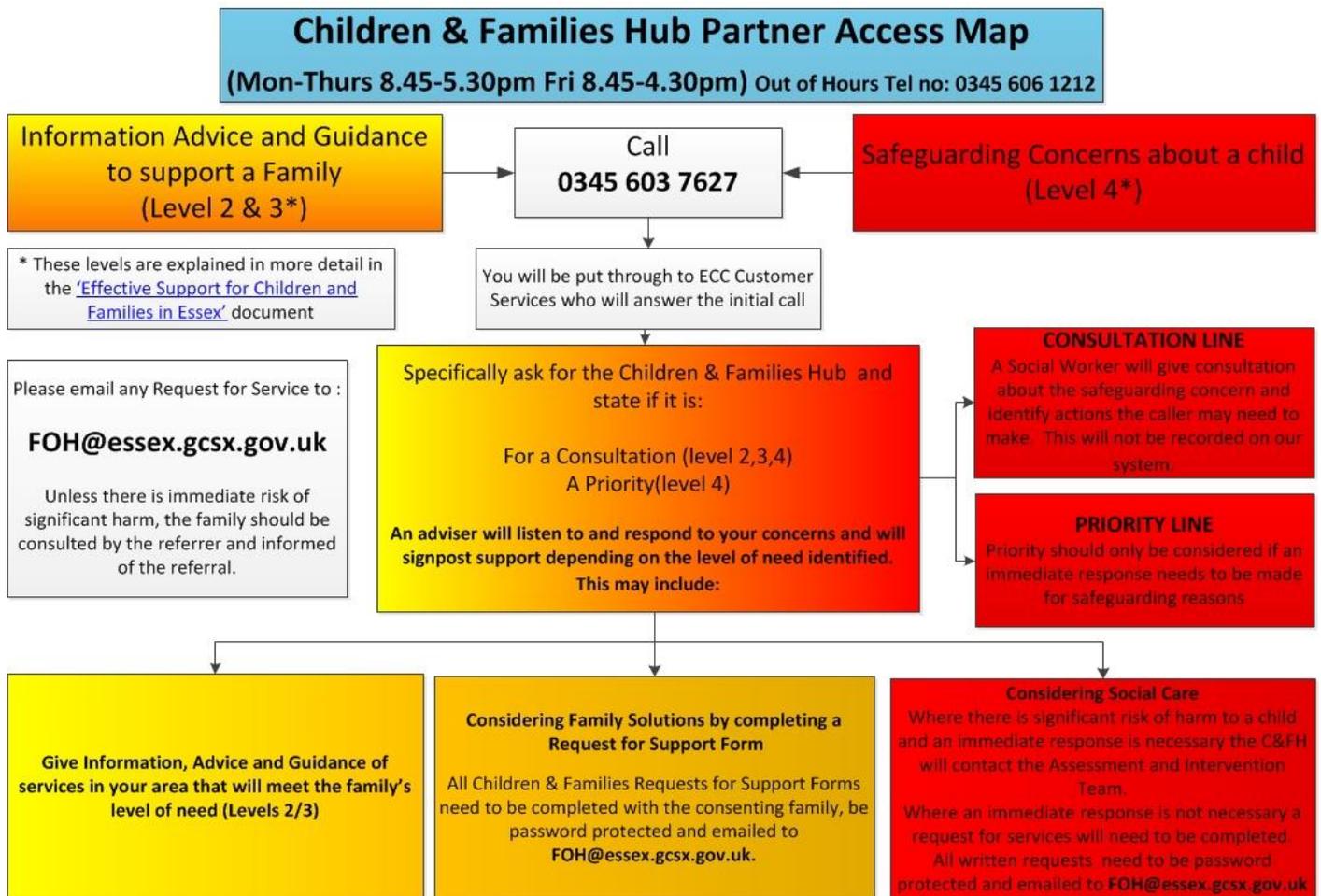
Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider academy community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example students in the academy or members of the public.

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

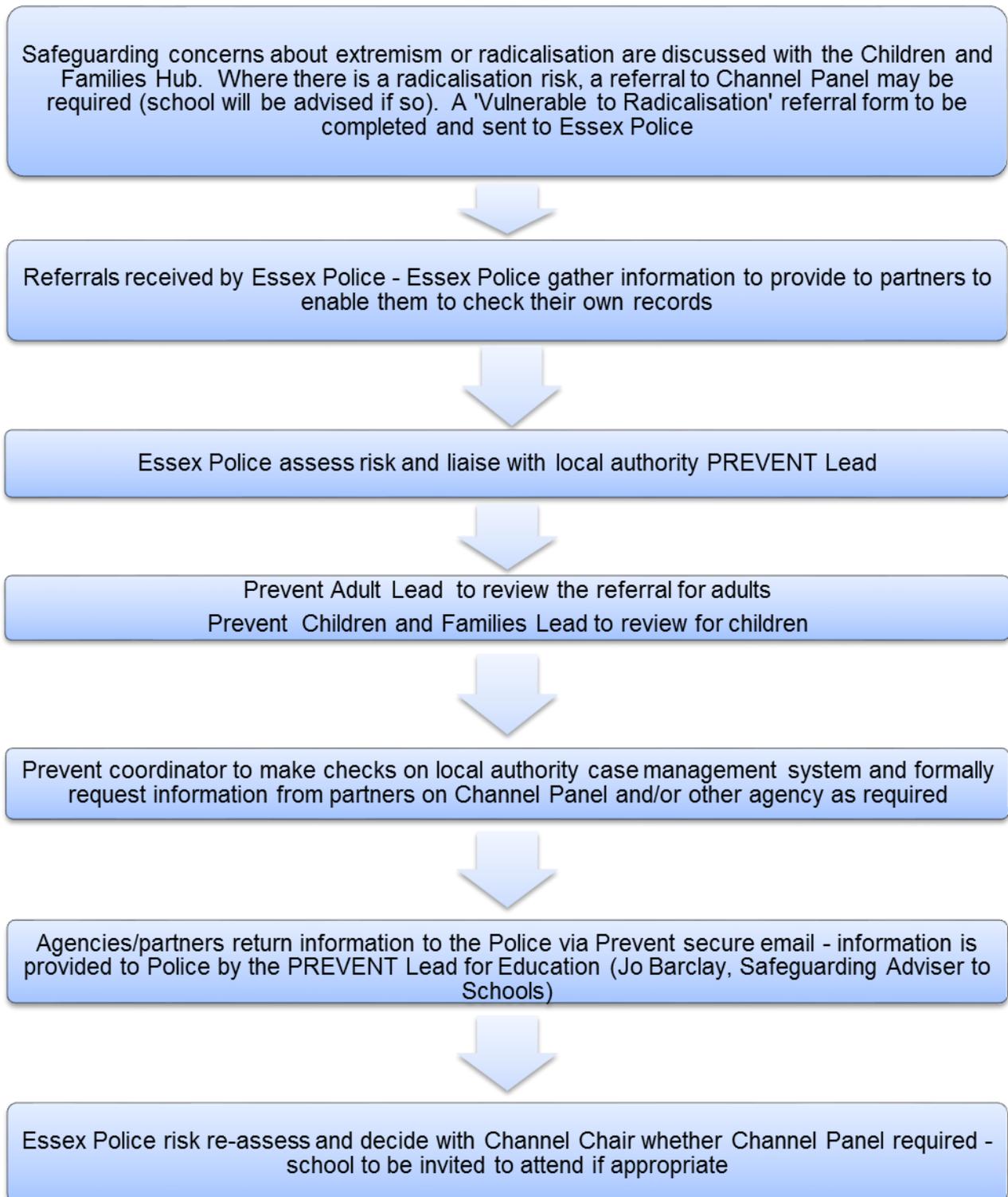
We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection / safeguarding concerns. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: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

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

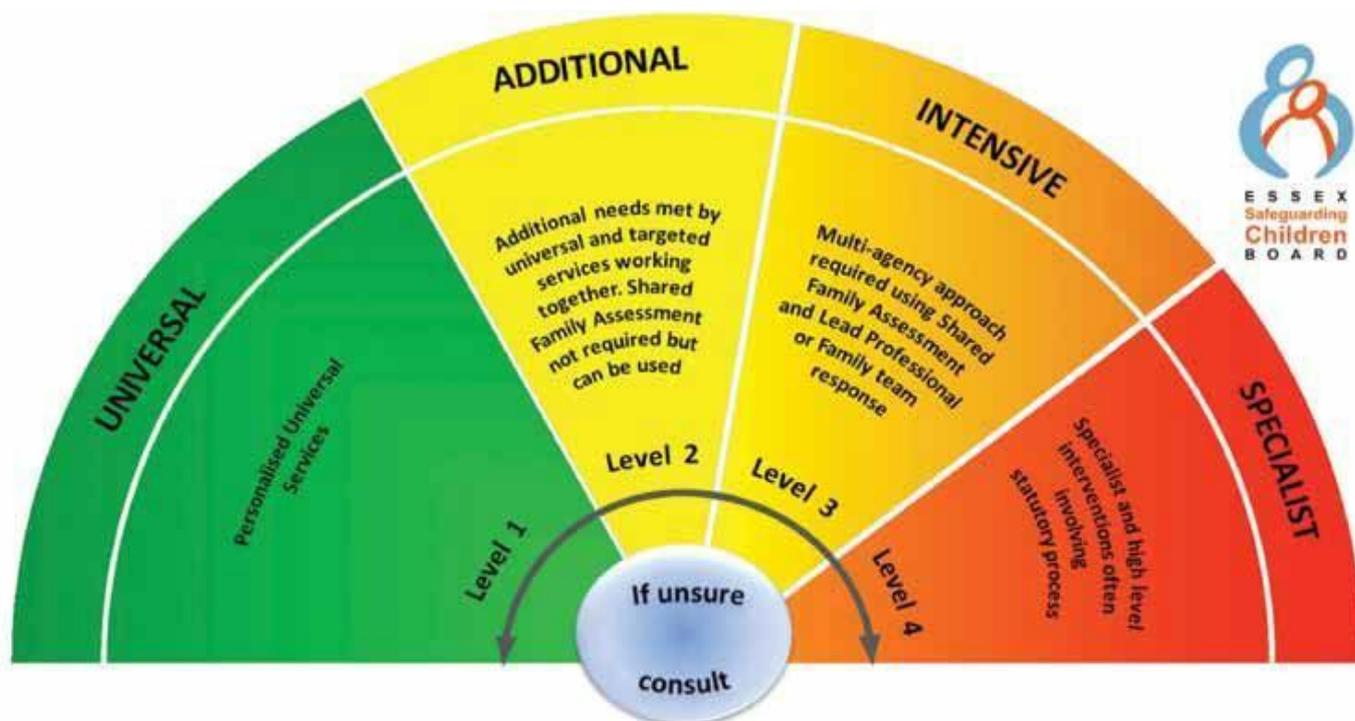
Appendix A: Children and Families Hub flow chart



Appendix B: PREVENT Referral Flowchart



Appendix C: 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