

# Happy Hill Essex CIO

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



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# Happy Hill Essex CIO

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR

### 1. Introduction

Happy Hill Essex CIO and their staff/Volunteers 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 should make sure their approach is what is in the best interests of the child.

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, June 2023)
- the Behaviour policy.
- the Staff Code of Conduct
- the safeguarding response to children missing
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

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

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

### 2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together \(DfE, updated July 2022\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county.

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

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

[Working Together \(DfE, 2022\)](#)

Education Act (2011)

[Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](#) (ESCB, 2021)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)

Children and Social Work Act (2017)

[Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2023\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)

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

[Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (DfE, 2022)

Children Act (2004)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)

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

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (DfE, 2021)

[Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB, 2018\)](#)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2021\)](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2020\)](#)

[Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

[Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)

[Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - safe practice for schools and educational settings \(ESCB 2020\)](#)

### **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 setting and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are as follows:

Designated safeguarding Lead – Heather Hill

Register address: Braintree Enterprise Centre, Block A - Unit 10, 46-48 Springwood Drive, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2YN

Mrs Heather Hill - Founder of Happy Hill

Email address [happyhillessex@outlook.com](mailto:happyhillessex@outlook.com)

Charity registration number: 1193856

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### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)**

The designated safeguarding lead has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone is aware of these procedures and that they are always followed. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care (Children and Families Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. They work with the local authority and the ESCB as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The deputy/deputies designated safeguarding lead is / are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy/deputies designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

### **All**

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

### **Key person supervision**

Staff taking on the role of key person must have supervision meetings in line with this procedure. Supervision meetings are held every 4-6 weeks for key persons. Key persons are supervised by the setting manager or deputy. Supervision meetings are held in a confidential space suitable for the task. Key persons should prepare for supervision by having the relevant information to hand.

The child focused element of supervision meetings must include discussion about:

- the development and well-being of the supervisee's key children and offer staff opportunity to raise concerns in relation to any child attending. Safeguarding concerns must always be reported to the designated person immediately and not delayed until a scheduled supervision meeting
- reflection on the journey a child is making and potential well-being or safeguarding concerns for the children they have key responsibility for
- promoting the interests of children.
- coaching to improve professional effectiveness based on a review of observed practice/teaching
- reviewing plans and agreements from previous supervisions including any identified learning needs for the member of staff

During supervision staff can discuss any concerns they have about inappropriate behaviour displayed by colleagues, but must never delay until a scheduled supervision to raise concerns. Staff are reminded of the need to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and

warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children that have occurred during their employment. New information is referred immediately to the designated officer.

Key person supervision discussions are recorded and is retained by the supervisor and a copy provided to the key person. The key person and supervisor must sign and date the minutes of supervision within 4-6 weeks of it happening and disagreements over recorded content must be minutes. Each member of staff has a supervision file that is stored securely at all times. Concerns raised during supervision about an individual child's welfare may result in safeguarding concerns not previously recognised as such, these are recorded in the child's child safety file. The reasons why the concerns have not previously been considered are explored. Additional safeguarding or welfare decisions made in relation to a child during supervision are recorded on the individual case file. The supervisor (if not the designated person) should ensure the recording is made and the designated person is notified.

Supervisors check with staff if there is any new information pertaining to their suitability to work with children. This only needs to be recorded on the supervision meeting record. Where staff are on zero hours contracts or are employed as and when needed, their line manager completes the staff suitability self-declaration form quarterly, and/or at the beginning of every new period of work. Regarding the use of agency staff/support workers/self-employed persons there is an expectation that as part of the agreement with agencies they have sought information regarding their employee's suitability to work with children. Line managers must review this regularly. The position for students on placement is the same as that for agency staff.

Where exceptional circumstances prevent staff from conducting supervision as outlined in this procedure, the line manager is informed in writing, a copy placed on the supervision file and the appropriate actions agreed to ensure that the setting meets its obligations within the EYFS.

#### **4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues**

*"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children"*

Keeping Children Safe refers to four categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

All staff/volunteers/ are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we can identify children who may be in need of help or protection. We understand that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

### **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).

### **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".*

### **Contextual safeguarding**

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

### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling, or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. We recognise that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children.

### **So-called 'honour-based violence' (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)**

*Female Genital Mutilation (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 provision will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

Symptoms of FGM in very young girls may include difficulty walking, sitting or standing; painful urination and/or urinary tract infection; urinary retention; evidence of surgery; changes to nappy changing or toileting routines; injury to adjacent tissues; spends longer than normal in the bathroom

Register address: Braintree Enterprise Centre, Block A - Unit 10, 46-48 Springwood Drive, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2YN

Mrs Heather Hill - Founder of Happy Hill

Email address [happyhillessex@outlook.com](mailto:happyhillessex@outlook.com)

Charity registration number: 1193856

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or toilet; unusual and/or changed behavior after and absence from the setting (includes increased anxiety around adults or unwillingness to talk about home experiences or family holidays); parents are reluctant to allow child to undergo normal medical examinations; if an older sibling has undergone the procedure a younger sibling may be at risk; discussion about plans for an extended family holiday.

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. Forced marriage became criminalised in 2014. There are also civil powers for example a Forced Marriage Protection Order to protect both children and adults at risk of forced marriage and offers protection for those who have already been forced into marriage.

If someone is believed to be at risk it is helpful to get as much practical information as possible, bearing in mind the need for absolute discretion, information that can be helpful will include things like, names, addresses, passport numbers, national insurance numbers, details of travel arrangements, dates and location of any proposed wedding, names and dates of birth of prospective spouses, details of where and with whom they may be staying etc. Forced marriage can be linked to honour-based violence, which includes assault, imprisonment and murder. Honour based violence can be used to punish an individual for undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour.

Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue. In an emergency police should be contacted on 999. Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted either by professionals or by potential victims seeking advice in relation to their concerns. The contact details are listed:

- Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
- Email: [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk)
- Email for outreach work: [fmufcooutreach@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufcooutreach@fco.gov.uk)

## **Mental health**

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

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community, and we recognise that Happy Hill Essex CIO play a part in this. We aim to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all clients and staff.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being. We encourage parents to share any concerns about the well-being of their child, so appropriate support can be implemented.

## **Online safety**

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents

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challenges and risks. Any person can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

#### I.C.T equipment:

- The setting manager ensures that all computers have up-to-date virus protection installed.
- Tablets are only used for the purposes of observation, assessment and planning and to take photographs for individual children's learning journeys.
- Tablets remain on the premises and are stored securely at all times when not in use.
- Staff follow the additional guidance provided with the system.

#### Internet access:

- Children never have unsupervised access to the internet.
- The setting manager ensures that risk assessments in relation to e-safety are completed.
- Only reputable sites with a focus on early learning are used (e.g. CBeebies).
- Video sharing sites such as YouTube are not accessed due to the risk of inappropriate content.
- Children are taught the following stay safe principals in an age appropriate way: only go online with a grown up, be kind and keep information about me safe, only press buttons on the internet to things I understand, tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet.
- Staff support children's resilience in relation to issues they may face online, and address issues such as staying safe, appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways.
- All computers for use by children are sited in an area clearly visible to staff.
- Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

#### Personal mobile phones – staff and visitors:

- Personal mobile phones and internet enabled devices are not used by staff during working hours. This does not include breaks where personal mobiles may be used off the premises or in a safe place e.g, staff room. The setting manager completes a risk assessment for where they can be used safely.
- Personal mobile phones are switched off and stored in lockers or a locked office drawer.
- In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the office with permission.
- Staff ensure that contact details of the setting are known to family and people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
- Staff do not take their mobile phones on outings.
- Members of staff do not use personal equipment to take photographs of children.
- Parents and visitors do not use their mobile phones on the premises. There is an exception if a visitor's company/organisation operates a policy that requires contact with their office

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periodically throughout the day. Visitors are advised of a private space where they can use their mobile.

#### Cameras and videos:

- Members of staff do not bring their own cameras or video recorders to the setting.
- Photographs/recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons, e.g. to record learning and development, or for displays, and are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting.
- Camera and video use is monitored by the setting manager.
- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is first gained from all parents for their children to be included. Parents are told they do not have a right to photograph or upload photos of anyone else's children.
- Photographs/recordings of children are only made if relevant permissions are in place.
- If photographs are used for publicity, parental consent is gained and safeguarding risks minimised, e.g. children may be identified if photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.

#### Cyber Bullying:

If staff become aware that a child is the victim of cyber-bullying at home or elsewhere, they discuss this with the parents and refer them to help, such as: NSPCC Tel: 0808 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) or ChildLine Tel: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### Use of social media:

- Staff are expected to:
  - understand how to manage their security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with
  - ensure the organisation is not negatively affected by their actions and do not name the setting
  - are aware that comments or photographs online may be accessible to anyone and should use their judgement before posting
  - are aware that images, such as those on Snapshot may still be accessed by others and a permanent record of them made, for example, by taking a screen shot of the image with a mobile phone
  - observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
  - not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view
  - set privacy settings to personal social networking and restrict those who are able to access
  - not accept service users/children/parents as friends, as it is a breach of professional conduct
  - report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their setting
  - not engage in personal communication, including on social networking sites, with children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. There may be occasions when the educator and family are friendly prior to the child coming to the setting. In this case information is shared with the manager and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries are agreed

## Peer on peer abuse

Happy Hill Essex CIO 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.

## Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education/leisure providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools and other services 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 to provide:

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

Parental consent for radicalisation referrals:

LSP procedures are followed in relation to whether parental consent is necessary prior to making a referral about a concern that a child or adult may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It is good practice to seek the consent of the person or consent of their parent/carer but it is not a requirement if seeking consent may put the child at risk or if an offence may have been or may be committed. Advice should be sought from the safeguarding lead (Heather Hill).

Consent is required prior to any individual engaging with a Channel intervention. Consent is usually sought by Channel partners, but LSP procedures should be followed regarding this.

If there is a concern that a person is already involved in terrorist activity this must be reported to the Anti-Terrorist Hot Line 0800 789 321-Text/phone 0800 0324 539. Police can be contacted on 101.

## Serious violence

Register address: Braintree Enterprise Centre, Block A - Unit 10, 46-48 Springwood Drive, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2YN  
Mrs Heather Hill - Founder of Happy Hill  
Email address [happyhillessex@outlook.com](mailto:happyhillessex@outlook.com)  
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All staff are aware of indicators which may signal those children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from our service, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

### **Incapacitated parent**

Incapacitated parent refers to a condition which renders a parent unable to take responsibility for their child; this could be at the time of collecting their child from the setting or on arrival. Concerns may include:

- appearing drunk
- appearing under the influence of drugs
- demonstrating angry and threatening behaviour to the child, members of staff or others
- appearing erratic or manic

If a member of staff is concerned that a parent displays any of the above characteristics, they inform the designated person as soon as possible. The designated person assesses the risk and decides if further intervention is required. If intervention is required, the designated person speaks to the parent in an appropriate, confidential manner. The designated person will, in agreement with the parent, use emergency contacts listed for the child to ask an alternative adult to collect the child. The emergency contact is informed of the situation by the designated person and of the setting's requirement to inform social care of their contact details. The designated officer is informed of the situation as soon as possible and provides advice and assistance as appropriate. If there is no one suitable to collect the child social care are informed. If violence is threatened towards anybody, the police are called immediately. If the parent takes the child from the setting while incapacitated the police are called immediately and a referral is made to social care.

The designated person records the incident in the child's child safety file. If the police were contacted the report should also be copied to the owners/directors/trustees. Further updates are recorded.

## **5. Children potentially at risk of greater harm**

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

Happy Hill Essex CIO understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

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

## 6. Procedures

We here at Happy Hill Essex CIO work 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 Happy Hill Essex CIO 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).

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, 2019, updated May 2022)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017, updated 2021)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Any staff member or visitor to Happy Hill Essex CIO must 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 sent to the Children and Families Hub via the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. HHECIO may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being

addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

If, for any reason, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the hall 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 us they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them.

Responding to marks or injuries observed:

- If a member of staff observes or is informed by a parent/carer of a mark or injury to a child that happened at home or elsewhere, the member of staff makes a record of the information given to them by the parent/carer in the child's personal file, which is signed by the parent/carer.
- The member of staff advises the designated person as soon as possible if there are safeguarding concerns about the circumstance of the injury. If there are concerns about the circumstances or explanation given, by the parent/carer and/or child, the designated person decides the course of action to be taken.
- If the mark or injury is noticed later in the day and the parent is not present, this is raised with the designated person.
- If there are concerns about the nature of the injury, and it is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, the designated person decides the course of action required and an incident reporting form is completed, taking into consideration any explanation given by the child.
- If there is a likelihood that the injury is recent and occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated person.
- If there is no cause for further concern, a record is made in the child's file, with a note that the circumstances of the injury are not known.
- If the injury is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated person
- The parent/carer is advised at the earliest opportunity.
- If the parent believes that the injury was caused at the setting this is still recorded in the Accident Record and an accurate record made of the discussion is made on the child's child protection file.

Responding to the signs and symptoms of abuse:

- Concerns about the welfare of a child are discussed with the designated person without delay.
- A written record is made of the concern as soon as possible in their child protection file.
- Concerns that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm are responded to immediately and if a referral is necessary this is made on the same working day.

Responding to disclosure by a child:

- When responding to a disclosure from a child, the aim is to get just enough information to take appropriate action.

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- The educator listens carefully and calmly, allowing the child time to express what they want to say.
- Staff do not attempt to question the child but if they are not sure what the child said, or what they meant, they may prompt the child further by saying 'tell me more about that' or 'show me again'.
- After the initial disclosure, staff speak immediately to the designated person. They do not further question or attempt to interview a child.
- If a child shows visible signs of abuse such as bruising or injury to any part of the body and it is age appropriate to do so, the key person will ask the child how it happened.
- When recording a child's disclosure their exact words are used as well as the exact words with which the member of staff responded.
- If marks or injuries are observed, these are recorded on a body diagram.

## 7. Referrals

The designated person follows their LSP procedures for making a referral. If the designated person or their back-up is not on site, the most senior member of staff present takes responsibility for making the referral to social care. If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, or an incident occurs at the end of the session and staff are concerned about the child going home that day, then the Police and/or social care are contacted immediately. If the child is 'safe' because they are still in the setting, and there is time to do so, the senior member of staff contacts the setting's designated officer for support.

Information is recorded in the child's child safety file. Discussion with parents and any further discussion with social care is recorded. If a referral was made copies of all documents are kept and stored securely and confidentially. Each member of staff/volunteer who has witnessed and incident or disclosure should also make a written statement. Follow up phone calls to or from social care are recorded in the child's file; with date, time, the name of the social care worker and what was said. Safeguarding records are kept up to date and made available for confidential access by the designated officer to allow continuity of support during closures or holiday periods.

### **Seeking consent from parents/carers to share information before making a referral for early help**

When a referral for early help is necessary the designated person must always seek consent from the child's parents to share information with the relevant agency.

- If consent is sought and withheld and there are concerns that a child may become at risk of significant harm without early intervention, there may be sufficient grounds to over-ride a parental decision to withhold consent.
- If a parent withholds consent, this information is included on any referral that is made to the local authority. In these circumstances a parent should still be told that the referral is being made beforehand (unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm).

### **Informing parents when making a child protection referral**

In most circumstances consent will not be required to make a child protection referral, because even if consent is refused, there is still a professional duty to act upon concerns and make a referral. When a child protection referral has been made, the designated person contacts the parents (only

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Mrs Heather Hill - Founder of Happy Hill

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if agreed with social care) to inform them that a referral has been made, indicating the concerns that have been raised, unless social care advises that the parent should not be contacted until such time as their investigation, or the police investigation, is concluded. Parents are not informed prior to making a referral if:

- there is a possibility that a child may be put at risk of harm by discussion with a parent/carer, or if a serious offence may have been committed, as it is important that any potential police investigation is not jeopardised
- there are potential concerns about sexual abuse, fabricated illness, FGM or forced marriage
- contacting the parent puts another person at risk; situations where one parent may be at risk of harm, e.g. abuse; situations where it has not been possible to contact parents to seek their consent may cause delay to the referral being made

The designated person makes a professional judgment regarding whether consent (from a parent) should be sought before making a child protection referral as described above. They record their decision about informing or not informing parents along with an explanation for this decision. Advice will be sought from the appropriate children's social work team if there is any doubt. Advice can also be sought from the designated officer.

### **Reporting a serious child protection incident**

- The designated person is responsible for reporting to the designated officer and seeking advice if required prior to making a referral as described above.
- The designated person will report the incident in the child's child safety file.
- Further briefings are sent to the designated officer when updates are received until the issue is concluded.

## **8. Training**

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. All staff members and volunteers 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 volunteers.

## **9. 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 safeguarding 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.

## **10. Records and information sharing**

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our service is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our setting 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.

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 (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the members file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth.

## **11. Interagency working**

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their attendance, emotional well-being, welfare and presentation. If Happy Hill Essex CIO is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure they are represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings.

## **12. 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 Code of Conduct. Happy Hill Essex CIO works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2019) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

Happy Hill Essex CIO has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be

referred to Trustee/ Designated Lead (or the Deputy Safeguarding lead (Operation Manager) in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues.

Where the concern involves the Operations Manager, Trustee, Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported direct to the Kim Alliston - Trustee.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2019) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, a Trustee/ Designated Lead, senior named Trustees must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to staff/ members/volunteers and parents. We do not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

Staffing matters are confidential and Happy Hill Essex CIO operate within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

### **13. 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. Happy Hill Essex CIO work in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force (*Essex Steps training*) and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

### **14. Whistleblowing**

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

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

#### **Whistleblowing procedure**

The whistleblowing procedure must be followed in the first instance if: a criminal offence has been committed or is likely to be committed, a person has failed to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice has occurred, the health and safety of any individual has been or is likely to be endangered, the working environment has been or is likely to be damaged, information tending to show any matter falling within one of the preceding clauses has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

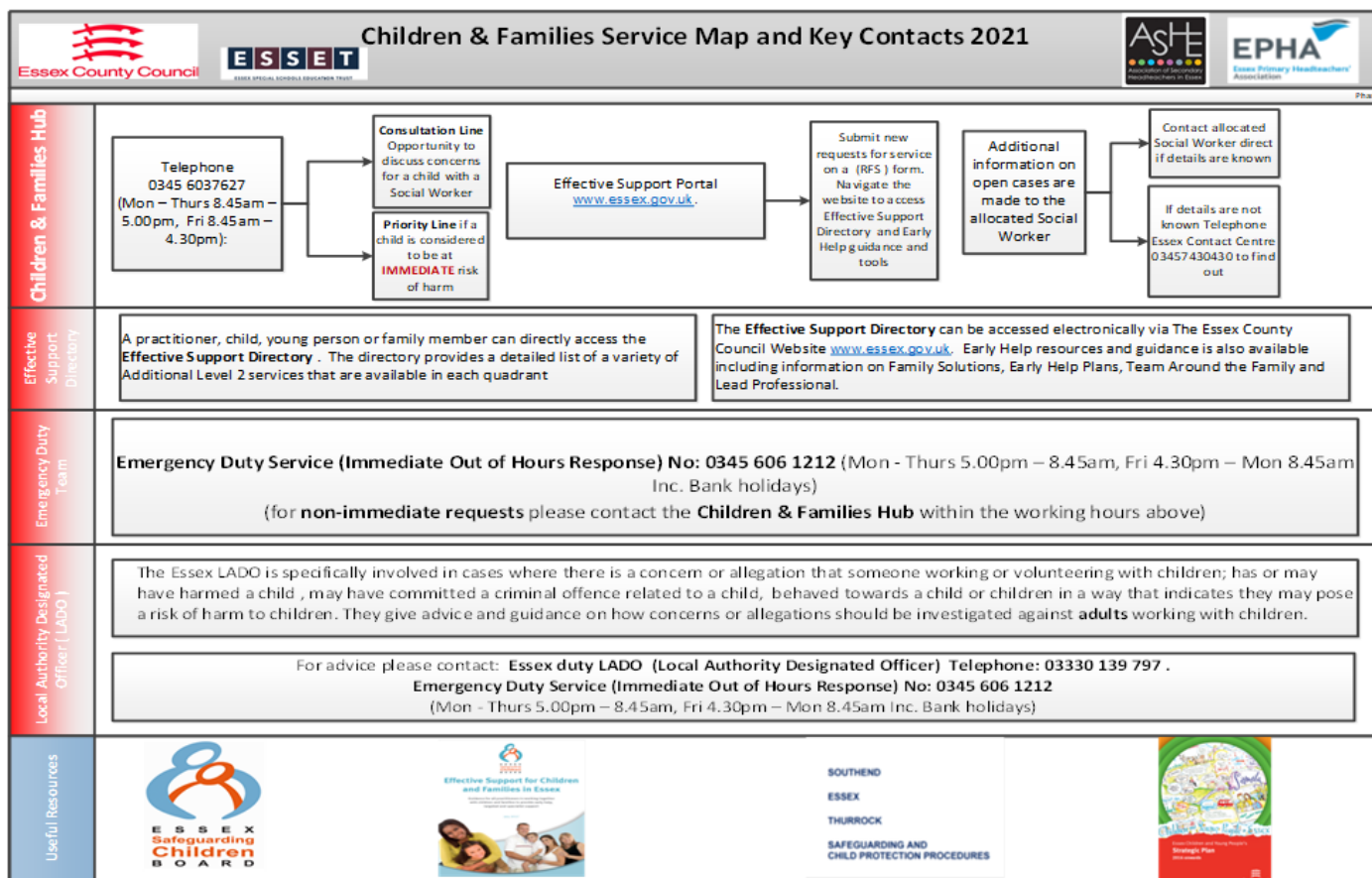
There are three stages to raising concerns as follows:

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Mrs Heather Hill - Founder of Happy Hill  
Email address [happyhillessex@outlook.com](mailto:happyhillessex@outlook.com)  
Charity registration number: 1193856

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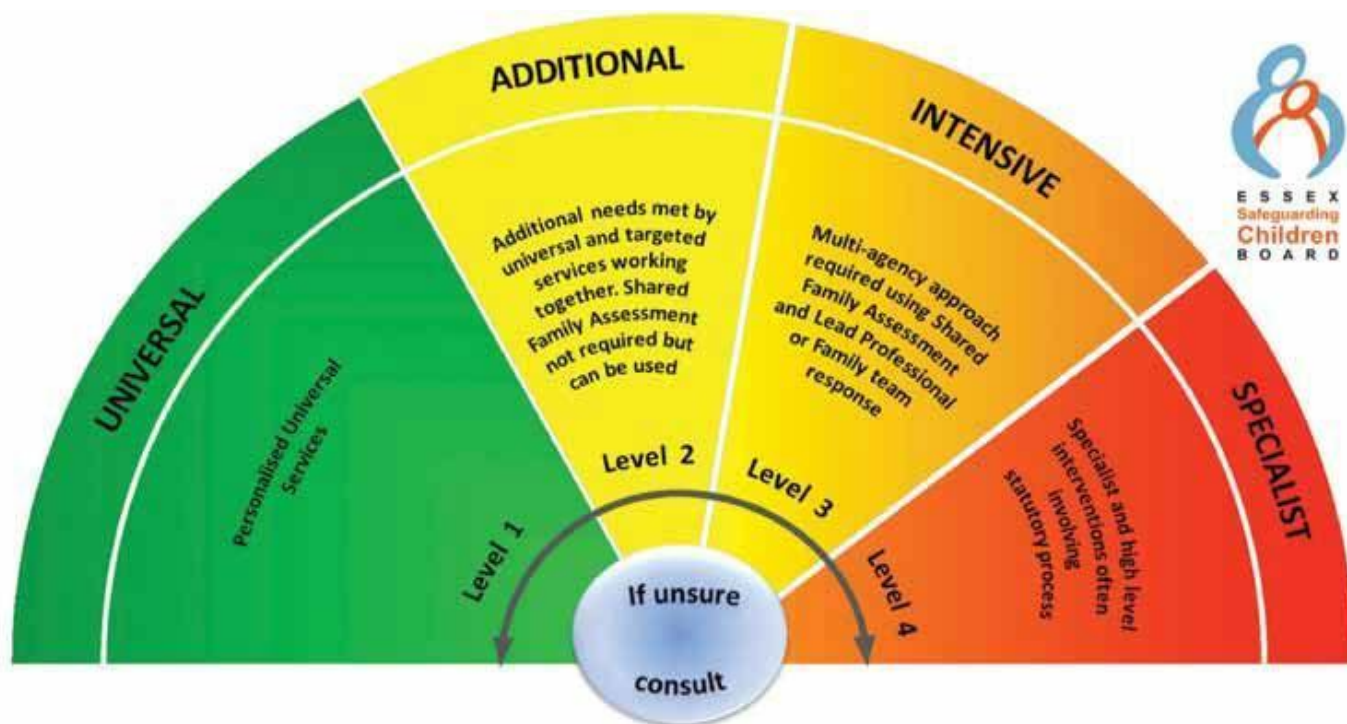
1. If staff wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should normally raise this issue with their Manager/Designated Person.
2. Staff who are unable to raise the issue with their Manager/Designated Person should raise the issue with their line manager's manager/Designated Officer.
3. If staff are still concerned after the investigation, or the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with a line manager, they should raise the matter with Heather Hill, Chair of Trustees, on [happyhillessex@outlook.com](mailto:happyhillessex@outlook.com)

## Appendix A: Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts



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## 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 service.