This safeguarding audit is a self-evaluation guide to help Early Years settings check whether they are compliant with the safeguarding and welfare requirements in Section 3 of the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (‘Statutory framework’).

**Essex early years and childcare providers: safeguarding audit 2023 / 2024**

The audit can be used as a ‘healthcheck’ to support the development of safeguarding arrangements, and the delivery of safeguarding through the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will enable settings to identify any gaps in practice and procedures, to record the necessary actions required as a result, and include the date by which the actions have been completed. Settings may also use the audit to enhance practice that is already satisfactory.

Figures in brackets indicate which part of Section 3 of the Statutory framework points are taken from. Words in italics are direct quotations from the statutory framework. Additional text reflects Essex expectations around best practice.

The safeguarding audit should also be read in conjunction with the following statutory and local guidance:

* [Children Act 1989](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents)
* [Children Act 2004](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents)
* [Childcare Act 2006](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21)
* [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) (DfE, 2023)
* [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) (HMG, 2018)
* [The Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures](https://www.escb.co.uk/2423) (‘SET Procedures’, ESCB, 2022)
* [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](https://www.essex.gov.uk/resources-for-practitioners/effective-support-resources) (ESCB, 2021)
* [Essex Local Offer](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/)
* [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

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| **Setting name:** | **Ofsted registration number:** |
| **Setting email address:** | **Setting telephone number:** |
| **Name of owner / manager of the setting:**  **Lead practitioner for safeguarding:**  **Named first aiders:**  **Named Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo):** | **Deputy manager:**  **Deputy lead practitioner for safeguarding:**  **Name and job title of person completing this audit:**  **Date:** |

**Evidence base**

Settings will have a range of information and documents to use as evidence for each category within the audit. The following are examples:

**Records**

* Training
* Individual child files
* Individual Child Protection files
* Staff induction
* Staff files including qualifications and references
* Parental responsibility and contact information
* Staff meeting minutes
* Management committee (or equivalent) meeting minutes
* Health and Safety fire and risk assessments

**Key documents**

* Policies and procedures
* Setting Improvement Plan
* Information to parents (for example: prospectus, Setting / parent Agreement)

**Other**

* Surveys undertaken with children, parents, staff
* Peer observation
* Local authority visits
* Ofsted inspection report
* Daily staffing structure
* Medical consent forms
* Accident records

|  | **YES / NO** | **EVIDENCE** | **IF NO, details of action to be taken.** | **Date action completed** |
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| **1: CHILD PROTECTION** |  |  |  |  |
| 1.1 Does the setting have a safeguarding policy and procedures to safeguard children (3.4)? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2 Are the safeguarding policy and procedures in line with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Procedures (‘[SET Procedures](https://www.escb.co.uk/2423)’) issued by the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](https://www.escb.co.uk/) (3.4)? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.3 Do the safeguarding policy and procedures include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are:   * safeguarding concerns about a child; * an allegation made against a member of staff; and * cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting (3.4)? |  |  |  |  |
| Are internal communication channels sufficiently robust and the need for confidentiality understood by everyone concerned, to ensure that child protection / safeguarding issues are managed effectively? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the setting’s registration form ask parents / carers if there is any other agency involvement, e.g., health, Social Care (this is not mandatory but may be useful)?  Does your setting have a signing-in system for visitors, and do you cover: identity, visitors’ book, fire drill and use of mobile phones?  Are emergency contact details easily accessible and clearly displayed?  Can the setting provide information on specific local early help services, for example family and parenting programmes, help for problems relating to domestic abuse, and improving family functioning? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the setting premises and outdoor area secure, so that children cannot leave unaccompanied and unauthorised visitors cannot enter? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.4 Has a practitioner been appointed to take lead responsibility for safeguarding (childminders must undertake this responsibility themselves) (3.5)?  Is there a Deputy Lead Practitioner for safeguarding with the relevant training, who is available in the absence of the Lead Practitioner for safeguarding?  Does the setting display key safeguarding information such as who the Lead Practitioner and Deputy Lead Practitioner for safeguarding are, contact details for Essex Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) and Ofsted?  Are staff, parents / carers, committee members and other service users aware of who the Lead Practitioner for safeguarding is within the setting? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.5 Has the Lead Practitioner attended a child protection training course that enables them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect (3.5)? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.6 Does the lead practitioner provide support, advice and guidance to staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required (3.5)?  Are your Lead Practitioner and their Deputy familiar with the ‘SET Procedures’ and the ‘Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex’ (ESCB, 2021) documents available on the [Essex County Council website](https://www.essex.gov.uk/resources-for-practitioners/effective-support-resources)? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.7 Have all staff received training to ensure they understand the safeguarding policy and procedures (3.6)?  Have all staff, students, volunteers, owner, directors, and committee members received appropriate safeguarding awareness training as recommended by the ESCB?  Are staff members aware of their role, responsibilities, and the expectations in relation to Children’s Social Care Child in Need and Child Protection meetings?  Are all staff members aware of valuing differing beliefs and cultural practices?  Is safeguarding a regular agenda item at team meetings and in supervision? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.8 Does the training include how to identify the signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and respond in a timely and appropriate way (3.6)?   * significant changes in children's behaviour * deterioration in children’s general well-being * unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect * children’s comments which give cause for concern * any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child’s home or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation and/or * inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children, for example: inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images   Are staff members made aware of how children can be placed at risk by exposure to inappropriate material such as films, images, social media sites, or websites? Are all staff given training and support on providing ways to minimise those risks?  Does the setting help children to begin to learn how to use technology safely, and to be safe online? Is information provided to parents / carers in this regard? |  |  |  |  |
| Are all children listened to, taken seriously, and responded to appropriately?  Do children know that they can talk to their key person or any member of staff if they have a concern about their safety? |  |  |  |  |
| Are all child protection files securely stored, held separately to other information and accessible only by the Lead Practitioner and the Deputy Lead Practitioner? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the setting aware that records relating to individual children should be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the setting? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the setting aware that child protection files must be transferred to a child’s new setting when the child joins them, for example when they join school but also if they move to another Early Years setting? |  |  |  |  |
| Are child protection concerns systematically reviewed, at least half-termly, with the outcome and any actions recorded? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.9 Do staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues (3.6)?  Training / information is available on the [ESCB](http://www.escb.co.uk/) and [Essex Early Years and Childcare](https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/) websites. Safeguarding updates and information are also available through local authority safeguarding briefings and forums: [Education Essex online booking system](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fschools.essex.gov.uk%2Finfo%2Ftradedservices%2FPages%2Feducation-essex-online-booking-system.aspx&data=05%7C01%7C%7C7f7cbdee80a8455bce1408da6e3c6a23%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637943503016007543%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ZiqYW0lzu066lr9%2BiLxITm08J7e5s%2FL%2BfMNFclK9DVU%3D&reserved=0).  Settings may also find it helpful to review the information in:  [What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2) (HMG 2015) |  |  |  |  |
| Does the setting communicate changes to policies and procedures made in line with legislation and local guidance to all staff and ensure they are implemented? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.10 Does the setting have regard to (3.7):   * [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) (HMG, 2018); and * [Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance) (Home Office, 2023)?   The setting may also find it helpful to refer to the [Keeping children safe in education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) (DfE, 2023) statutory guidance for schools. For example, it contains further information about safeguarding issues.  If staff have concerns about children’s safety or welfare, do they notify agencies with statutory responsibility without delay (3.7)?  This means Essex Social Care or the police. |  |  |  |  |
| Does your setting have a ‘whistleblowing’ policy, which all staff are aware of? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.11 Settings must inform Ofsted or their childminder agency of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises, whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere (3.8).  Has the setting had cause to do this?  Is there a senior person at your setting who can support the Lead Practitioner and take leadership responsibility for allegations case management?  *Settings must also notify Ofsted, or their childminder agency of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.* |  |  |  |  |
| Are staff alert to the requirement to notify the local authority of children who are being privately fostered? |  |  |  |  |
| **2: SUITABLE PEOPLE** |  |  |  |  |
| 2.1 Does the setting have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises) are suitable (3.9)?  Have all those responsible for recruiting and interviewing staff completed safer recruitment training? |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2 Registered settings, other than childminders, must obtain an enhanced criminal records check for every person aged 16 or over (including for unsupervised volunteers, and supervised volunteers who provide personal care) who:  works directly with children;  lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless there is no access to the part of the premises when and where children are cared for) and/or;  works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).  An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.  Does the setting complete these checks (3.10)?  Does the setting’s recruitment policy reflect the need for at least two references for each candidate, one of which is from a current employer that supports their professional history and character?  Do all new employees undertake a specified induction and review period during which their attitudes towards children, behaviour and understanding of safeguarding are assessed? |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3 Does the setting inform staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children – whether received before or during their employment at the setting (3.11)?  *Providers must not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.* |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4 Does the setting record information about staff qualifications, identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed (3.12)?  *This must include the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it. For childminders, the relevant information will be kept by Ofsted or the agency with which the childminder is registered.* |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5 Has the setting had cause to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, where a member of staff has been dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm (3.13)? |  |  |  |  |
| **3: DISQUALIFICATION (record in audit if needed)** |  |  |  |  |
| 3.1 Has the setting checked whether any staff member has been disqualified from registration? Is the setting aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification (3.14)?  *A provider or a childcare worker may be disqualified from registration. In the event of the disqualification of a provider, the provider must not continue as an early years provider – nor be directly concerned in the management of such provision. If a setting becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee, the setting must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children.*    *A childminder, childminder assistant or a childcare practitioner working on domestic premises may also be disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed* (3.15). |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2 Is the setting aware that it must notify Ofsted (or the agency with which the childminder is registered) of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises where childcare is provided (3.16)?  Is there a mechanism in place to address any concerns identified following a significant event, and is there management oversight to ensure procedures have been reviewed and adapted as part of the response?  *The registered provider must give Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered, the following information about themselves or about any person who lives in the same household as the registered provider or who is employed in the household (3.17):*  *details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006*  *the date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose*  *the body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed*  *a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction)*  *Settings must do this within 14 days (3.18).* |  |  |  |  |
| **4: STAFF TAKING MEDICATION / OTHER SUBSTANCES** |  |  |  |  |
| 4.1 Has the setting ensured that those practitioners taking medication only work with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member’s ability to look after children properly (3.19)?  *Staff members must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If a staff member is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, the staff member should seek medical advice. All medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.* |  |  |  |  |
| **5: STAFF QUALIFICATIONS, SUPPORT AND SKILLS** |  |  |  |  |
| 5.1 Does the setting follow the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 including the fair and equal treatment of practitioners regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (3.20)? |  |  |  |  |
| 5.2 Have all staff received induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities (3.21)?  *This training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.*    Is there a clear written accountability framework which outlines the roles and responsibilities of all staff, especially for safeguarding and protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare? For example, a staff structure chart with role descriptions. |  |  |  |  |
| 5.3 Are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families (3.22 & 3.23)? |  |  |  |  |
| 5.4 Has the setting complied with paediatric first aid requirements (3.25)? |  |  |  |  |
| 5.5 Does the setting ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of the English language to ensure the well-being of children in its care (3.26)?  *Settings must be in a position to keep records in English, to liaise with other agencies in English, to summon emergency help, and to understand instructions such as those for the safety of medicines or food hygiene.* |  |  |  |  |
| Does the setting ensure that each child is assigned a key person (3.27)?  *The key person’s role is to help ensure that every*  *child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs (see 1.16), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.* |  |  |  |  |
| **6: STAFF / CHILD RATIOS – ALL PROVIDERS INCLUDING CHILDMINDERS** |  |  |  |  |
| 6.1 Does the setting comply with the requirements in relation to staff / child ratios (3.28 to 3.44)? |  |  |  |  |
| **7: HEALTH** |  |  |  |  |
| 7.1 Does the setting comply with the requirements relating to:  medicines (3.45 to 3.47)  food and drink (3.48 to 3.50)  accident or injury (3.51 to 3.52)? |  |  |  |  |
| **8: BEHAVIOUR** |  |  |  |  |
| 8.1 Does the setting keep records of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and inform parents / carers (3.54)?  *Parents / carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Providers must not give or threaten corporal punishment and must not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child’s well-being.* |  |  |  |  |
| **9: SAFETY AND SUITABILITY OF PREMISES, ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT** |  |  |  |  |
| 9.1 Does the setting comply with the requirements relating to:  safety (3.55 to 3.56)  smoking and vaping (3.57)  premises (3.58 to 3.64)  risk assessment (3.65)  outings (3.66 to 3.67) |  |  |  |  |
| **10: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / DISABILITY (SEND)** |  |  |  |  |
| 10.1 Does the setting have arrangements in place to support children with SEND (3.68)?  *All providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Maintained schools and maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO. Childminders are encouraged to identify a person to act as a SENCO and childminders who are registered with a childminder agency or who are part of a network may wish to share the role between them.*  [Essex Local Offer](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/)  [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) |  |  |  |  |
| **11: INFORMATION AND RECORDS** |  |  |  |  |
| 11.1 Does the setting maintain records and obtain and share information (with parents and carers, other professionals working with the child, the police, social services and Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered, as appropriate), to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met (3.69)?  *Providers must enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and/or carers, and between providers, if a child is attending more than one setting. If requested, providers should incorporate parents’ and/or carers’ comments into children’s records.* |  |  |  |  |
| 11.2 Has the setting ensured that (3.70):  its records are easily accessible and available  confidential information and records about staff and children are held securely, and only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them?  *Providers must be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Legislation and where relevant the Freedom of Information Act 2000.* |  |  |  |  |
| 11.3 Do all setting staff understand the need to protect the privacy of the children in their care and the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to the child is handled in a way that ensures confidentiality (3.71)?  *Parents / carers must be given access to all records about their child, provided that no relevant exemptions apply to their disclosure under the Data Protection Act (2018).* |  |  |  |  |
| 11.4 Has the setting ensured that the following information is recorded for each child (3.73):  full name  date of birth  name and address of every parent / carer who is known to the provider (and information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the child)  which parents / carers the child normally lives with, and emergency contact details for parents / carers |  |  |  |  |
| 11.5 Has the setting ensured that it is providing the correct information to parents / carers (3.74)? |  |  |  |  |
| 11.6 Does the setting have a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents / carers (3.75)?  *All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency on request.* |  |  |  |  |
| 11.7 Has the setting made available to parents / carers details about how to contact Ofsted (or the childminder agency with which the provider is registered as appropriate), if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements (3.76)? |  |  |  |  |
| 11.8 Does the setting hold the following documentation (3.77):  name, home address and telephone number of the provider and any other person living or employed on the premises (this requirement does not apply to childminders)  name, home address and telephone number of anyone else who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children attending the early years provision  a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of each child's key person  their certificate of registration (which must be displayed at the setting and shown to parents and/or carers on request |  |  |  |  |
| 11.9 Is the setting aware of the changes that must be notified to Ofsted, or the relevant childminder agency (3.78 to 3.79)? |  |  |  |  |

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| **Useful information**   * [Essex Early Years and Childcare](https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/safeguarding/)   Dedicated safeguarding pages including model policies, templates, briefings, and safeguarding forum presentations.   * [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](https://www.essex.gov.uk/resources-for-practitioners/effective-support-resources)   How services in Essex are provided and how support is made available at each level of need for children and young people and their families. Includes Directory of Services and guidance.   * [Ofsted](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)   Inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Also inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.   * [Disclosure and Barring Service](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)   Helps employers make safer recruitment decisions each year by processing and issuing DBS checks. Also maintains the adults’ and children’s Barred Lists. Makes considered decisions as to whether an individual should be included on one or both lists and barred from engaging in regulated activity.  **Online safety**  [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations for managers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations) (UK Council for Internet Safety, 2019)  Various organisations have produced guidance and resources relating to online safety in the early years:  [UK Council for Internet Safety](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety)  [Internet Matters](https://www.internetmatters.org/schools-esafety/pre-school/)  [CEOP](https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/)  [SWGFL](https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/early-years-toolkit/) |