

Education Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding training levels and requirements – a framework for education settings 2026

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Safeguarding training framework for Education settings – Summer 2026

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) produces guidance for all organisations in Essex on levels and learning outcomes in relation to safeguarding training. The guidance sets a framework for training for induction and at Levels 1, 2 and 3. For Education settings, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team works closely with the ESCB to ensure the framework is aligned to statutory requirements as set out by the Department for Education (DfE), and that there is an offer for all settings which meets the agreed expectations.

Settings are free to access training from any provider. However, if they do so, they are responsible for ensuring it meets the requirements set out by the ESCB (see the framework below), and also by the DfE, as detailed below.

Education schools and settings

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) sets out the statutory requirement for all staff to receive appropriate safeguarding training. It also requires education settings to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). There is a further requirement for these safeguarding leads to undertake training to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills for the role, and that this should be updated at least every two years.

The training levels for schools and other education settings are:

- all staff should access [Level 1 training](#) as part of induction
- all staff must have **Level 2 training**, as part of induction and then at least annually. For those settings who wish staff to access this from an external source, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 2 training](#). This can be accessed via a 2-hour online session, or the team can deliver to settings on-site. Alternatively, DSLs / DDSLs may wish to deliver Level 2 training to all staff within their setting themselves. *(To support safeguarding leads in doing this, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team write presentations for them to deliver to staff, which include all the necessary material. It is also possible to do a combination of these two options, depending on the needs of individual settings)*
- all DSLs and DDSLs must access **Level 3** training at least every two years. **This is in two parts**

➤ **LEVEL 3, PART 1 Foundation safeguarding training for DSL / DDSL's - half-termly, online for 3 hours**

This foundation session is suitable for those **NEW to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL** or for those who wish to revisit their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding in education settings in Essex. For those experienced in this role we would strongly recommend attending this training before attending the Part 2 in order to ensure a thorough understanding of the processes and procedures in Essex. It is also appropriate for those staff in settings who need an enhanced understanding of safeguarding in an education setting, although they may not have a formal DSL or DDSL role. This training needs only to be attended **once**.

However, please note that anyone who has attended our Level 3 training between October 2024 and July 2026 will have met this requirement or if the DSL is experienced in their role in Essex.

➤ **LEVEL 3, PART 2 – Strategic safeguarding training for DSL'S / DDSL's – in-person 9.30 am – 4.00pm**

There is an **expectation** that everyone for whom it is relevant, has already completed *Level 3 PART 1 - Training for NEW Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Leads (Schools)*. **Strategic safeguarding training for DSL'S / DDSL's** training builds on **PART 1** and will equip DSLs and DDSLs to undertake their strategic role and build their expertise around safeguarding. This training should be undertaken at least every **two years**, so DSLs meet the requirements within Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE).

- **Early Years settings**

The *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-based Providers* (DfE) sets out the statutory requirement for all staff working with children to receive appropriate safeguarding training. It also states that the Designated Safeguarding Lead must attend child protection training which meets the requirements set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (in Essex, this is the Essex Safeguarding Children Board) or local authority on appropriate training courses.

In Essex, the safeguarding training requirements for Early Years settings are aligned to those for schools and other settings. These requirements are as follows:

- all staff in early years settings should access [Level 1 training](#) as part of induction
- all staff (including the DSL / DDSL) must have **Level 2 training**, as part of induction. All staff must then receive Level 2 training at least annually (apart from the DSL / DDSL, as they will undertake Level 3 training). For those settings who wish staff to access this from an

external source, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 2 training](#). This can be accessed via a 2-hour online session, or the team can deliver to settings on-site. Alternatively, DSLs / DDSLs may wish to deliver Level 2 training to all staff within their setting themselves. *(To support safeguarding leads in doing this, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team write presentations for them to deliver to staff, which include all the necessary material. It is also possible to do a combination of these two options, depending on the needs of individual settings)*

- all Designated Safeguarding Leads (and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) must access [Level 3 training](#)

Childminders working alone

The *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Childminders* (DfE) set out the statutory requirement that childminders working alone will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in their setting. It also states that the DSL must attend child protection training which meets the requirements set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (in Essex, this is the Essex Safeguarding Children Board) or local authority on appropriate training courses.

In Essex, the safeguarding training requirements for Early Years practitioners are aligned to those for schools and other settings. These requirements are as follows:

- all childminders should access [Level 1 training](#) as part of induction
- all childminders must have **Level 2 training** as part of induction. The ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 2 training](#). This can be accessed via a 2-hour online session.
- all Designated Safeguarding Leads (Childminders) must access **Level 3 training**, at least every two years. The ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 3 training](#), which is in-person and offered at various locations across the county.

Childminders with assistants

The *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Childminders* (DfE) set out the statutory requirement that childminders will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead and that they must attend child protection training which meets the requirements set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (in Essex, this is the Essex Safeguarding Children Board) or local authority on appropriate training courses.

In Essex, the safeguarding training requirements for Early Years practitioners are aligned to those for schools and other settings. These requirements are as follows:

- all childminders should access [Level 1 training](#) as part of induction
- all staff (including the childminder) must have **Level 2 training** as part of induction. Any assistants (or other staff) should then receive this at least annually. For those childminders who wish staff to access this from an external source, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 2 training](#) via a 2-hour online session. Alternatively, childminders may wish to deliver Level 2 training to all staff within their setting themselves. *(To support safeguarding leads in doing this, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team write presentations for them to deliver to staff, which include all the necessary material. It is also possible to do a combination of these two options, depending on the needs of individual settings)*
- all Designated Safeguarding Leads must access **Level 3 training**, at least every two years. The ECC Education Safeguarding Team offers [Level 3 training](#) which is in-person and offered at various locations across the county.

The ESCB framework

Induction

For whom	Learning outcomes	Delivery and timescales
All staff, regardless of the frequency of contact with children and families	As part of induction, all staff should be provided with:	On start date (or before)

ESCB Level 1

It is expected that this level builds on the knowledge gained in the previous level

For whom	Learning outcomes	Delivery and timescales
All staff working with children and families	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be aware of the national legislation and guidance in relation to safeguarding children (specifically Keeping Children Safe in Education / Statutory Frameworks for Early Years)2. Be aware of local guidance: Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures and Essex Effective Support for Children and Families3. Be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect4. Know how to report concerns about a child5. To be able to document safeguarding/child protection concerns in a clear and concise way that can be shared with other staff members or agencies appropriately6. Understand own role and responsibilities and those of others in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children7. Understand the principles of information sharing DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers Be aware of the increased vulnerability of some children and groups8. Have a basic awareness of honour-based abuse, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, impact of domestic abuse on children, child exploitation and online safety	E-learning or in-person 1 – 2 hours Within the first week of start date

ESCB Level 2

It is expected that this level builds on the knowledge gained in the previous level

For whom	Learning outcomes	Delivery and timescales
All staff working with children and families	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be able to recognise and respond to a range of safeguarding concerns (including Prevent)2. Understand how to respond when a child alleges or discloses abuse3. Know how and when to consult with a DSL or DDSL4. Understand the safeguarding roles of parents and carers and recognise factors that may impact on parenting capacity5. Recognise the different cultural and religious beliefs and the potential impact of this on safeguarding when working with children and families6. Understand and recognise the challenges experienced by some children and/or their families, and the impact this can have on engagement7. Understand how to appropriately challenge other professionals and how to escalate concerns8. Understand boundaries of personal competence and responsibility; know when to involve others and when / where to get advice and support9. Be able to communicate effectively and develop working relationships with other practitioners and professionals, children, and families to safeguard and promote the welfare of children10. Have a working knowledge of Keeping Children Safe in Education / Statutory Framework for Early Years, the current SET Procedures, and Working Together 202611. Understand the importance of the ‘voice of the child’, and know how to advocate for them12. Understand the Essex Effective Support process, to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time	E-learning, though best practice is in-person 2 – 3 hours Within the first week of start date and then refreshed annually

	13. Understand the Essex Early Help process and be able to contribute to and/or co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF) meeting	
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ESCB Level 3

LEVEL 3 PART 1

It is expected that this level builds on the knowledge gained in the previous level

For whom	Learning outcomes	Delivery and timescales
<p>NEW TO ROLE</p> <p>Designated Safeguarding Leads / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads</p>	<p>This foundation course will give delegates an understanding of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National and local statutory child protection guidance including the Southend Essex and Thurrock procedures and Effective support for families and children in Essex 2. Reporting concerns about children in Essex 3. Reporting concerns about the children’s work force in Essex and working with the Local Authority Designated Officer 4. Prevent in Essex 5. Operation Encompass and MARAC in Essex – processes and procedures 6. Sources of support at Early Help in Essex 7. The Essex Education Safeguarding team 8. Essex Education Safeguarding team resources and guidance documents 9. Essex Education safeguarding team training offer 	<p>3 hours online Training need only be attended once prior to attending Level 3 part 2</p>

LEVEL 3 PART 2

It is expected that this level builds on the knowledge gained in the previous level (LEVEL 3 PART 1)

For whom	Learning outcomes	Delivery and timescales
<p>Designated Safeguarding Leads / Deputy</p> <p>Designated Safeguarding Leads</p> <p>Lead practitioners for safeguarding</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have an enhanced understanding of safeguarding to equip them to lead on all safeguarding matters in the setting, including provision of advice and guidance to other staff in relation to safeguarding concerns 2. Be able to lead on high quality standards for the safeguarding culture within the setting and be able to positively influence others to support this 3. Be able to lead on the development and review of all safeguarding policies, procedures and safeguarding training within the setting 4. Have a sound understanding of Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex to support decision making in relation to levels of need for children and families 5. Have a sound understanding and good working knowledge of Essex assessment processes to provide early help and statutory intervention (to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time) 6. Be able to effectively articulate concerns for children and families, to ensure proportionate responses and quality referrals at the appropriate level of need 7. Have an understanding of how to access local support services across all levels of need 8. Have a sound understanding of the additional vulnerabilities of some children and also the importance of the ‘voice of the child’ in all safeguarding work 9. Understand how to resolve professional disagreements and escalate appropriately, in accordance with the SET procedures 	<p>Best practice is in-person</p> <p>6 - 8 hours</p> <p>As soon as possible when starting the role (before or after start date), then refreshed at least every two years</p> <p>Safeguarding leads should also access courses on specific topics to enhance their safeguarding knowledge</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. Have the skills to recognise and work with others to address issues of aggression, non-compliance or disguised compliance that may impact on practitioners' ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child11. Have the appropriate skills and knowledge to enable effective contribution to and attendance at multi-agency meetings12. Have a sound understanding of the impact of trauma on children13. Be able to oversee and maintain a quality recording system for child protection concerns14. Have a sound understanding of the importance of data protection and information sharing, both within the setting and also with other safeguarding partners15. Have a sound understanding of the risks to children online and be able to lead on the approach to online safety, including filtering and monitoring arrangements16. Be able to lead on all concerns relating to Prevent and understand how to access support from other partners17. Understand the concept of 'it could happen here' and be able to lead on systems for reporting and recording low-level concerns18. Understand how to keep updated on current safeguarding matters, including how to access learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and ESCB developments	
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This information is issued by:
Essex County Council

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and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

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