



# **Everly East**

# **Accessible**

# **Safeguarding Policy**

# **(PECS)**

# Everly East

## Accessible Safeguarding Policy

### 2026/2027

|                                    |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Person responsible for the Policy: | Jack Beech                                                                           |
| Date Written:                      | February 2026                                                                        |
| Signed:                            |  |
| Date for Review:                   | August 2026 (Completed)<br>September 2026<br>September 2027                          |
| Key Changes Made:                  | Awaiting annual local authority changed but reviewed on policy date                  |

## **Accessible Safeguarding Policy (PECS)**

Everly East Academy

### **Accessible Safeguarding – Supporting Pupils with ASC and Communication Needs**

Everly East Academy recognises that some pupils, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), communication difficulties or those who are non-verbal, may experience additional barriers when trying to communicate worries, concerns or safeguarding disclosures.

The school is committed to ensuring that safeguarding systems are accessible to all pupils, regardless of their communication needs.

Staff understand that safeguarding disclosures may not always be verbal and may instead be communicated through behaviour, gestures, communication aids or changes in presentation.

All staff are trained to recognise that pupils with communication needs may disclose concerns in different ways and should remain vigilant to potential indicators of distress or safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding support is adapted to ensure pupils are able to communicate safely and effectively.

These approaches include:

- Use of visual communication systems such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- Visual emotion boards or feelings charts
- Communication cards or symbols to indicate worry, fear or discomfort
- Structured opportunities for pupils to communicate concerns with trusted adults
- Use of alternative communication methods such as gestures, pointing or assistive communication devices
- Staff observing changes in behaviour, mood or engagement that may indicate distress

Where appropriate, pupils may be supported to communicate concerns using visual prompts such as:

- “I feel worried” cards
- “I need help” symbols
- Visual safeguarding prompts within classrooms or safe spaces

Staff will ensure that pupils understand that they can communicate concerns to any trusted adult within the school.

If a pupil communicates a safeguarding concern through non-verbal means, behaviour, or visual communication systems, staff will respond in the same way as they would to a verbal disclosure.

Concerns will be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff receive training in recognising non-verbal indicators of safeguarding concerns, particularly for pupils with ASC or communication differences.

The school recognises that changes in behaviour, emotional regulation, engagement, or communication may indicate that a pupil is experiencing distress or harm. These changes will always be explored sensitively and in line with safeguarding procedures.

By ensuring safeguarding processes are accessible and inclusive, Everly East Academy aims to ensure that every pupil can be seen, heard and protected, regardless of their communication needs.

## **Keeping You Safe (Child Friendly Safeguarding)**

### **We keep you safe at school**

At Everly East Academy, we want every pupil to feel safe, happy and supported.

If something worries you, we will help.

### **If you feel worried**

You can tell us if:

- Someone hurts you
- Someone scares you
- Someone makes you feel uncomfortable
- Someone asks you to keep a secret that makes you feel worried
- Something happens online that worries you

You can always tell a **trusted adult**.

### **You can tell an adult in different ways**

You can:

- Talk to an adult
- Show a **PECS card**
- Point to a **feeling picture**
- Write it down
- Use your communication device

- Ask for help

### **Adults who can help you**

You can talk to:

- Your teacher
- A teaching assistant
- The safeguarding lead
- The headteacher
- Any adult you trust in school

We will listen and help you.

### **If you feel unsafe**

You can use a HELP card or I am worried card.

An adult will help you.

You will always be listened to.

### **Remember**

**You are important.**

**You deserve to feel safe.**

**We will help you.**

### **Accessible Safeguarding – PECS**

### **Supporting Pupils with Non-Verbal or Minimally Verbal Communication**

#### **Staff Training Requirements**

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns in pupils who are non-verbal or minimally verbal. This includes:

- Identifying non-verbal indicators of distress, changes in behaviour, or atypical communication patterns that may signal a safeguarding concern.

- Understanding the communication systems used within the school (e.g., AAC devices, PECS, symbol systems, gesture-based communication).
- Responding consistently and appropriately to indicators of distress or concern, even where no verbal disclosure is made.

This training will be included as a core component of the staff induction programme and refreshed regularly to ensure that all staff maintain the necessary competence to safeguard pupils effectively.

### **Recording Non-Verbal Disclosures**

Where a pupil communicates a safeguarding concern non-verbally, staff must respond in the same way as they would to a verbal disclosure. To ensure clarity and consistency, staff will:

- Record the specific non-verbal behaviours or indicators observed (e.g., body language, gestures, avoidance behaviours, emotional reactions, changes in communication attempts).
- Document the context of the observation, including time, location, individuals present, and any preceding events.
- Avoid interpreting or assigning meaning to the behaviour beyond what is directly observable.
- Submit the record promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via the school's agreed reporting system.

The DSL will review all non-verbal disclosure records, determine any required immediate action, and monitor emerging patterns or safeguarding concerns over time.

### **Link to EHCP and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)**

The school recognises that effective safeguarding is dependent on pupils having reliable communication systems that enable them to express needs, preferences, and discomfort. To support this:

- The school will work with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) to ensure that each pupil's communication method is clearly identified, implemented, and embedded from the point of entry or as early as possible.
- The Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process will be used to review and update communication needs, ensuring that any required communication aids, strategies, or staff support are in place and regularly monitored.
- Staff will be informed of each pupil's agreed communication system and provided with appropriate training where necessary to ensure consistency across the setting.

This collaborative approach ensures that pupils are equipped with the tools they need to communicate distress or safeguarding concerns in a way that is understood and responded to appropriately.

   
Safeguarding Policy

    
Everly East Academy

       
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 Someone  makes  you  feel  uncomfortable

 Someone  asks  you  to keep  a secret  that  makes  you

 feel worried

 Something  happens  online  that  worries  you

 You can  always  tell  a trusted adult.



You can tell an adult in different ways



You can:



Talk to an adult



Show a PECS card



Point to a feeling picture



Write it down



Use your communication device



Ask for help





  
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 You can talk to:


  
 Your teacher

  
 A teaching assistant


  
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