



In our school we love deeply, respecting everyone and treating them with dignity;  
we aspire with confidence, working hard and embracing challenge and  
we serve God and the community, following the example of Jesus, to create a better world.

**Ephesians 5:2 (NLT)**

*“Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us”*

***This Policy should be read in conjunction with ‘Keeping children safe in Education’ Information for all school and college staff. Department for Education September 2023***

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

### **Policy aims:**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect the welfare of pupils
- Set out procedures to be followed if sexual exploitation and grooming are suspected
- To provide guidance that should be considered in the framework of the school’s child protection and safeguarding practices.

### **Application:**

This policy should be followed by all staff, volunteers and governors.

### **Definitions:**

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where 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.”

The manipulation or ‘grooming’ process involves befriending children and gaining their trust. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate awareness: for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones, without immediate payment gain.

In all cases, those exploiting a child or young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice due to their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

The link between children being sexually exploited and children going missing is very strong. Some 140,000 children go missing from home or care in the UK each year and it has been estimated that running away places around a quarter of these at risk of serious harm.

Children and young people ESCB CSE Operating March 2017

It is important to recognise that peer on peer sexual exploitation is also an area of concern and staff need to be vigilant of this.

### **The complexity and challenge of sexual exploitation and grooming:**

It can be difficult to identify children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation. The grooming process draws children into what they initially perceive as a new and caring relationship with an exciting older boyfriend or girlfriend. Attempts to explain the risks to the child may be met with derision and hostility. By the time the child realises the reality of the 'relationship' they may have been seriously sexually and physically abused, threatened with the distribution of indecent photographs or videos of their abuse and warned that they will put themselves or their family in danger if they speak out. Unsurprisingly, the child will be reticent to disclose their abuse, particularly to people in positions of authority such as teachers, social workers or police officers. The child may find it impossible, for a number of reasons, to speak to their parent and their abusers will have sought to isolate them from their family and friends. Some children may have developed drug or alcohol addictions and rely on their abusers for supply.

A fundamental learning point to emerge from cases of sexual exploitation such as those in Derby, Rochdale and Oxford and the Jimmy Saville case is that many children who try to disclose their abuse are not believed, or value judgements are made by professionals about the young person, suggesting they are 'willing partners' in a lifestyle they have 'chosen'. Remarkably, some young people's concerns and disclosures have been dismissed as groundless because of their challenging behaviour, involvement in crime or history of going missing from home, school or care.

As a school we have a responsibility to do all we can to raise awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming and to identify and support any pupil who is at risk of abuse.

### **School Action:**

School staff are in daily direct contact with children and we play an important role in keeping pupils safe and supporting them when things go wrong. To help keep our pupils safe from sexual exploitation and grooming we will:

- Promote healthy and safe relationships
- Raise pupils' awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming at an age appropriate level
- Raise staff awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming
- Help parents to understand the issues
- Contribute to multi-agency safeguarding and child protection arrangements

### Key Facts:

Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old (but can affect much younger children) Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.

- It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
- Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups: Looked After Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
- Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally and internationally).
- Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.
- Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

### What are the signs and symptoms of child sexual exploitation?

Grooming and sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour and/or development. However, parents, carers, school teachers and practitioners are advised to be alert to the following signs and symptoms:

- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour
- repeat sexually transmitted infections; in girls repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- going missing from home or care or school
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- neglect of self, withdrawn
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault

### Procedures to be followed when sexual exploitation or grooming are known or suspected:

Early identification of risk is known to be a crucial factor in reducing harm so the vigilance of school staff is critically important. Staff should not attempt to manage concerns about sexual exploitation or grooming in isolation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must always be informed and school's Senior Leadership Team, who will seek advice from and make referrals to Social Care.

### Safeguarding Portfolio Policies

Anti-bullying	Missing Children
Child Protection & Safeguarding	Positive Handling
Health and Safety	Safer Recruitment
Inclusion	SEN
Medical Needs	Whistleblowing

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