

Highgate Hill House School

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

This policy was adopted by the Proprietor on 01/12/2016

Reviewed 01/12/2019

To be Reviewed: Dec 2020

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has become a growing and serious concern and is recognised as a form of child sexual abuse. This Policy is a recognition of this concern and our commitment to protecting and supporting the school community and working with partner agencies to achieve this. This Policy falls within the established Child Protection and Safeguarding framework that is already in place in school.

At Highgate Hill House School we strive to support and teach students about how to make positive choices and informed decisions in their relationships so that they develop awareness and can protect themselves from all potential forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. As a school we promote healthy friendships and relationships through the school ethos, school policies, student-staff relationships and the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. An awareness of the risk factors and signs and indicators of CSE is key for all staff as is how to access support and guidance.

The purpose of this policy is to create a considered and consistent approach to dealing with CSE at Highgate Hill House School.

Aims and objectives

- To increase awareness and understanding of CSE within the school setting
- To raise awareness of the risk factors and warning signs of CSE
- To provide relevant information and guidance on CSE, which is accessible to staff, parents/carers and students
- To provide a consistent approach when dealing with CSE
- To make available support for pupils, parents/carers and staff in the event of concerns arising in relation to CSE
- To enable those seeking help to feel secure and supported

There are key principles to bear in mind –

1. Sexual exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and, in some cases, neglect.
2. Children and young people do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but do so due to coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.
3. Young people under 16 cannot consent to sexual activity: sexual intercourse with children under the age of 13 is statutory rape. (Sexual Offences Act 2003)
4. Sexually exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
5. Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion should be handled with care and sensitivity by professionals.

6. The primary law enforcement effort must be made against the coercers and adults who sexually exploit young people. In some cases young people themselves may exploit other young people, and in these cases law enforcement action may also be necessary.

Vulnerability factors to CSE

Children are more vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experience of one or more of the following:

- Child sexual abuse
- Domestic violence within the family
- Family breakdown
- Physical abuse and emotional deprivation
- Bullying in or out of school
- Family involvement in sexual exploitation
- Parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug/alcohol, mental health etc)
- Drug/alcohol, mental health or other difficulties themselves
- Being looked after in residential care
- Going missing frequently

By virtue of regular contact with young people, school staff are well placed to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs which may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation. School staff should also be mindful of the risks posed by CSE and remain alert to the potential for this and need to respond immediately.

In the event of staff identifying concerns relating to CSE, this information should be shared immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The concerns will be reviewed and appropriate action taken in line with the school Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Prevention

Staff will be made aware of this policy and the importance of on-going vigilance and early intervention to prevent the likelihood for sexual exploitation and abuse occurring.

The issue of Child Sexual Exploitation will also be raised on different levels within the school and will be informed by support and guidance from the Local Authority and partner agencies as appropriate:

At a whole school level:-

This will be achieved through staff briefings and pupil assemblies which will provide information and guidance relating to CSE as well as the support available in school and through external agencies.

Information and guidance:-

Will be provided and reinforced through tutor time and the Citizenship and PSHE curriculum. This will provide positive guidance and advice to facilitate and support healthy personal and social development, along with Esafety issues.

At an individual level:- where concerns are identified or suspected (through information received or disclosed) a response will be fashioned in line with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated.

It is accepted that all children and young people may potentially be at risk of online CSE and therefore, by way or response, Highgate Hill House School has a robust E-Safety policy to ensure pupils are taught to recognise online risk and who to report any concerns to.

Highgate Hill House School will commit to having appropriate staff complete CEOP training and attend training on CSE to ensure that appropriate knowledge and skills are available to support the school community.

Confidentiality

We appreciate that some pupils may feel anxious about seeking help due to concerns about sharing of information and confidentiality. We always strive to share information on a 'need to know' basis and to manage information discreetly and sensitively. Therefore information will only be shared in the child or young persons' best interest.

Staff are legally bound to share information if they feel the pupil is at risk or is suffering from significant harm, and therefore complete confidentiality cannot be achieved.

Parental Involvement

As a school we always seek wherever possible to establish a positive partnership with parents and carers and to work proactively to support pupils and their families.

If a concern is raised either by a young person or a peer, it would be usual to initiate contact with home. It is often the case that the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the pupil's tutor. The pupil involved will also be asked to attend this meeting if at all possible. The concerns raised will be discussed and an action plan may be formulated to address concerns. In specific circumstances it may not be possible to contact the parents/carer prior to sharing information and concerns with the MASH. Professional guidance will be sought and every effort made to communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible whilst ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As with all Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns within school, the identification or disclosure of CSE will be recorded and securely stored. Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis to ensure the safety and well-being those involved.

Any communication with home, or meetings with the child will be recorded and the relevant bodies will be informed about issues or concerns.

Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any on-going concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and pupils.

How do we ensure that people are aware of this Policy?

- Formal acceptance by the Governing Body.
- This policy will be made available to staff, parents and students on the School website.
- Students will be informed about Child Sexual Exploitation and the school policy through assemblies and academic teaching (PHSE, Citizenship and tutorials).
- Pupils can speak to members of staff about their concerns throughout the school day and will be offered support, advice and guidance.

Appendix for Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It is complex and can manifest itself in different ways.

The agreed definition of child sexual exploitation "involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/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 resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability." (HM Government, 2012, Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation).

As with all types of abuse, child sexual exploitation can have a devastating impact on the child or young person who is being exploited. It can disrupt their social lives and education, and cause long-term mental health problems including self-harm, attempts at suicide, and relationship behaviours which can affect achieving a fulfilling life.

In March 2015, the Government stated that tackling child sexual abuse was a national priority.

What we know

Child sexual exploitation has had a higher profile in recent years, due to the widely publicised cases in Rochdale, Rotherham and Oxfordshire. Separate independent reviews for these cases highlighted that organised child sexual exploitation had "been happening on a massive scale over many years" and that "local agencies had dismissed concerns or put in place an adequate response" (Jay 2013; Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation

in Rotherham (1997-2013). It is clear that child sexual exploitation has been an issue for other local authorities, although these have not been subject to the same media coverage.

Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. It can be difficult to identify victims, as children and young people rarely disclose abuse through sexual exploitation due to a number of complex factors. For example, children not being aware that they are being abused, fear and shame and feeling 'in love' with the perpetrator(s).

Facts, Figures, Trends

Evidence submitted to the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups indicated that over 16,500 children and young people in England were at high risk of child sexual exploitation in 2010/11. 2,409 children were confirmed as victims over this period, although this was recognised as an under-estimation of the true number of victims.

The Inquiry's findings showed that victims of child sexual exploitation were both male and female, and a range of ages, ethnicities and sexualities. Of the 2,408 victims identified:

- ages ranged between 4 and 19 years old, with a peak age of 15
- majority were girls
- higher rate of victimisation of children from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. 28% of all victims identified were from a BME group, which is an over-representation of England's population
- 155 were also identified as being perpetrators of child sexual exploitation

The Inquiry explained that the characteristics common to all victims were "their powerlessness and vulnerability", rather than a particular demographic. However, while it is acknowledged that "children from loving and secure home can be abused...those for whom there are no protective measures in place are at greatest risk".

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead completed an internal audit of statutory requirements that safeguard and protect children and young people at risk of Sexual Exploitation, as part of the Royal Borough's new Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy. The audit showed that from December 2013 to October 2014, at least 31 young people had been identified as at risk in the borough. These were categorised at 3 different levels:

- Level 1: where there is no current information that they are at risk of CSE but who have previously been linked to CSE and/or are displaying the warning signs = 18 children and young people
- Level 2: where there is information that suggests a current risk of CSE but no disclosures or evidence. There will be a higher number of risk indicators present, including those captured in level 1 and those listed under level 2. The case is likely to have been considered under Section 47 = 8 children and young people
- Level 3: where there has been a disclosure of sexual offences perpetrated against them or where an active investigation is taking place due to corroborated intelligence or evidence regarding CSE = 5 children and young people.

National and Local Strategies

National Strategies

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including keeping children safe from sexual exploitation, is a key part of the Government's drive to improve outcomes for children and young people. This is underpinned by a number of national strategies and policies:

- Department for Education (2006); Working Together to Safeguard Children - the core Government guidance which sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) The Staying Safe Action Plan
 - Department of Health (2009), Healthy lives, brighter futures: The strategy for children and young people's health - sets out the Government's long-term strategy to support children's and families' health including a commitment to ensure that all organisations with responsibility for child health and wellbeing are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children
- HM Government (2009); Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation this national guidance supplements 'Working together to Safeguard Children' and is aimed at local safeguarding children's boards, practitioners and professionals working with children and young people.