



Seaham Trinity Primary School Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

Introduction:

This policy has been developed in response to growing concerns about the scale of sexual exploitation and the recognition that any child might be targeted for grooming and exploitation.

Policy aims:

The aims of this policy are to:

- demonstrate Seaham Trinity Primary School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils
- raise awareness about sexual exploitation and grooming
- help staff to identify warning signs and vulnerable children
- explain the school's procedures to be followed if sexual exploitation and grooming are suspected
- stress the importance of multi-agency cooperation.

Application:

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

Definitions:

Sexual exploitation is a form of abuse whereby children are deliberately persuaded to enter into situations where they receive something (for example, gifts, money, food, accommodation) in exchange for sexual activity. Most victims are female, though there is thought to be considerable underreporting by male victims, who may be confused about their sexuality and be unwilling to draw attention to themselves.

Most perpetrators are male, though women may also be involved. Children may be exploited by an individual, several individuals working as an organised group, or by a gang.

Grooming is the process of 'preparing' a boy or girl for a sexual purpose. Grooming is often slow and subtle, continuing for several weeks or months and lulling the child into a false sense of security. It always involves manipulation and deceit.

Two types of grooming are recognised: street grooming which occurs in the community, and online grooming using technology including the internet and mobile phones.

(Note: references to children, young people or pupils mean all individuals under the age of 18. References to parents mean parents, carers and others with parental responsibility.)

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 in to 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 the only professionals 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 through Science and PHSE lessons. Older pupils will participate in Healthy Relationships Education, which will be led by school staff in support with the school nurse;
- Raise pupils' awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming at an age appropriate level through PHSE lessons, which will be led by staff;
- Raise staff awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming through staff meetings;
- Help parents to understand the issues by sharing information at parents' meetings and signposting through additional communication, e.g. newsletters;
- Contribute to multi-agency safeguarding and child protection arrangements;
- Participate in regular child protection training, which also includes information on CSE.

The age of consent:

Although in UK law a child is anyone under the age of 18, the age of consent to sexual activity (whether heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual) is 16. Children who have reached the age of consent may nevertheless be capable of being victims of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or rape.

Regarding children (that is, those under the age of 18) sexual activity is a criminal offence and school will always refer concerns about this to children's social services. School staff should report any concern about sexual activity to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will decide on the most appropriate course of action. The school will follow the DSCB guidance on dealing with under-age sexual activity.

School staff who are approached by a pupil wishing to discuss sexual matters must make it clear to the pupil that they cannot guarantee confidentiality but will act in the child's best interests.

Sexually active young people:

In law, a child is a person under the age of 18. Not all sexual activity involving a child is criminal, nor is it always abusive. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13–15 as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to children's social services. The professional should make this assessment using the considerations below. Within this age range the younger the child the stronger the presumption must be that sexual activity will be a matter of concern. Cases of concern should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, subsequently, with other agencies if required. Where confidentiality needs to be preserved a discussion can still take place as long as it does not identify the child (directly or indirectly).

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that significant harm to a child has occurred, or is likely to occur, there should be a presumption that the case is reported to children's social services and a strategy discussion should be held to discuss appropriate next steps. Again, all cases should be carefully documented including where a decision is taken not to share information.

The following factors should be taken into account when assessing the extent to which the child may be suffering or at risk of harm:

- The age of the child. Sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator that there are risks to the welfare of the child (whether boy or girl) and possibly others
- The level of maturity and understanding of the child
- What is known about the child's living circumstances or background
- Age or status imbalance, in particular where there is a significant age or status difference
- Overt aggression
- Coercion or bribery
- A history of child sexual offences within the family
- Behaviour of the child, e.g. Withdrawn, anxious
- The misuse of substances, including alcohol, which may act to lower inhibitions
- Whether the child's own behaviour, including a tendency to misuse substances, might place him/her

at risk of harm so that s/he is unable to make an informed choice about any activity

- Whether any attempts to secure secrecy have been made by the sexual partner, beyond what would

be considered usual in a teenage relationship

- Whether the child denies, minimises or accepts concerns
- Whether the methods used are consistent with grooming and
- Whether the sexual partner/s is/are known by one of the agencies.

On the basis of careful assessment of the above factors a decision should be made about whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that significant harm has occurred or might occur. If there is reasonable cause a referral should be made to children's social services who are expected to apply child protection procedures and hold a Strategy Meeting/Discussion to discuss appropriate next steps.

The Police should normally share required information about the sexual partner without beginning an investigation. The Strategy Meeting/Discussion must consider issues of consent and confidentiality in respect of informing parents/carers without the young person's consent, seeking legal advice as appropriate.

A Child/Young Person 16 or 17 Years Old

Sexual activity involving a 16- or 17-year-old, although it might not constitute an offence, may still involve harm or the risk of harm (For example, rape or harassment etc).

Professionals should bear in mind the considerations and processes outlined above in this guidance in assessing that risk, and should share information as appropriate.

It should also be remembered that where someone is in a position of trust or authority in relation to a child (that is, anyone under the age of 18) it is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with the child.

The Legal Framework:

Sections 175 and 157 of The Education Act 2002 require the governing bodies of all schools and colleges and the proprietors of independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

The statutory child protection guidance for schools is 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment'. This guidance was replaced by 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' in 2019. The new advice document explains the role of the school.

'School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.'

The multi-agency child protection guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) emphasises that:

'... practitioners working in both universal services and specialist services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and provide children with the help they need. To be effective, practitioners need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this area and be aware of the new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation and radicalisation. To enable this, the three safeguarding partners should consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission.'

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 covers sexual offences against children, including offences involving grooming and the internet and trafficking.

Warning Signs:

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse and the range of indicators of sexual abuse can be found in

Appendix 1 and in the school's child protection policy.

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 DSL must always be informed and school

leadership will enlist the advice and support of children's social services and the police as appropriate.

The next review of this policy is in a years time in 2022 with the full Governing Body.

This policy was shared with teachers, teaching assistants, kitchen staff, caretaker and cleaning staff, administration staff, lunchtime staff and governors. This policy can also be accessed through the school's website.

APPENDIX 1

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The government's definition and guide "Child Sexual Exploitation" (2017) provides information on potential indicators of child sexual exploitation.

Development Needs:

Health:

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault).
- Chronic fatigue.
- Recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion.
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse.
- Sexually risky behaviours.

Education:

- Patterns of unexplained absence from school/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school.

Emotional and Behavioural Development:

- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language.
- Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults.

Identity:

- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity.

Family and Social Relationships:

- Hostility in relationship with parent/carers and other family members.
- Physical aggression towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers.
- Placement breakdown.
- Reports from reliable sources (e.g. parents/carers, friends or other professionals in contact with the child or young person) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation.
- Detachment from age-appropriate activities.
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited.

- Young person known to be sexually active.
- Sexual relationship with a significantly older person.
- Unexplained relationship with older adults.
- Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the internet.
- Phone calls, texts messages or letter from unknown adults.
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence.
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation.
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having no home base.
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base.
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links.

Social Presentation:

- Change in appearance.
- Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people).

Parental Capacity:

Ensuring Safety:

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or neglect.

Family and Environmental Factors:

Family History and Functioning

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties.

Housing

- Pattern of street homelessness.
- Having keys to premises other than those known about.

Income

- Possession of large amount of money with no plausible explanation.
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation.
- Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding.

Family's Social Integration

- Reports that the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation.

INDICATORS SPECIFIC TO BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Development Needs

Health

- Physical, symptoms – sexually transmitted infections, bruising or other marks suggestive of

physical or sexual abuse.

- Drug or alcohol misuse.

Education

- Patterns of unexplained absence from school, deterioration of schoolwork, or part-time timetable.

Emotional and Behavioural Development

- Secretive
- Young offender behaviour or anti-social behaviour
- Secretive about internet use or using adult networking sites
- Sexualised language
- Aggressive or violent
- Sexually offending behaviour.

Family and Social Relationships

- Associating with other children who are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Missing from home or staying out late.
- Getting into cars of unknown people.
- Contact with unknown adults outside of normal social group via face to face meetings, internet, text messaging or phone calls.

Identity

- Low self-image, poor self-image, or lack of confidence.

Social Presentation

- Wearing an unusual amount of clothing.

Family and Environmental Factors

Income

- Social activities with no explanation of how funded.
- Possession of abnormal amounts of money, gifts, new mobile phones, credit on mobile phones, number of sim cards.

Family's Social Integration

- Frequenting known high-risk areas or going to addresses of concern.
- Seen at public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs).