



## Saint Edmund's Catholic Primary School

*'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'*

# Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

Committee responsible for policy	Full Governing Body
Approved by Committee/ <b>FGB</b>	December 2021
Statutory/Non-statutory	STATUTORY
Frequency of Review	Annual
Date of last review	New Policy
Date of next review	<b>September 2023</b>
Purpose of policy	To fulfil the Governing Body's responsibility to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in place consistent with London Safeguarding Children's board (LSCB) and in account with the guidance from DfE to safeguard children & promote their welfare
Consultation	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
Links to other policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Behaviour Anti-bulling Acceptable Use Policy Medical including Intimate Care RSE

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**Definition:**

"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."

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse affecting boys and girls. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Child sexual exploitation may occur without the child being aware of events, or understanding that these constitute abuse.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

**Child sexual exploitation:**

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child's or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. While age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, or access to economic or other resources

## **Consent**

Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation), consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

## **Key factors in child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation involves some form of exchange (sexual activity in return for something) between the victim and/or perpetrator or facilitator. Where there is no such exchange, for example, where the gain for the perpetrator is sexual gratification (or the exercise of power or control), this is described as sexual abuse (and not exploitation).

The exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). The receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim.

It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the definition of exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

## **Links to other kinds of crime**

- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (including online grooming)
- Abusive images of children and their distribution
- Drugs-related offences
- Gang-related activity
- Immigration-related offences
- Domestic servitude

## **Potential vulnerabilities**

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe or stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation or social difficulties

- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Sexual identity

### **Possible indicators of child sexual exploitation**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc, without plausible explanation
- Gang association and/or isolation from peers and social networks
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work
- Leaving home or care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Returning home under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age or sexually transmitted infections
- Evidence of or suspicion of physical or sexual assault
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- Frequenting areas known for sex work
- Concerning use of internet or other social media
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- Online exploitation
- Periods of going missing overnight or longer;
- Older 'boyfriend/girlfriend' or relationship with a controlling adult;
- Physical or emotional abuse by that 'boyfriend/girlfriend' or controlling adult;
- Entering and/or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothing or other items;
- Physical injury without plausible explanation;
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.

## **Early Intervention**

To help children and young people achieve good outcomes it is important to identify issues and problems early and to take prompt preventative action. Early intervention is likely to be far more effective than intervention at a later stage when the impact on the child's or young person's health or development is likely to have escalated.

## **A Child Centred Approach**

Children and young people at risk of CSE will often be in high risk situations and isolated from protective, nurturing adults. They will need to be encouraged to express their wishes and feelings to make sense of their particular circumstances and contribute to decisions that affect them. Of particular relevance is the impact of those who may have groomed and conditioned children and young people, to coerce and abuse them. Children and young people may also be under very strong pressure, intimidated, afraid and/or dependent on those that have exploited them where substance misuse is a factor. Children and young people may therefore reject offers of help and support and appropriate interventions need to be designed to address this.

## **Other Agencies**

Vulnerable children and young people will be identified and targeted by abusers/coercers and we must ensure that both we and local agencies act quickly and sensitively in the best interests of the child or young person concerned. It is vital that good strong support and re-integration strategies are put into place to ensure a positive outcome.

St Edmund's works alongside local agencies and adheres to local protocols developed within the framework of working together to address this form of abuse. It is our primary aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children and young people and to encourage the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity by those who coerce children and young people and abuse them through exploitation.

It is our policy to discuss concerns regarding child involvement in exploitation such as exploitation or pornography etc. on a multi-agency level. Staff must collaborate together to recognise the problem, treat the child or young person as a victim, safeguard and promote their welfare, investigate and aid prosecutions and to develop strategies for children and young people to exit exploitation for good.

- A child or young person involved in exploitation may have been victim to physical and sexual abuse, the responsibilities of reporting and supporting the investigation of abuse are set out in our Safeguarding Children Policy. Staff should be particularly alert to relationships of children and young people with older persons, presence of gifts, money etc., and frequent absences from the home or encouraged visits to the person's home.
- Children or Young people developing regular contact with older persons may see these persons picking them up in cars, loitering around premises and if concerns exist should always be reported to senior staff and the police.

- Key agency contacts will be SPA, Early Help, Police, Social Services, LADO, NSPCC, Health Authority, Education and Youth Services and local voluntary agencies.
- OFSTED must be notified of any child or young person involved or suspected of involvement in sexual exploitation.
- Staff must always give consideration to the needs of the child or young person and arrangements for their immediate safety, continuing protection and safeguarding the child or young persons' diversion from exploitation.

### **What to do if staff are concerned about a child**

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately. Any concerns regarding indicators of abuse or neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue should be recorded on a 'Cause for Concern' form (found in the Child Protection folder on the server) and passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used (found in appendix 3 of safe). Concerns can also be discussed in person with the DSL but the details of the concern should be recorded in writing.

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.

St Edmund's recognises that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding.

In these circumstances staff will exercise professional curiosity and will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the 'Cause for Concern' form to record these early concerns and give the completed form to the DSL.

Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing.

# Raising safeguarding concerns about a child

