



Whistleblowing Policy



Encourage, Guide, Support, Celebrate

Date Approved: Autumn 2025

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Definition:

"The sexual exploitation of children and young people **Under 18** involves situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or person) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no 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."

The national working group for sexually exploited children and young people. 2008.

Online sexual exploitation includes:

- Befriending through online chat rooms/messaging services.
- Online grooming techniques e.g. stalking, identity pretence, false promises e.g. meeting celebrities, tickets, gifts.
- Asking children to talk and share indecent images of themselves.
- Leverage for further demands e.g. threats to show other people recorded sexual acts by child/young person.
- Arranging offline meeting for the purpose of sexually abusing child.
- Contact from perpetrators in other countries & abused online.
- Speed of grooming can be very quick – leaving little 'thinking' time.

The restrained influencing of a child over several months has been largely replaced by rapid escalation to threats, intimidation and coercion.

Procedures:

With this policy we make it clear that all Governors, staff and volunteers are committed to dealing effectively with Child Sexual Exploitation. (CSE).

- We identify and make known to staff and pupils a designated lead person for CSE who is fully trained and updated regularly.
- The designated safeguarding lead and CSE lead are both the same person.
- All staff are made aware of and understand the CSE indicators and referral pathways.
- Pupils are taught about healthy (and sexual) relationships, peer pressure, bullying, online safety, gang activity etc and how these topics can relate to CSE.
- All pupils know who to go to for help and support, and to report CSE concerns to.
- Relevant staff work in partnership with other agencies.

- Procedures are in place to continually gather, record and share CSE information with LSCB and police. As soon as practically possible, including ongoing data on pupils running away or going missing episodes.
- We consider effective ways of raising awareness of CSE with parents/carers.

Vulnerabilities;

All children and young people, including those from supportive families can be vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, some children and young people are known to be at greater risk. For example, those that;

- Have a chaotic home/family life.
- Have a history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect.
- Have experienced loss or bereavement.
- Are associated with gangs through relatives/peers, or are living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Have friends with children and young people who are being sexually exploited.
- Have learning difficulties.
- Live in residential care, or hostel/bed & breakfast accommodation.
- Have low self-esteem/confidence.
- Are young carers i.e have caring responsibilities for parents/family members with mental or physical health problems, or who are misusing substances.

Warning signs:

Children and young people who are being sexually exploited may be:

- Going missing from home or care
- Absent from school
- Increasing their use of social media, dating sites, image sharing apps etc.
- Involved in risky online relationships including new contact with people out of the area.
- Sharing indecent/inappropriate online images with peers, or with people only met online.
- Becoming isolated/estranged from family and friends
- Meeting people befriended on line
- Involved in offending behaviour
- Misusing drugs/alcohol
- Experiencing sexual cyber-bullying
- Changing their physical appearance.
- Experiencing repeated sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- In poor mental health and or self-harming, having thoughts of or attempting suicide.
- Receiving money & gifts from unknown sources.

Risk assessment on consent:

“In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, or at risk of becoming a victim, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind:

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any type of sexual touching.

- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.
- Where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered.
- Nonconsensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim and
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence, or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.”

What to do next:

Any member of staff who suspects or receives information that a child or young person **may be** involved in sexual exploitation (including suspicion that they are being groomed online) should refer their concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL.

If there are concerns about the involvement of a person who: works with children and/or is in a position of trust the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** should be informed.

Where appropriate the child’s wishes and feelings, as well as those of their parents/carers should be sought and taken into consideration when deciding how to proceed. However, practitioners should be aware that this may not always be in the child’s best interest and may put them at further risk of harm.

Some children may have been trafficked and need support to access services. Practitioners should refer to the ‘Designated Competent Authorities’ based within the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). The contact details are below.

Key documents referred to and underpinning this policy are:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025*
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Working together to safeguard children 2018
- Whistle Blowing Policy

Links with other policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Good Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- PREVENT Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Managing Allegations against Staff
- Online Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Guidelines
- Staff Code of Conduct