

Halfway Nursery Infant School



Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

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Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has become a growing and serious concern and is recognised as a form of child sexual abuse. The Halfway Nursery Infant School Child Sexual Exploitation Policy is recognition of this concern, and of our commitment to protecting and supporting the school community, and working with partner agencies to achieve this. As such, this Policy falls within the established Child Protection and Safeguarding framework that is in place in school, and as documented in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

At the Halfway Nursery Infant School we strive to support and teach children 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. The school promotes healthy friendships and relationships through the school ethos, school policies, child-staff relationships and the curriculum. Awareness of the risk factors and signs and indicators of CSE are 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 Halfway Nursery Infant 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 children
- To provide a consistent approach when dealing with CSE
- To make available support for learners, parents and staff in the event of concerns arising in relation to CSE
- To enable those seeking help to feel secure and supported.

The following 6 principles underpin our CSE procedures and guidance –

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 should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
5. Many sexually exploited children have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities into which they are coerced. 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.

Definition and Overview of CSE

The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People defines sexual exploitation as:

“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 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 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.

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”

Sexually exploited children are rarely visible on the streets and are only a small part of the bigger picture of sexual exploitation of children by adults, other children and young people. A growing number of the young people are being sexually exploited by adults and older young people via the Internet. This method of grooming children for abuse has contributed to the invisibility of the sexual exploitation of children.

Sexual exploitation involves both girls and boys under the age of 18. The children involved must be regarded as potential victims of abuse. Increasingly, victims are children under 16 years of age, from all communities and cultures and include a significant proportion of looked after children. Vulnerability due to abuse, neglect, domestic violence and parental difficulties, disengagement from education, drugs/alcohol, homelessness, peers' involvement in sexual exploitation and association with 'risky' adults are the most common factors amongst children who are at risk of being sexually exploited. Strong links have been identified between child sexual exploitation and prostitution, running away from home, human trafficking and substance misuse. Looked After Children are also particularly at risk of being targeted for sexual exploitation. (Barnado's: Reducing the Risk 2006)

Children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by a young person of a similar age. Girls, in particular, are often coerced into sexual exploitation by an older male who targets an individual. They may see him as their boyfriend, and become physically and emotionally dependent upon him. This may be reinforced by the use of alcohol and drugs. Over time, access to friends and family may become restricted and the child becomes alienated from sources of support which may be able to identify and interrupt the abuse. This is often referred to as the grooming process.

Sexual exploitation adversely affects the lives of children and impacts on their health, education, self-esteem and causes them to be socially excluded. This group may include children who have been victims of human trafficking.

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; and
- Going missing frequently

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

Responding to Concerns – Risk Assessment Framework

In the event of staff identifying concerns relating to CSE, this information should be shared immediately with the school Child Protection Officer, Paula Bestall. The concerns will be reviewed and appropriate action taken in line with the school Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Where appropriate, consultation will take place with appropriate local authority support services.

A multi-agency approach will be adopted to ensure that holistic support is available – potentially involving partner agencies such as the Police, Children’s Social Care, and School Nursing Service.

Prevention

Staff training and briefings will be used to share information, and ensure that CSE is recognised as a potential cause for concern and source of risk and harm for the school community. Staff will be made aware of this policy and the importance of ongoing vigilance and early intervention to prevent the likelihood for sexual exploitation and abuse occurring. Guidance and information relating to CSE is readily accessible to staff through this policy, which can be accessed on www.hniclassroom.co.uk.

The issue of Child Sexual Exploitation is addressed at different levels within the school, and is 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 learner 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 Personal Safety days. Additionally, the curriculum will provide positive guidance and advice to facilitate and support healthy personal and social development, including e-safety issues.
- At an individual level – where concerns are identified or suspected (through information received or disclosed), the response will be in line with the CSE procedures. This will also be informed by the requirements of the Halfway Nursery Infant School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and dealt with as a potential safeguarding concern. **All** expressions of concern are taken seriously and investigated.
- It is accepted that all children may potentially be at risk of online CSE. We address this through a robust E-Safety policy to ensure children are helped to recognise online risk and know to whom they should report any concerns.
- We are committed to providing staff with appropriate CSE related training.

Confidentiality

The school appreciates that some children may feel anxious about seeking help due to concerns that this information is shared with others. We always strive to share information on a ‘need to know’ basis and manage information discreetly and sensitively. Information will only be shared in the child’s best interest. Staff are legally bound to share information if they feel the child is at risk, or is suffering from significant harm.

Parental Involvement

The school seeks, whenever possible, to establish a positive partnership with parents and carers, and to work proactively to support children and their families.

If a concern is raised by a child, it is usual to initiate contact with home. It is often the case that the parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the Child Protection Officer. 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 parents/carers prior to sharing information and concerns with professional support organisations. 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 children.

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 of those involved.

Any communication with home, and 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 then be communicated to staff and parents/carers.

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

Formal acceptance by the Governing Body.

This policy will be made available to parents and stakeholders via the school website.

Children are made aware of Child Sexual Exploitation in ways appropriate to their ages and levels of understanding through curriculum teaching.

Children can speak to members of staff about their concerns throughout the school day and will be offered support, advice and guidance.