

# Child on Child Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy



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## CHILD ON CHILD HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum. It ranges from normal and developmentally expected (age-appropriate) to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent. Problematic, abusive, and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. This is known as Harmful Sexual Behaviour, which children can experience in various settings including at our organisation, at home (or in another home), in public places, online, or in person. Hatfield Wick Education recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of harmful sexual behaviour.

We take any allegation of abuse between our learners seriously and follow our child protection procedures if a report of harmful sexual behaviour is made. This may include seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. Decisions are made taking into account the age and developmental stages of any child involved. We also consider any other factors as appropriate and balance this with our duty and responsibilities to protect all children.

### 2. WHAT HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR MEANS

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes statutory guidance for all education settings: Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023). Part 5 of this guidance sets out how organisations should manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment (harmful sexual behaviour).

#### 2.1 Sexual Violence

This means sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape;
- Assault by penetration;
- Sexual assault (which includes inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching);
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent (a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity).

#### 2.2 Sexual Harassment

This means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur online and offline, both inside and outside of our organisation, including:

- Sexual comments (telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names);
- Sexual 'jokes' or taunting;
- Physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with someone's clothes;
- Displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature;

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture or video under a person’s clothing without them knowing.

### 2.3 Online Harmful Sexual Behaviour

This can be a single event or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (this is a criminal offence);
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- Sexualised online bullying;
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media;
- Sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats;
- Coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online.

## 3. WHOLE ORGANISATION APPROACH TO HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

### 3.1 Children

We talk to our learners in an age-appropriate way about healthy, positive, and respectful relationships. We help our learners to understand what is meant by boundaries and privacy, online and offline. We aim to provide learners with the language to report abuse and explain how they can report concerns and tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### 3.2 Parents and Carers

It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour and that they reinforce key messages from our organisation at home. We work in partnership with parents and carers to support our learners and want to help them to keep their children safe.

### 3.3 Staff

Our staff undertake annual safeguarding training to ensure they are aware of the signs of abuse and how to recognise them. Staff also receive regular updates on a number of safeguarding issues, including harmful sexual behaviour.

### 3.4 Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We have systems in place to filter information and block internet access to harmful sites and inappropriate content. These systems are monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective.

## 4. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

### 4.1 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Our staff will never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern nor promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by a statutory agency (Police and/or Social Care).

### 4.2 Anonymity

It is important that any child (victim or perpetrator) is safeguarded when an incident of harmful sexual behaviour has occurred. We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of all children involved.

### 4.3 Recording Incidents

It is essential that we record all reports about harmful sexual behaviour within our organisation in line with our Safeguarding Policy. Any member of staff receiving a report of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this will record it as soon as possible.

### 4.4 Risk Assessment

We will usually complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour. Our risk assessment will include considerations such as:

- The victim and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them
- Whether there may have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator(s)
- The time and location of the incident(s) and any action required to make the location(s) safer
- All other children (and if appropriate, our staff) at the organisation

## 5. PRINCIPLES

We will take a balanced and proportionate approach to harmful sexual behaviour based on the principle that it is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Our approach will help ensure that all children are protected and supported appropriately. Cases of harmful sexual behaviour will be considered carefully on an individual basis and in conjunction with other agencies when they are involved. The safety of all our children is paramount, and we have a duty of care to all learners.

## 6. SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORTING A VICTIM

We will assess what short-term and long-term support a child may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident and recover from what they have experienced. We will work with other partners as appropriate and in accordance with the child's wishes and, wherever appropriate, in discussion with parents and carers.

## 7. SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORTING AN ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

We will also protect and support children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. We aim to ensure that any intervention will effectively address the behaviour at the appropriate level of need. We will carefully consider when to inform an alleged perpetrator(s) about a report of harmful sexual behaviour made against them, in consultation with relevant agencies.

## 8. INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND CARERS

In line with our child protection procedures, we inform parents or carers about reports of harmful sexual behaviour unless doing so may place a child at additional risk. We seek advice from other safeguarding partners in individual cases based on the circumstances of each case.

## 9. ONGOING SUPPORT FOR OUR LEARNERS

We will consider what ongoing support our learners may need and tailor this on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of all children involved. Support may include pastoral support, counselling services, provision of a trusted adult, or a referral to an external specialist agency.

## 10. OUTCOMES

We will always seek to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to an actual or alleged incident, liaising with our safeguarding partners as appropriate.

### 10.1 Manage Internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children involved are not in need of early help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other policies, such as our child protection, behaviour, and anti-bullying policies, and provide pastoral support where appropriate.

### 10.2 Early Help

Where statutory intervention is not required or agreed, we may use an early help approach instead, providing support as soon as a problem emerges.

### 10.3 Requests for Support to Children's Social Care

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a request for support to Children's Social Care.

### 10.4 Reporting to the Police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault is made, we are required to report it to the police.

- Further Resources and lesson plans
- The Lucy Faithfull Foundation - Stop It Now <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/how-we-prevent-child-sexual-abuse/the-lucy-faithfull-foundation/>

- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview) (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-how-to-respond-to-an-incident-overview>
- It's Not OK: online teaching resources | NSPCC Learning <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/its-not-ok/>
- Speak out Stay safe programme | NSPCC Learning <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/speak-out-stay-safe/>
- IMAGINE Toolkit - Involving Boys in Preventing Street Harassment <https://www.beyondequality.org/blog-posts/imagine-toolkit-involving-boys-in-preventing-street-harassment>
- Crossing the Line: PSHE toolkit | Childnet <https://www.childnet.com/resources/pshe-toolkit/crossing-the-line/>

## 11. LINKED POLICIES

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Data Protection and Data Security Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Learner Support Policy
- Positive Touch Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy