

# Poplar Adolescent Unit Education Provision

## Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

Accepted by the Management Committee:	September 2017
Review Date	September 2021

**Owner: Head of Education, Safeguarding**

**Introduction and Commitment:**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has become a growing and serious concern and is recognised as a form of child sexual abuse. The Poplar Adolescent Unit Child Sexual Exploitation Policy is recognition of this concern and 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 the Poplar Adolescent Unit Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

At Poplar Adolescent Unit we strive to support and teach learners 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. Poplar Adolescent Unit promotes healthy friendships and relationships through the school ethos, school policies, learner-staff relationships and the curriculum. An awareness of the risk factors and signs and indicators of CSE is 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.

**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/carer's and learners.
- To provide a consistent approach when dealing with CSE.
- To make available support for learners, parents/carers and staff in the event of concerns arising in relation to CSE.
- To enable those seeking help to feel secure and supported.

## Guidance Documents:

This Policy is based upon the information, advice and guidance provided by the following documents:

Southend Essex Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures (Nov 2016)  
'Sexual Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults Intelligence – Practitioners guide (Essex Police)  
Essex Child Sexual Exploitation Arrangements (See Appendix 1)

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE September 2016.

The following 6 principles have been identified:

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 and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
5. Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. 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. In some cases young people themselves may exploit other young people, and in these cases law enforcement action may also be necessary.

## 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.

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.

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### **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 – See SET Missing Children Protocol

By virtue of regular contact with young people, school staff is well placed to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs which may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation. School 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:**

The ESCB have produced guidance on the use of risk assessment tools. These are used by Poplar Adolescent Unit to profile the level of concern, structure assessment of risk and form the basis for progressing support. This assists in determining which category of risk of harm may exist through sexual exploitation, i.e. Standard, Medium, or High.

**Procedure:**

In the event of staff identifying concerns relating to CSE, this information should be shared immediately with the school Designated Safeguarding Officer. The concerns will be reviewed and appropriate action taken in line with the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer (who is also the CSE Champion). Safeguarding advice can be obtained through the named nurses for the Trust prior to a referral to social care through the Child and Family Operations Hub (0845 603 7627). Full details of referral process is found on the board in office.

A multi-agency approach, in line with local SET guidance, will be adopted to ensure that holistic support is available – potentially involving partner agencies such as the Police, Children's Social Care, School Nurse, and the Youth and Family Support 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. ESCB guidance and information relating to CSE will be readily accessible to staff via the appendices in the Child Protection Policy. Information relating to CSE will be on display across the school site, providing guidance and advice to learners and staff.

The issue of Child Sexual Exploitation will also be raised on different levels within the school and will be 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, PSHE lessons and visits which will provide information and guidance relating to CSE as well as the support available throughout the ward. This would include access to advocates, psychologists, therapists, nurses and a social worker.
- At an individual level – where concerns are identified or suspected (through information received or disclosed) a response will be fashioned in line with the SET guidance and CSE procedures. This will also be informed by the requirements of the Poplar Adolescent Unit Child Protection Policy and Procedures and dealt with as a potential safeguarding concern.
- It is accepted that all children and young people may potentially be at risk of online CSE and therefore, by way or response, Poplar Adolescent Unit has a robust E-Safety Policy to ensure learners are taught to recognise online risk and who to report any concerns.
- The Poplar Adolescent Unit will commit to having appropriate staff complete CEOP training and attend ESCB training on CSE to ensure that appropriate knowledge and skills are available to support the school community.

**Parental/carer Involvement:**

- Poplar Adolescent Unit always seeks wherever possible to establish a positive partnership with parents and carers and to work proactively to support learners and their families.
- If a concern is raised either by a young person or a peer, it would be usual to initiate contact with home though in specific circumstances it may not be possible to contact parents/carer's prior to sharing information. In such circumstances guidance from the Trust's Safeguarding Team will be sought and every effort made to communicate with parents/carer's as soon as possible whilst ensuring the safety and well-being of learners.

**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, or meetings with the child will be recorded and the relevant bodies will be informed about issues or concerns.
- Staff and Management Committee Members will evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any on-going concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and learners.

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

- Formal acceptance by the Management Committee.
- This Policy will be made available to staff, parents and learners on the Poplar Adolescent Unit website.
- Learners will be informed about Child Sexual Exploitation and the School Policy through the curriculum.
- Learners can speak to members of staff about their concerns throughout the school day and will be offered support, advice and guidance. Concerns in most cases can be shared on the ward 24 hours a day.