



LONG FIELD ACADEMY

# Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

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<b>Senior Team Responsibility:</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>
<b>Governors' Reviewing Committee:</b>	<b>LGB</b>
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**Associated documentation:** *Safeguarding, Behaviour, Staff Code of Conduct Whistleblowing, Anti-bullying, Health & Safety, Allegations against staff, Attendance, Administration of medicines, E-Safety, Recruitment and Selection, Intimate Care*

## 1. Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation and Key Principles

- 1.1 The sexual exploitation of children is defined as: *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 the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without 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”* (Office of Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child sexual exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Nov 2012)
- 1.2 Sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, and in all parts of the world. It affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. It is a form of Sexual Abuse and can have a serious impact on every aspect of the lives of children involved.
- 1.3 Whilst it is not known how prevalent it is, sexual exploitation has become increasingly recognisable as practitioners gain more understanding of grooming and other methods of sexual exploitation and begin to take a proactive and coordinated approach to deal with it.
- 1.4 Children involved in any form of sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as victims of abuse and their needs carefully assessed. The aim should be to protect them from further harm and they should not be treated as criminals.
- 1.5 The government guidance requires agencies to work together to:
- a. Develop local prevention strategies;
  - b. Identify those at risk of sexual exploitation;
  - c. Take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who may be sexually exploited; and
  - d. Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.
- In doing so, the key principles should be:
- a. A child-centred approach. Action should be focussed on the child’s needs, including consideration of children with particular needs or sensitivities, and the

fact that children do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative or abusive situation;

b. A proactive approach. This should be focussed on prevention, early identification and intervention as well as disrupting activity and prosecuting perpetrators;

c. Parenting, family life, and services. Taking account of family circumstances in deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;

d. The rights of children and young people. Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting welfare;

e. Responsibility for criminal acts. Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as criminal behaviour on the part of the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse. The responsibility for the sexual exploitation of children lies with the abuser and the focus of police investigations should be on those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people;

f. An integrated approach. Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out a tiered approach to safeguarding: universal, targeted and responsive. Within this, sexual exploitation requires a three-pronged approach tackling prevention, protection and prosecution;

g. A shared responsibility. The need for effective joint working between different agencies and professionals underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem of sexual exploitation and effective coordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## **2. The Child**

2.1 Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances.

2.2 Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and causes significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents and carers are often traumatised and under severe stress. Siblings can feel alienated and their self-esteem affected. Family members can themselves suffer serious threats of abuse, intimidation and assault at the hands of perpetrators.

2.3 There are strong links between children involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy and substance misuse. In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied

asylum seeking children, victims of forced marriage and those involved in gangs.

- 2.4 The majority of sexually exploited children are hidden from public view. They are unlikely to be loitering or soliciting on the streets. Research and practice has helped to move the understanding away from a narrow view of seeing sexual exploitation as 'a young person standing on a street corner selling sex' (DCSF 2009).
- 2.5 There is also often a presumption that children are sexually exploited by people they do not know. However evidence shows that this is often not the case and children are often sexually exploited by people with whom they feel they have a relationship, e.g. a boyfriend / girlfriend. Children are often persuaded that the boyfriend / girlfriend is their only true form of support and encouraged to withdraw from their friends and family and to place their trust only within the relationship.
- 2.6 Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Practitioners should be aware that particularly young people aged 16 and 17 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

### **3. Important Information about Sexual Exploitation**

- 3.1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. (Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability – Serious and Organised Crime Agency).
- 3.2 What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship and it is important to recognise this when considering cases of potential child sexual exploitation. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.
- 3.3 Technology can play a part in sexual exploitation, for example, through its use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people in order to groom them. A common factor in all cases is the lack of free economic or moral choice.
- 3.4 Sexual exploitation has strong links with other forms of crime, for example, domestic violence, online and offline grooming, the distribution of abusive images of children and child trafficking. Many adults involved in prostitution describe difficult childhood experiences that include domestic violence, neglect, emotional abuse, disrupted schooling and low educational attainment.

3.5 The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children and young people gather without much adult supervision, e.g. parks or shopping centres or sites on the Internet.

#### **4. Factors linked to sexual exploitation**

4.1 The factors below are recognised as factors linked to sexual exploitation. It is not an exhaustive list and each indicator is not in itself proof of involvement in child sexual exploitation. Concerns should increase the more indicators which are present although one single indicator alone may in itself be significant. Professionals should use their judgment when considering these factors. They are:

a. Health – physical symptoms e.g. bruising, chronic fatigue, recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy and/or seeking a termination of pregnancy; evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse; sexually risky behaviour;

b. Education – truancy; disengagement with education; considerable change in performance at school;

c. Emotional and behavioural development – volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language; involvement in petty crime; secretive behaviour; entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;

d. Identity – low self-image; low self-esteem; self-harm; eating disorder; promiscuity;

e. Family and social relationships – hostility in relationship with parents, carers and/or other family members; physical aggressions towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers; placement breakdown; detachment from age appropriate activities; association with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited; sexual relationship with a significantly older person; unexplained relationships with older adults (e.g. through letters, texts, internet links); staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation; persistently missing or missing with no known home base; returning after having been missing looking well cared for with no known home base; going missing and being found in an area where the child has no known links;

f. Social presentation – change in appearance; leaving home in clothing unusual for the child e.g. inappropriate for age;

g. Parental capacity – family history of parental neglect or abuse;

h. Family and environmental factors – family history of domestic violence; pattern of homelessness;

i. Income - possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation; acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation; accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding;

j. Family's social integration – reports that the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation;

k. *Possible indicators specific to boys and young men are:*

l. Health – physical symptoms (e.g. bruising or sexually transmitted infections); drug or alcohol misuse; self-harm or eating disorders;

m. Education – truancy, deterioration of school work or part-time timetable;

n. Emotional and behavioural development – secretive e.g. about internet use; anti-social behaviour; sexualised language; sexually offending behaviour;

o. Family and social relationships – associating with other children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation; missing from home or staying out late; getting into cars of unknown people; contact with adults outside normal social group;

p. Identity – low self-esteem, poor self-image or lack of confidence;

q. Social presentation – wearing an unusual amount of clothing;

r. Income – social activities with no explanation of how funded; possession of abnormal amounts of money, gifts, new mobile phones, credit on mobile phone, number of SIM cards;

s. Social integration – frequenting known high-risk areas or going to addresses of concern; seen at public toilets known as locations where gay men meet to engage in sexual activity; seen at adult venues.

4.2 The Office of Children's Commissioners have also produced a comprehensive list of warning signs which can be used as a vulnerabilities checklist. This promotes awareness of 'softer' intelligence. The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse:

a. Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)

b. History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)

c. Recent bereavement or loss

d. Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships

- e. Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited
- f. Learning disabilities
- g. Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- h. Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- i. Homeless
- j. Lacking friends from the same age group
- k. Living in a gang neighbourhood
- l. Living in residential care
- m. Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer
- n. Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- o. Young carer

4.3 The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited.

- Missing from home or care
- Physical injuries
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Involvement in offending
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- Absent from school
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation

## 5. The role of Long Field Academy

5.1 Work to tackle sexual exploitation should follow the same principles as addressing other forms of abuse or neglect.

- 5.2 The Academy's Safeguarding Policy describes in detail the procedures to follow.
- 5.3 Safeguarding training and refresher training includes an awareness of sexual exploitation, how to identify the warning signs, together with the recording and retention of information and gathering evidence; identification of risk and possible Indicators.
- 5.4 Staff are in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs that may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation.
- 5.5 Relevant staff are aware of how to monitor online spaces and be prepared to request access reports where they are suspicious that a child is being groomed online.
- 5.6 In the first instance concerns that a child may be at risk of sexual exploitation should be discussed with the Academy's Student and Pastoral Welfare Manager (Mrs Lisa Newby), who will follow the procedures described in the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.