

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

HSLC INFORMATION SHEET

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is defined in Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (DfE February 2017) as:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology” (p.5)

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity; • can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

CSE continues to be a major Child Protection issue across the UK. CSE is when children and young people receive something - food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts or money etc - as an encouragement to perform, or as a result of performing (and/or others performing on them) direct sexual activities. Most recent government advice also asks schools to increase vigilance around ‘Peer on peer abuse: sexual violence and sexual harassment between children (Keeping Children Safe in Education – updated September 2018)

CSE can also occur and progress through the use of the internet or on mobile phones. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person have influence and power over them because of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or resources. For victims, the effect and pain of their ordeal and fear that they will not be believed or may be at risk if they tell someone, means they are often too scared to come forward and report or tell what is happening. The impact of CSE upon victims can be devastating leading to a range of complex, significant and often longstanding personal difficulties in terms of physical and emotional health.

At HSLC we strive to support and teach pupils 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 risk, abuse and sexual exploitation.

Prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation

There is a growing evidence base (e.g. from the Rotherham CSE abuse case where 1400 child victims were identified) pointing to the widespread occurrence of, and potential risk for CSE, across all areas of society and the country.

But of course, CSE is often a hidden issue, and therefore it is difficult to know the true figure of victims and actual number of children who are victims of CSE is likely to be much higher due to the reluctance of victims to come forward and disclose

The Age of Consent

The age of consent (the age at which it is legal to have sex) is 16 for everyone in the UK. Under the age of 16 any sort of sexual touching is illegal. It is illegal to take, show or distribute sexualised / graphic / indecent photographs of children (under 18 years of age) or to pay or arrange for sexual services from children.

It is also against the law if someone in a position of trust (such as a teacher) has sex with a person under 18 that they have responsibility for.

Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

Further advice and guidance is available through our CSE Policy incorporating peer on peer abuse: sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school 2018

Some Potential Warning Signs and Risk Factors of CSE

WARNING SIGNS:	RISK FACTORS
Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late Skipping school or being disruptive in class Appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that cannot be accounted for Experiencing health problems that may indicate a STI. Having mood swings and changes in temperament Using drugs and alcohol Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviours Unexplained bruises	Homelessness Low self-esteem Recent bereavement or loss Children in care Young carers Being female Witnessing domestic violence, and drug or alcohol misuse History of abuse Residing in chaotic or dysfunctional households Low socio-economic status Living in a gang-affected neighbourhood Children or young people who have been trafficked into the country Children at risk of 'honour' or forced marriages

Who can you contact for advice and support if you have concerns?

HSLC Student Support Team

Mrs Kay Sullivan (School Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding and Welfare Manager)
Based in the Student Support Team building / 01964 532727

CHILDLINE

24 hour helpline for children and young people under 18 providing confidential counselling and advice
0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

24 hour child protection helpline - 0808 800 5000 - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre- CEOP

<http://ceop.police.uk>

East Riding Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHaSH) – 01482 395500

IMMEDIATE DANGER - CALL the POLICE on 999

The HSLC CSE Policy is available on the school web site – www.hslc.co.uk - and provides further information and advice