Cedar Park School

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

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Cedar Park School is committed ensuring children and young people are safe.

Cedar Park has high expectations in relation to the safeguarding of young people in our care and ensuring that the environments in which young people are placed, are safe.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, DfE guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (May 2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 and Annex A (2023).

1.0 What is Harmful Sexual Behaviour?

1.1 Harmful sexual behaviour can include young people using sexually explicit words or phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence or threats, penetrative sex with other children/young people. Children and young people can be exposed to harmful sexual behaviour both in person and online.

1.2 Harmful sexual behaviour is not defined by the age of children or young people. A younger child could sexually harm an older child if they have power over them, such as if the older child has a disability. Power is a key factor in the reasons why young people display harmful sexual behaviours towards peers. Both girls and boys can display harmful sexual behaviours.

1.3 There are four different stages to childhood sexual development. Some children may develop later than others depending on their understanding and their own global development. The stages of development are;

• Infancy from 0-4 years old. Sexual exploratory behaviours start to emerge such as by kissing, cuddling, showing curiosity about their genitals and talking about them. Children may not show inhibitions such as by wandering round naked. They imitate and copy behaviours of life around them including 'mummies and daddies' and 'doctors and nurses'. Random masturbation can occur as this is a sensual stage in development. The distinction between toileting behaviours and comforting behaviours begins to emerge. Parents and carers are most influential, and children learn the social rules and what is permissible from them.

• Young children from 5-9 years old. As they become older, children start recognising the need for greater privacy. At the same time there are more exploratory behaviour with peers, as well as them comparing their bodies with their peers and asking more questions. Masturbation is less random but more likely among

boys due to gender socialisation. They may use words associated with body parts or sex that they may have heard, and they may try to shock adults around them by using these words although they don't fully understand the meaning. The influence of peers begins to emerge.

• Pre-adolescents from 10-12 years old. Children become more curious about sex and sexual behaviour, such as through kissing, hugging and 'dating' other children. They may become more interested in other people's body parts and the changes that happen in puberty. At this age, children become more aware about sex and bodies and so they may start to ask more questions about relationships and sexual behaviour. They might try to find out information about sex from the internet. Children may start to masturbate in private as they develop a greater awareness of the need for privacy.

• Adolescents from 13-16 years old. As puberty starts, sexual behaviour becomes more private with young people kissing, hugging, dating and forming longer-lasting relationships with peers. They may be interested in and asking questions about body parts, relationships and sexuality. Young people may use sexual language and talk about sex with friends. They may look for sexual pictures or pornography on the internet. Young people may masturbate in private and experiment sexually with the same age group.

1.4 Healthy sexual behaviours are;

• Mutual;

• Consensual;

• Exploratory and age appropriate;

• No intent to cause harm;

• Fun, humorous;

• No power differential between participants.

1.5 Problematic sexual behaviours are;

• Displaying behaviours not age appropriate, such as invasion of personal space, sexual swear words in very young children;

• Some ‘one off’ incidents of low-key behaviours such as touching over clothing;

• Incidents where there is peer pressure to engage in the behaviour. For example, touching someone’s breast, exposure of bottom;

• Behaviours are spontaneous rather than planned;

• They may be self-directed such as masturbation;

• There are other balancing factors such as lack of intent to cause harm, or level of understanding in the young person about the behaviours, or some remorse;

• The child or young person targeted may be irritated or uncomfortable but not scared and feel free to tell someone;

• Parents display concern and are interested in supporting the child to change.

1.6 Harmful sexual behaviours are;

• Not age appropriate;

• Elements of planning secrecy or force;

• Power differentials between young people involved such as size status and strength;

• Targeted children feel fear/anxiety/discomfort;

• Negative feelings are expressed by the young person when carrying out the behaviour, such as anger aggression;

• The young person does not take responsibility for the behaviour and blames others or feels a strong sense of grievance;

• Incidents are increasing in frequency and the young person's interest in them is disproportionate to other aspects of their life;

• They are not easily distracted from the behaviour, it appears compulsive and is persistent despite intervention.

1.7 Sexual harassment between children/young people means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

1.8 Harmful sexual behaviour, violence or harassment can occur online.

1.9 At Cedar Park, we categorise sexually harmful behaviours into three categories. We use the age of the child and the context around the behaviour to help us decide what actions are required.

Green light sexual behaviours are typical and developmentally appropriate.

They are:

- Spontaneous, curious, light-hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual

- Appropriate to the child's age and development
- Activities or play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels.

These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and provide support.

Amber light sexual behaviours cause concern because of:

- Persistence, intensity, frequency or duration
- The type of activity for the age and stage of development
- Inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability
- Risk to the health and safety of the child or others
- Unusual changes in a child's behaviours.

These behaviours should not be ignored and they signal the need to monitor and provide targeted support.

Red light sexual behaviours indicate or cause harm because they are:

- Excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening
- Secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery
- Not appropriate for the age and stage of development
- Between children or young people with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power
- Abusive or aggressive.

2. Risk Factors

2.1 'Peer relationships are increasingly influential during adolescence, setting social norms which inform young people's experiences, behaviours and choices and determine peer status. These relationships are, in turn, shaped by, and shape, the school, neighbourhood and online contexts in which they develop. So if young people socialise in safe and protective schools and community settings they will be supported to form safe and protective peer relationships. However, if they form friendships in contexts characterised by violence and/or harmful attitudes these relationships too may be anti-social, unsafe or promote problematic social norms as a means of navigating, or surviving in, those spaces' (Contextual Safeguarding Briefing, Carlene Firmann, 2017).

2.2 Young people's peer groups, communities and social media activity are either key risk factors or key protective factors. For example, if a young person socialises with peers who have a positive influence on their thinking and behaviours, this will more than likely protect them within their communities and neighbourhoods. Likewise, if young people socialise with peers who are themselves involved in risky activities such as substance misuse, gangs or exploitative relationships, this too may impact on the young person's safety and wellbeing in the community and their neighbourhoods.

2.3 Children and young people can develop harmful sexual behaviours because of trauma or abuse. They may have experienced;

• Physical abuse

• Emotional abuse

• Sexual abuse

• Severe neglect

• Parental rejection

• Family breakdown

• Domestic abuse

• Parental substance misuse

It is important to remember that being abused does not mean that children or young people will go on to abuse others.

2.4 Key risk factors and vulnerabilities of young people who sexually abuse others are that they may;

• have poor self-regulation and coping skills

• experience social anxiety and a sense of social inadequacy

• have poorly internalised rules for social behaviour

• possess a poorly developed or primitive sense of morality

• lack secure and confident attachments to others

• exercise limited self-control, and act out their emotional experiences through negative or otherwise inappropriate behaviour

• have little insight into the feelings and needs of others and, indeed, their own emotions

• place their own needs and feelings ahead of the needs and feelings of others

• exhibit a poorly defined sense of personal boundaries

• have developed strong and not easily corrected cognitive distortions about others, themselves, and the world they share

• struggle to interact socially or have issues with social competence.

2.5 Staff must remember this is not an exhaustive list. Staff must remain alert to possible signs of sexual abuse, violence, harassment or harmful behaviours by pupils in school.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Staff must read Cedar Park's Child Protection policy.

3.2 Designated Safeguarding Leads must be familiar with DfE guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in Schools and Colleges (May 2018). They must ensure that staff understand how to report a concern regarding harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or harassment.

3.3 Staff must challenge any discriminatory language or inappropriate behaviour. Staff have a duty to ensure that the school environment is one which is safe and which supports pupils to understand safe relationships, grooming, sex and consent.

3.4 The school has a web filtering system in place. However, staff must be vigilant when pupil's use their own mobile phones. Any concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If there are concerns regarding the safety of the websites that pupils have accessed, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform the parents/carer immediately and follow the local authority referral procedures.

3.5 Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are three times more likely to be abused. Staff must be vigilant in monitoring those pupils who are more vulnerable. Any concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and documented on CPOMS.

3.6 The Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead must consider the pupil cohort within their school, including the gender and age range of pupils. Consideration must be given as to whether additional support for children with protected characteristics (who are potentially at greater risk) is appropriate. Evidence shows that girls are more likely to be subject to sexual violence and sexual harassment than boys, and that boys are more likely to perpetrate such violence and harassment. The Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads must ensure that they and the staff take effective actions to develop healthy and respectful relationships between boys and girls including through Relationship and Sex Education and Personal Social and Health education.

3.7 Staff must report any concerns regarding harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment to the Designated safeguarding Lead immediately and document this on CPOMS. Staff must follow up on the concern and ensure that action has been taken.

3.8 Staff must ensure that their response to sexual violence, harassment or harmful behaviours between children of the same sex is equally robust as it is for sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the opposite sex.

3.9 The Head Teacher must ensure that a preventative approach is taken and that all pupils are educated around the risks associated with grooming, online safety, safe/healthy relationships, and sex education including what consent means.

3.10 Phones and internet use can be a key risk factor relating to sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviours. If there are known risks relating to harmful sexual behaviours, wherever possible staff must supervise internet use. There should not be any pupils that use their mobile phones during the school day.

3.11 Any concerns relating to online grooming must be immediately documented on CPOMS and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must be aware of the e-safety policy.

4.0 Local procedures

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Leads must be familiar with the local referral procedures for safeguarding and child protection concerns. They must also be familiar with local responses to sexual violence and harassment and these must shape their own responses. Designated Safeguarding Leads must ensure that staff are aware and understand the local processes and that they are familiar with local support services.

5.0 What to do if you have concerns

5.1 If there are immediate concerns for the pupils safety, staff must immediately report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The police must be notified if there are immediate concerns for a pupils safety or wellbeing because of sexual violence, harassment or harmful behaviour. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that all safeguarding concerns have been referred to the local authority in line with the local child protection procedures.

5.2 The placing authority must be notified immediately where it has been identified that there are immediate safeguarding concerns. It is recommended as best practice that all steps are taken to convene a multi-agency professionals meeting to review any potential risks and agree actions to be taken to safeguard the young person/young people. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for this.

5.3 Where staff have concerns regarding harmful sexual behaviour or possible low level concerns regarding a pupils sexual behaviour or understanding, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within one working day. Staff must ensure that all concerns are documented CPOMS. The Designated safeguarding Lead must consider making an Early Help referral.

5.4 Sexual harassment, violence and harmful sexual behaviour incidents and risks must be reviewed within termly safeguarding governor visits and within Senior Leadership Team meetings. The purpose of this is to ensure that information is being shared and that proactive measures are being taken to safeguard the young person/young people.

6. What to do if a young person discloses harm

6.1 If a pupil discloses that they have been harmed by another pupil, it is likely that this will be very traumatic for them. Staff must be aware of the potential impact that this could have on pupil's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Safety measures must be put in to support the pupil. If concerns are raised by a third party, consideration must be given as to the reasons the pupil has not felt able to disclose themselves.

6.2 Staff must listen, ask open questions, write as much detail down as possible, and never promise to keep things secret. It is important that staff are open and honest with the pupil, sensitive and show them unconditional positive regard. It is likely that the pupil will need reassurance that they are safe and that they are not to blame. Staff must document all information onto CPOMS.

6.3 After a pupil has disclosed, staff must immediately report the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then support the staff member to report the information to the police and placing authority immediately.

6.4 Staff must ensure that the language they use is not 'victim-blaming'. Staff must show young people that they are non-judgmental and that they have not caused a problem by disclosing. Wherever possible, support should be provided so as the victim can continue with their daily routine within school.

6.5 Where the report includes an online element, Designated Safeguarding Leads must ensure that they are aware of searching screening, and confiscation advice (for schools and colleges) as well as KCCIS advice www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council- for-child-internet-safety-ukccis. The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.

6.5 Designated Safeguarding Leads must ensure that staff know and understand the local authority procedures for safeguarding young people against abuse.

Information can be lawfully shared even if the pupil states that they do not want the information to be shared. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must carefully balance the wishes of the victim alongside their duty to safeguard others. This situation must be handled as carefully and sensitively as possible.

6.7 If a pupil alleges that they have been raped, assaulted by penetration or sexually assaulted, these must be reported to the police and Social Care immediately. The pupils parents/carers should normally be informed unless there is a risk of greater harm to the pupil.

6.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead must complete a risk assessment immediately after disclosures of sexual violence, harassment or harmful behaviours have been shared. The risk assessment must be completed within one working day and documented on CPOMS. The risk assessment must be shared with the police, local authority and Chair of Governors.

6.9 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Head Teacher must take into account the proximity of the alleged perpetrator and victim after reports of rape and assault by penetration because of the distress that this can cause the victim. Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school or college should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the school or college, where appropriate. These actions should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

6.10 For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises, should be considered immediately. Risk assessment must be documented on CPOMS within one working day.

6.11 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the victim is offered appropriate support throughout the investigation and Court process. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the lead professional who must liaise with social care and the police throughout the investigation. All communications must be documented.

6.12 If an allegation cannot be substantiated during an investigation or within Court, this does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must discuss any decisions with the victim and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

7.0 Response to the alleged perpetrator

7.1 Any allegation will be traumatic for the alleged perpetrator. Alleged perpetrators may require specialist support and must be provided with the resources to be able to access specialist support services.

7.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that the alleged perpetrators age and understanding is taken into account, as well as trying to understand the reasons why the alleged perpetrator may have harmed a peer. A risk assessment must be completed immediately which should balance the proportionality of the allegation alongside the needs of the victim and the alleged perpetrators right to continue to be educated.

7.3 It is good practice for Designated Safeguarding Leads to meet with alleged perpetrators parents/carers to discuss what measures will be put into place to support their child. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be led by the police regarding what information can be shared with the alleged perpetrator and their family.

7.4 If the alleged perpetrator moves schools, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that all safeguarding information is shared in advance with the new school.

7.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead must liaise with the police and Social Care should they wish to take disciplinary action prior to the conclusion of a police/Social Care investigation. Other professionals investigating an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly.

7.6 Staff must be alert to possible bullying of the alleged perpetrator either within school or via social media. Arrangements must be made to safeguard them. Staff must promote a culture where bullying is not tolerated.