



# Langdon Park School

## HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

**Updated: September 2023**

**Review Date: September 2024**

<b>Designated Safeguard Lead:</b>	Evelyn Morrison
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead:</b>	Lify Begum
<b>Designated Governor:</b>	Paul Bargery

**Contents**

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding	3
2. What is Harmful sexual behaviour	3
3. Four Stages of Childhood Sexual Development	4
4. Healthy Sexual Behaviours	5
5. Problematic Sexual Behaviours	5
6. Harmful Sexual Behaviours	5
7. Risk Factors	6
8. Roles and Responsibilities	6
9. Follow up of Concern	7
10. What to do if a young person discloses harm	9
11. Response to the alleged perpetrator	10
12. Training and Support for Staff and Student	11
13. Student support	11
Annex A- Flowchart of responses and actions	12
Annex B- Hackett's Continuum	13

## 1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We believe that all children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. Although reporting concerns can be uncomfortable for staff, and be unpleasant for families, at Langdon Park School we recognise that it is better to help children, young people and their families early, before issues escalate and become more damaging. Because safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, all staff are committed to recognising and reporting all concerns relating to child safety, wellbeing and are vigilant to spot signs of abuse and maltreatment.

As such, we promise to:

- Be observant and alert to signs of abuse-remember, 'It could/ does happen here...'
- Be curious and question explanations given by parents / children / staff
- Be compassionate, honest and clear
- Ask for support when we feel it is appropriate
- Understand and follow school policies and procedures
- Work together with other agencies when appropriate to make sure that support for children, young people and families is effective and helps improve outcomes

## 2. What is Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful Sexual Behaviour in schools is a form of 'Child on Child' abuse. Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously

Sexual Violence refers to criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to make upskirting a specific offence of voyeurism. The Act came into force on 12 April 2019. Sexual harassment is described as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature'.

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.

Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. Harmful sexual behaviour is not defined by the age of children or young people. However, a younger child

can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. 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.

HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously and can be a one-off occurrence or be part of a pattern of behaviour.

### **3. Four Stages of Childhood Sexual Development**

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 masturbating private and experiment sexually with the same age group.

#### **4. Healthy Sexual Behaviours**

- These can be described as:
- Mutual;
- Consensual;
- Exploratory and age appropriate;
- No intent to cause harm;
- Fun, humorous;
- No power differential between participant

#### **5. Problematic Sexual Behaviours**

- These can be described as:
- 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.

#### **6. Harmful Sexual Behaviours**

These can be described as:

- 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.

## 7. Risk Factors

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.

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.
- 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.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

- Staff must read Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- Staff must be aware of the information in **Part 5 of KCSIE 2023** in order to understand how to respond and report an allegation or concern.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads must be familiar with DfE guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in Schools and Colleges

(Updated September 2023). They must ensure that staff understand how to report a concern regarding harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or harassment.

- 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 pupil's to understand safe relationships, grooming, sex and consent.
- 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 recorded on Safeguard.
- 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 Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that they and the staff take effective actions to develop healthy and respectful relationships between boys and girls including through Relationship Health and Sex Education (RHSE).
- Staff must report any concerns regarding harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and document this on Safeguard online.
- 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.
- The Headteacher and DSL 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.
- Any concerns relating to online grooming must be immediately documented on Safeguard and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **9. Follow up of Concern**

- If there are immediate concerns for the pupil's safety, staff must immediately report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The police must be notified if there are immediate concerns for a pupil's 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 and the Langdon Park School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform the Headteacher who will in turn, contact the Chair of Governors.
- The local 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.
- Where staff have concerns regarding harmful sexual behaviour or possible low-level concerns regarding a pupil's sexual behaviour or understanding, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead ASAP. Staff must ensure that all concerns are documented onto Safeguard. The Designated safeguarding Lead must consider making an Early Help referral or seek advice from the MASH.
- Sexual harassment, violence and harmful sexual behaviour incidents and risks must be reviewed within governance meetings 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.
- The designated safeguarding lead will be informed of all Child on Child abuse where there are safeguarding concerns using the online 'safeguard' reporting system.
- The school will inform other staff members, and parents/ carers, where appropriate.
- Sanctions (as identified within the school behaviour policy) and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including earlyhelp or children's social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- Support will be offered to the perpetrator also in order for them to change their behaviour as well as appropriate sanctions being put into place.



## **10. What to do if a young person discloses harm**

It is important that an alleged victim of any type of harmful sexual behaviour understands and knows that they are believed.

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.

Staff must listen, ask open questions and not leading questions, write as much detail down as possible (with permission of the child), 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 record all information on Safeguard.

After a pupil has disclosed, staff must immediately report the information to the DSL who will provide information to the police and local authority immediately.

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.

Where the report includes an online element, the DSL must ensure that they are aware of searching screening, and confiscation. The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

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.

If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, this must be referred to the local authority immediately.

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.

The DSL must complete a risk assessment, if appropriate, immediately after disclosures of sexual violence, harassment or harmful behaviours have been shared.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and HeadTeacher must consider 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 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 should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport to and from the school where appropriate. These actions should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

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 and school transport, should be considered immediately. Risk assessments must be documented on the schools electronic recording system ASAP.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the victim is offered appropriate support throughout the investigation and potential court process. The DSL is the lead professional who must liaise with social care and the police throughout the investigation. All communications must be documented.

If an allegation cannot be substantiated during an investigation or within Court, this does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The DSL must discuss any decisions with the victim and continue to offer support.

The alleged perpetrator should also be offered ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

## **11. Response to the alleged perpetrator**

- 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.
- The DSL must ensure that the alleged perpetrators age and understanding is considered, 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.
- It is good practice for DSL to meet with alleged perpetrators parents/carers to discuss what measures will be put into place to support their child. The DSL must be led by the police regarding what information can be shared with the alleged perpetrator and their family. If the alleged perpetrator moves schools, the DSL must ensure that all safeguarding information is shared in advance with the new school.
- The DSL 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.

- 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.

## **12. Training and Support for Staff and Student**

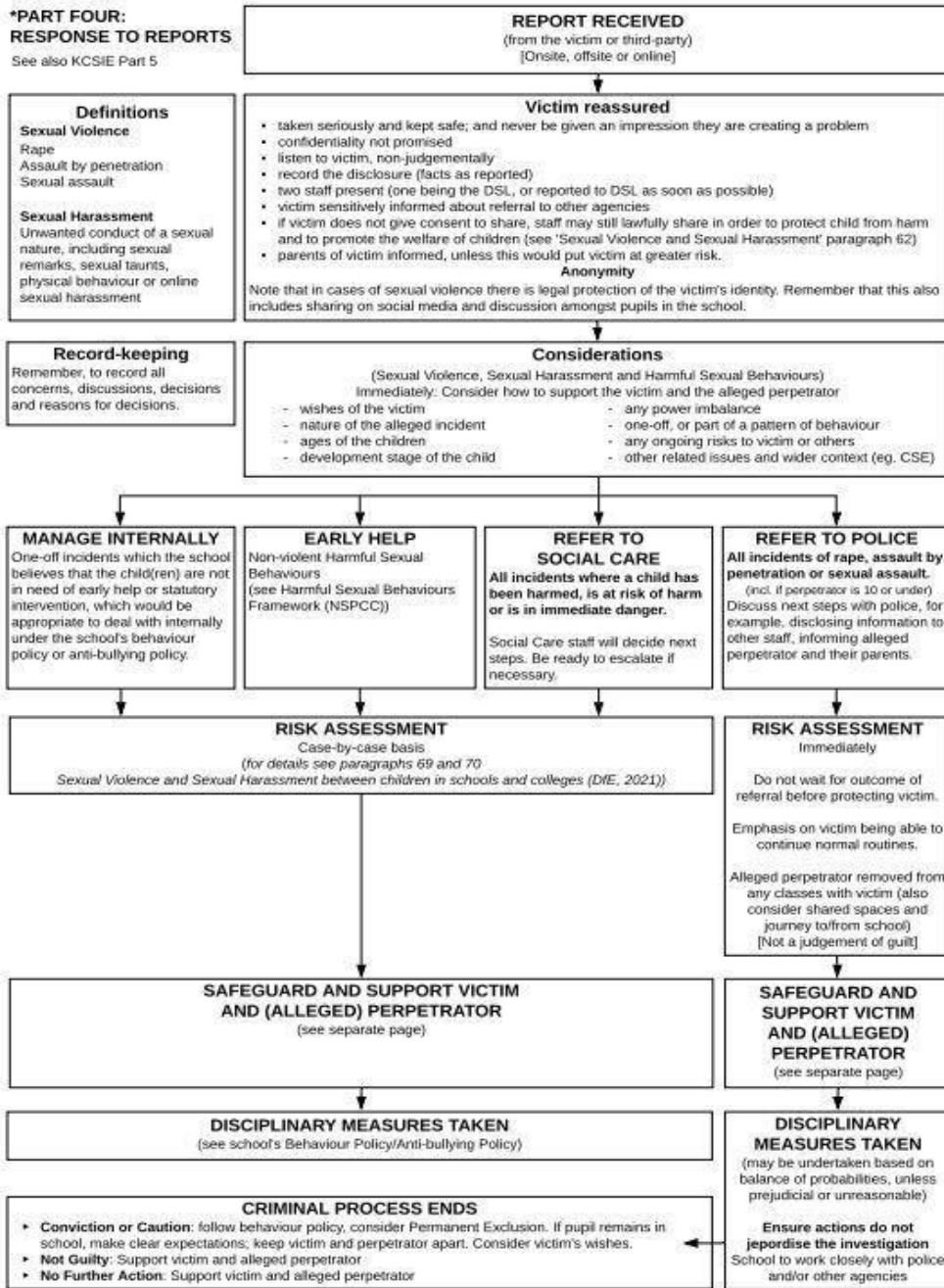
- External and internal staff training
- Staff weekly bulletin
- Google Drive

## **13. Student support**

- Inclusion support- yellow lanyards
- The Box
- Mental Health and Wellbeing ambassadors
- Google wellbeing classroom
- Student voice- questionnaire/ Forum
- Mapping the site

As a school we are aware that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, all staff are committed to recognising and reporting all concerns relating to child safety, wellbeing and are vigilant to spot signs of abuse and maltreatment. All concerns are reported to the Safeguarding Designated Lead Mrs Morrison or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Lify Begum and are reported on Safeguard

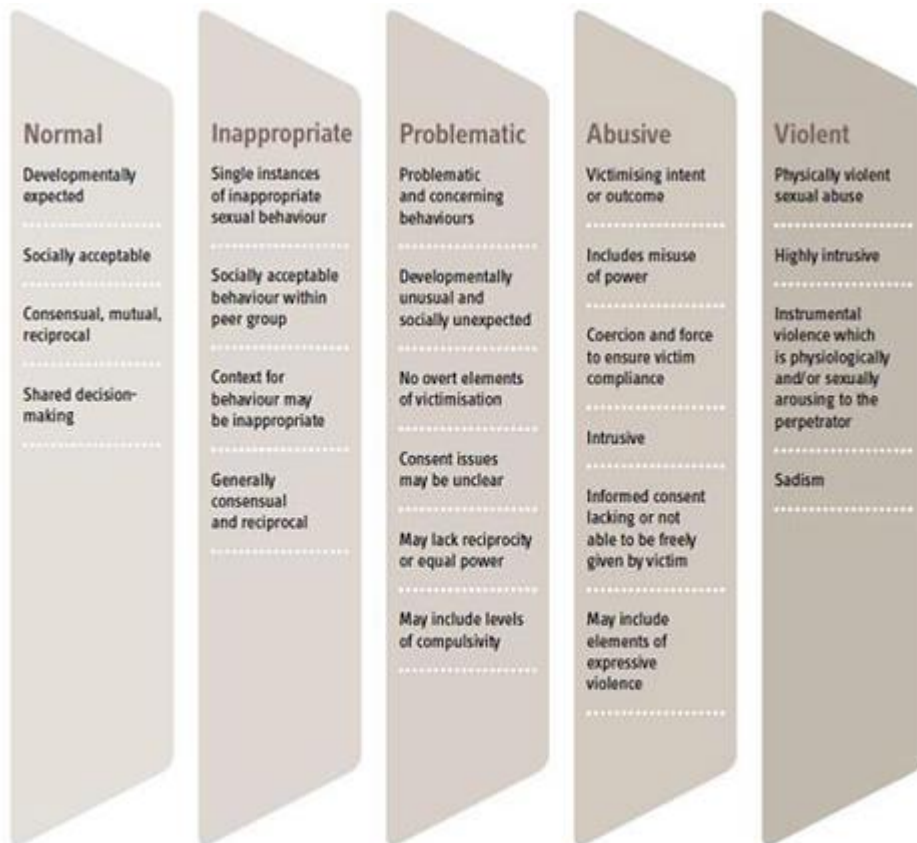
## Annex A- Flowchart of responses and actions



Source:  
\*Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021)

SVSH Flow Chart for Schools 2021 v.1.0

## Annex B- Hackett's Continuum



*A continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviours*  
(Hackett, 2010)