Highams Park
Academy Trust

Highams Park Academy Trust

Child on Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

Date of Review	SLMT Lead	Trustee Approval
29 September 2022	James Lampshire (DSL)	29 September 2022
5 October 2023	James Lampshire (DSL)	5 October 2023
3 October 2024	James Lampshire (DSL)	3 October 2024
16 September 2025	James Lampshire (DSL)	2 October 2025

Date of next review: October 2026

Introduction

Highams Park School is committed to a whole school approach to identifying, tackling & responding to child on child abuse, sexual harm/violence and harassment.

A child/student as described in this policy is a child and young person up until 18 years.

The Context

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools existing Safeguarding Policy (2025), Behaviour Policy (2025) and Online Safety Policy (2025) as well as:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges 2025**
  All staff in a school should be familiar with the relevant sections that deal with Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment. All staff will also be provided annually with Part 1 of this guidance.

- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges.**
  Dfe, September 2021; guidance for Head Teachers, Principals, Senior Leadership teams and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

- **Sexting in Schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.**
  UK Council for Internet Safety

- **Teaching Online Safety in Schools, DfE 2023**

- **The Voyeurism Act, 2019 (Section Up skirting)**

Highams Park School is committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour in our school and beyond.

In cases where child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour is identified we may use the local safeguarding procedures as set out by Waltham Forest Safeguarding children partnership.

We recognise that child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Sexting (youth produced digital imagery);
- Bullying- name calling, physical,
- Prejudiced behaviour- homophobic, disabilities;
- Cyber bullying & on-line abusive behaviour;
- Radicalisation;
- Abuse in intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse;
- Children who display sexually problematic/harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment;
- Gang association and serious violence- County Lines, initiation, hazing.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children are at risk but that some groups are more vulnerable than others and includes:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities;
- A child living with domestic abuse;
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm;
- A child who is at risk of/or is been exploited or at risk of exploited (CRE, CSE)
- A looked after child;
- A child who goes missing or is missing education;
- Children who identifies as or are perceived as LGBTQI+ and/or any of the protective characteristics;

Research tell us that girls are more frequently identified as been abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, and sexual harassment. They often are exploited into gangs, and are victims of sexual violence when in gangs. However, we are aware as a school that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse, and may display other behaviour such as anti- social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited /entrapped into gangs and subject to violence as a result of gang culture.

Bullying and Online bullying and behaviour

Child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour can happen on line and through social media. Highams Park School will respond to this form of abuse, cyber bullying and related behaviour.

Highams Park School has other policies which can be found on the school's website and upon request which relate to identifying, responding to and reporting this type of behaviour by students. We will take a robust approach and educate all our staff to help prevent and tackle this.

Responding to an incident/disclosure

Where abuse or violence, including sexual harm and/or sexual harassment, has taken place outside of school e.g. on school transport, off site during lunchtimes, or in the local community involving one or more of our students; we will investigate and act around the conduct of the student/s. We will also consider if we should notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Where behaviour between students is abusive or violent, including sexual harm or sexual harassment within the school; we will use our procedures as set out by the school's child protection and safeguarding policy 2025, and the procedures as set out by the local Children's Safeguarding Partnership. This will mean a referral to the police and a referral to Children's' Social Care Services.

All staff understand that all concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, we acknowledge that anyone can make a referral.

Understanding Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

Sexual harm, violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age or gender; this can either be a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any setting where students are together.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing having an impact on academic achievement and their emotional health & wellbeing.

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a student's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic and sexually harmful behaviour (HSB).

As a school therefore, we may use the Brook Traffic Tool, and Hackett's Continuum, and in some cases the AIM model (Carson). These are nationally recognised and acclaimed tools to assist in determining healthy, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

We may also use a Safety and Support Plan, or an in-School Risk HSB Management Plan depending on the outcomes of assessing risk in each individual case

Using tools like this will help us:

- Decide next steps and make decisions regarding safeguarding children;
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in students;
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from problematic/ harmful behaviour;
- Assist with communicating with parents/cares about the concerns we have about their child/children;
- Assist with communicating with our partners and agencies about the concerns we have regarding a student in the school.

Action following a report of Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

We will inform all staff that should they see or hear of any sexual behaviour they will stop the behaviour immediately; report the behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a written record of the incident.

We will speak to the student to establish their view about what happened and why, what understanding they have, what responsibility they take for their actions, and their willingness/ability to work on their behaviours.

We will speak to the students/s who has been targeted to establish the impact on them of the behaviour. How the other student/s managed to get in a position to carry out the behaviour, how they are feeling about the other student now, and what support they require.

This will only be to ascertain clarification; any further investigation may have to be undertaken by the statutory agencies.

We will contact the parents/carers of those involved and share the information.

The concern and subsequent steps/actions will be recorded on the schools CPOMS safeguarding software.

Following an incident, we will consider:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed e.g. ask about whether they want to make a police complaint. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment;

- The nature of the alleged incident(s) e.g. the intention, mitigating circumstances AND Including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;

- The ages of the students involved;

- The developmental stages of the students involved;

- Any power imbalance between the students concerned. For example, is the alleged abuser significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?

- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern;

- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other students, siblings, adult students or school staff; or other related issues in the wider context?

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case:

- The alleged abuser will be removed from any classes or areas they share with the victim;

- We will consider any reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of the alleged abuser, victim and all other students we have a duty to safeguard;

- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged abuser/s at a reasonable distance apart on school premises, including transport to and from the school;

- We will use the recommended In School HSB Risk Management Plan if assessed as appropriate;

- We will use a Victim Support Plan.

These actions are in the best interests of the students involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged abuser/s.

Reporting

Any incident of alleged or an actual incident of sexual harm, violence and/or sexual harassment will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence may have been committed. In all cases consideration is given to reporting the matter to Children Social Care Services via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

There are circumstances in some cases of sexual harassment/touching which dependent upon age and understanding/age of criminal responsibility, (e.g. one-off incidents), which we may decide that the child/ren concerned are not in need of Early Help or statutory intervention.

In these situations, it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, for example by utilising the behaviour and bullying policies, providing pastoral intervention and support. We may also decide that some child/ren involved do not require Statutory Interventions; however, they may benefit from Early Help.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, this can be at any point in a child's life. We will decide if an early help approach will benefit a student following any outcome of assessment that we may use. This may mean the development of a safety and support plan as part of the early help process.

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of child/ren than reacting later. This school acknowledges that an Early Help Assessment can be useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

In cases where an onward referral is deemed appropriate, consent will be sought from all concerned parties, including students and parents/carers.

Sanctions

We will consider the sanctions available to use as a school in reference to our Behaviour Policy.

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of child on child abuse and Highams Park School will consider all courses of action and intervention.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any student, other students, parents and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to attempt to resolve these.

The Role of Trustee

The Chair of Trustees/ Link Safeguarding Trustee will need to be aware of the complexities when an incident or incidents come to light, and when staff in the school are trying to manage these behaviours. This includes the use of sanctions, exclusions, pressures from parents to exclude and dealing with the parents of the alleged abuser or any alleged victim/s.

We know that as a school, the Chair of Trustees and Link Safeguarding Trustee will also need to consider that they may be approached by members of staff who are angry or anxious about students with sexual behaviours. In addition, we will also consider that there may be occasions where schools also feel pressures from external sources e.g. the local community and the media.

It is important that we as those trustees are informed and can help with a consistent approach and policy on such matters, and we recognise trustees should use any examples to help inform the schools future practice, ethos, reviewing any policy or procedure in light of this.

Multi-Agency Working

Highams Park School will work with our partners and agencies; Children's Social Care, the Police, Youth Offending Service, Health and CAHMS.

We recognise that we will be invited to share information, being a part of local partnerships and local partnership groups to help identify risk and issues both within the school and in our local community.

Our local point of contact will be the Local Authority Designated Officer for our locality (Waltham Forest)

Prevention and Training

Highams Park School is working hard at all times to create a culture where child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour does not happen.

We are aiming to create an ethos of good and respectful behaviour, and this should extend to all areas of the school and at all times of the school day, including travelling to and from school.

We, through curriculum teaching, learning and events and activities will aim to provide a solid understanding of healthy sexual behaviour/relationships with a no tolerance approach to child on child abuse/harmful sexual behaviour.

Highams Park School is committed to making our students feel safe and comfortable to report any concern that they may have. We will ensure that all our students know who to talk to, how to receive advice and help within the school. We will be able to signpost children to relevant local and national helplines and websites.

Management of the Policy

We will ensure all our staff, trustees, volunteers are trained in the awareness and response to all forms of bullying, all forms of child on child abuse, and including any local issues and concerns in the wider context (Contextual Safeguarding).

In addition, we will ensure all our staff, trustees and volunteers are aware of this policy and the supporting guidance, in order that they are clear regarding their role and responsibilities.

The School Designated Safeguarding Lead will take on a lead responsibility to ensure all staff are trained in the use of the available assessment tools, including Safety and Support Plans/the 'In School' Risk Management Plan and the 'Victim/s Support Plan.

The Link Safeguarding Trustee in the school will act to oversee and audit any training activity which takes place and activities in relation to this policy.

We will ensure that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and it's availability on the school website.

Signed by: **Signed by:**

Principal **Chair of Trustees**

Date: **Date:**