

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

(version 1.1)

The purpose of this policy statement is:

1. to protect children and young people who receive Startup Sherpa's services from harm.
2. to provide staff, children and young people with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Startup Sherpas who will understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding.
3. to provide clear guidance on how to identify, report, and respond to any safeguarding concerns.

Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

1. The Education Act 2002
2. The Children Act 1989 and 2004
3. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
4. The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
5. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
6. The Prevent Duty 2015
7. The Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- recording concerns and information sharing
- child protection records retention and storage
- code of conduct for staff, children and young people
- photography and sharing images guidance
- safer recruitment
- online safety

- anti-bullying
- health and safety
- induction, training, supervision and support

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people.
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made

- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/fororganisations]
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe online environment for our children, young people, staff, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff, children, and young people, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Startup Sherpas has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for:

1. The development and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
2. Providing advice and support to staff regarding safeguarding concerns.
3. Liaising with external agencies, such as social services and the police, when necessary.
4. Ensuring staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates.
5. Maintaining accurate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

**Our current DSL is Helen Roe and can be contacted via
safeguarding@startupsherpas.org**

Staff Responsibilities

All staff members have a responsibility to:

1. Be vigilant and report any concerns or disclosures promptly to the DSL
2. Attend safeguarding training regularly to ensure they are up to date with best practice.

3. Maintain a safe and secure environment for all sherpees.
4. Follow the Startup Sherpas' procedures for recording and reporting safeguarding concerns.

Squad Members including Squad Leaders and Community Leaders

- 1) Each squad member has been consented to by the parents/ legal guardians to join the programme.
- 2) Each squad member signs our Code of Conduct agreement and agrees to follow this.
- 3) Each squad member has been granted a work permit by their local council.

Procedures

Recognizing and Responding to Concerns

All staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and should follow Startup Sherpas' procedures for reporting concerns. These procedures are clearly outlined in Appendix A.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

We have robust processes in place for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers. These processes include:

1. Ensuring all staff and volunteers are subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including DBS checks.
2. Verifying and checking the identity, qualifications, and suitability of all staff members.
3. Providing appropriate safeguarding training to new staff members and ensuring they receive regular updates and refresher training.

Preventative Measures

- All of our Community Sherpa's have been DBS checked.
- Monitoring and reporting systems are in place on our 'Mattermost' platform.

- Squad Leaders monitor each squad and their use of 'Mattermost'.
- Community Leaders support and monitor Squad Leaders
- DSL monitors 'Mattermost'
- All communications on 'Mattermost' are uploaded to our server for use in Safeguarding investigations.
- Safeguarding Policies
- Safeguarding Training for Squad Leaders and Community Leaders
- A dedicated Safeguarding Team - this includes the Community Sherpas, Head of Safeguarding and DSL
- Signposts for support

Sharing Concerns

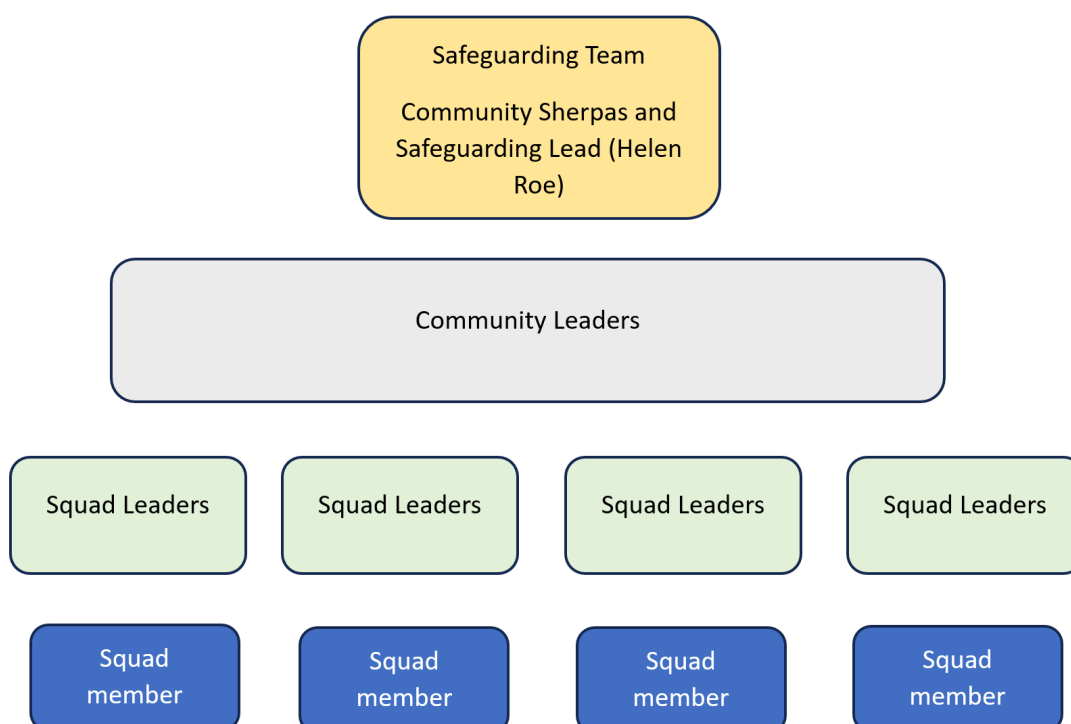
Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies, when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that such a move would be contrary to the child's welfare.

Everyone in the community has a responsibility for safeguarding children.

If a member of the team suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must contact Children's Services. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the Police (dial 999) must be called.

A member of the team who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child. Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

Safeguarding Team structure at Startup Sherpas



Training

Safeguarding Training is provided for squad leaders and community leaders. It is provided at the start of their employment and is updated annually, so that they understand:

1. Code of conduct
2. Know your responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding
3. Monitoring of 'Mattermost' (our online platform for communication between squads) and possible inappropriate content.
4. How to report and respond to a concern

Information for Community Sherpas

What to do if someone discloses abuse

1. A child is likely to disclose to someone they trust. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that they have placed them in

a position of trust, and reassures the child that they have done the right thing by coming to tell them.

2. As a first priority, a member of staff must ensure that they listen to the person making the disclosure without stopping, interrupting or prompting them, and remaining non-judgemental. They should avoid asking leading questions, but instead ask open ones, such as 'What happened next?' or 'When did this happen?'
3. It is crucial to establish a genuine concern for the child's welfare and that it will be necessary to pass any information to the relevant authorities
4. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise to keep secrets which might compromise a child's safety or well-being. As it is possible that a concern will need to be shared further, for example with Children's Services
5. Any information given will be recorded in writing at the time or as soon after as possible, and action will be taken. KCSiE (2019) states that 'Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report, especially if a second member of staff is present.... Either way, it is essential that a written record is made.' (KCSiE 2019 p66)
6. Care must be taken to record the timing, setting and the personnel present, as well as what was said in the person's 'actual' words. The member of staff should only record the facts as the child presents them – notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Such notes could become part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care and/or part of a criminal investigation.
7. In cases where there is an online element such as sexting, the key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

Concerns about a child

If there are concerns about a child (eg. if he/she is suspected of suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm such as physical injury, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or failure to thrive), colleagues should discuss the issue with the Safe Guarding Officer, who may make the decision to refer the matter to children's social care.

Anyone can make a referral, and if for any reason a member of the team feels that a referral is appropriate but one has not been made, then they should consider making one themselves.

The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless the child is considered to be at risk. In this instance, there would be no attempt by the school to contact the parents before informing the Children's Services Social Care Team, and the School would not work with the family to the point of excluding the Social Care Team.

Reporting Concerns

This procedure should be used in all safeguarding concerns, including:

- an adult who has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- peer on peer abuse
- an adult who has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- an adult who has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

You may contact the Chief Safeguarding Officer (DSL) regarding any concerns you have or if appropriate The LADO Service which manages allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey. If you have a concern regarding someone who works with children, please contact the LADO on **0300 123 1650*** or LADO@surreycc.gov.uk.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on **999**. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns.

- **Follow your safeguarding and child protection procedures.**
- **Contact the NSPCC Helpline** on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. Our trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.
- **Contact your local child protection services.** Their contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in.
- **Contact the child's school.** It's good practice to inform the child's school of any child protection concerns you might have. They may already be working to support the child and their family. Or if they have also noticed concerns, your information might help them take appropriate action.
- **Contact the police.**

Reporting online child abuse images

It's against the law to produce or share images of child abuse, even if the image was self-created. This includes sharing images and videos over social media.

If you see a video or image that shows a child being abused:

- Don't comment, like or share the video or image, as this will distribute it further.
- Report it to the website you've seen it on.
- Report it to the police.
- Contact the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000** and we'll report it to the police for you.

If the image or video involves the sexual abuse of a child, report it to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) who will take steps to get it removed from the internet.

Online behaviours

- Sherpas must not create, store, transmit or cause to be transmitted material which is offensive, obscene, indecent or defamatory or which infringes the copyright of another person.
- Sherpas are discouraged from moving their online chat to another platform (eg Snapchat et) where their conversations cannot be monitored by Startup Sherpa.
- Sherpas must immediately tell 'Lama Bot' if they receive an offensive message.
- Sherpas are advised not to reveal personal details about themselves or others in e-mail communication or Teams message, or arrange to meet anyone without specific permission.

Inappropriate contact and non-contact sexual abuse

1. Startup Sherpas staff and parents should contact Surrey Children's Services on (0300) 123 1620 (or if outside working hours, the emergency duty team on (01483) 517898) for advice on making a referral where there are concerns that the child:
 - is being groomed for sexual abuse
 - is planning or has arranged to meet with someone they have met on-line
 - has already been involved in making or viewing abusive images
 - has been the victim of non-contact sexual abuse.
2. If Startup Sherpas staff or parents are aware that a child is about to meet an adult they have made contact with on the internet, they should contact the police on 999 immediately.

Online Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

1. If staff are concerned that a child they work with is being sexually exploited online, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, who may make a multi-agency referral.
2. In cases where there is an online element such as sexting, specific advice must be followed:
 - **Never** view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal**.
 - If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.
 - **Do not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
 - **Do not** ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).
 - **Do not** share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
 - **Do not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

- **Do** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).
3. Staff should be aware of and act appropriately to all reports and concerns.
 4. Staff must make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated, and it should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”.
 5. Not recognising, acknowledging, or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse as it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Staff must always act on abuse that they witness or is reported to them.
 6. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include:
 - assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;
 - the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs; and
 - communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.
 7. The starting point of any report will always be that sexual violence and harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the school. It is crucial that staff do not pass off allegations of sexual violence as ‘banter’, ‘part of growing up’ or ‘having a laugh’.
 8. Further example of Sexual Harassment can include:
 - Sexual comments, jokes, stories; lewd comments; remarks about clothes & appearance; sexualised name-calling
 - Sexual ‘jokes’ and taunting
 - Displaying images of a sexual nature

- Online sexual harassment, such as sharing sexual images and videos; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments including on social media
 - Sexual exploitation: coercion and threats
9. The DSL will need to make an immediate risk and needs assessment, working on a case-by-case basis to consider the needs of both the target(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) as well as the other students and staff (where appropriate) and will decide on the measures to put in place to support all parties. This assessment will be kept under review. The wishes of the target will be carefully considered in terms of how they wish to proceed, and all staff should act in the best interests of the child.

Appendix A

INDICATORS OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

Categories of abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Signs of abuse in children

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Risk indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but they

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with the DSL

- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse
- Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household

Physical abuse

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 Part 1 p8' defines Physical Abuse as 'a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.'

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored)

- could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless

there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a
- single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe(s) indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent-shaped.

Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite

Burns & scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will

always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the

- spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of
- his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. There are grounds for

concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such
- as swelling, pain or loss of movement

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is described as ‘The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development’ (KCSiE 2019 Part 1 p8)

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse, and may include:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, a mistake or valued only
- insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making
- fun of what of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations imposed on children, such as interactions
- that are beyond a child's developmental capability
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from
- participating in normal social interactions
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in
- danger
- The exploitation or corruption of children

Indicators of emotional abuse

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or nonattachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scapegoated within the family
- 'Frozen watchfulness', particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – child has difficulty relating to others

Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. It is defined as 'the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.' (KCSiE 2019 p15)

Forms of neglect

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes,
- shelter, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- Exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm and danger
- LP-PW-034 v11.2 : Apr20 35
- Lack of adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Indicators of Neglect

- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsible with no apparent medical cause
 - Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
 - Child thrives away from home environment
 - Child frequently absent from school
 - Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
 - Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods
- Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Sexual abuse may include:

- Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily
- involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
- These activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (such as rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual
- images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including online
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children
- Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain

sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual / inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorders), self-harm and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing
- Mood swings

Policy reviewed by: H. Roe January 2025

Next Policy Review: January 2026