SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

NOVEMBER 2024

To be reviewed November 2025

*This Policy should be read in conjunction with
all other Sacred Heart High School Policies*

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Appendix 1: Definition of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Appendix 2: Template for Managing Risk of a specific identified potentially harmful sexual behaviour .

1   STATEMENT OF INTENT

Harmful Sexual behaviour is an umbrella term that describes a range of sexual behaviours. See Appendix 1 for a full definition.

Sacred Heart has a zero-tolerance approach to any harmful sexual behaviour involving children and acknowledges that it could be occurring at Sacred Heart High School and in our school community. The school is proactive in its approach to assessing prevalence, responding to incidents and challenging and changing behaviour. This policy applies to all governors, staff and learners.

We have a statutory duty to safeguarding the children in our school. We work together to foster an environment that creates healthy relationships for children and young people.

Our whole-school approach encourages healthy relationships and works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. We provide high quality education within the curriculum to reduce the likelihood of the situations occurring.

We recognise that harmful sexual behaviour is harmful to both the child/children affected by the behaviours and the child/children who displayed the behaviour and provide ongoing support for all involved.

Our approach is to treat everything as a safeguarding incident in the first instance - we distinguish between behaviours that are exploratory and part of healthy age and ability appropriate development and those that may be harmful.

As a school we provide regular opportunities for school staff to understand what harmful sexual behaviours might look like and what they should do in the event of a report. We do this by providing training and regular updates where possible.

We also use the Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE) curriculum to help educate students about these issues as well as regularly remind and promote reporting routes within school to ensure they know what to do should an incident occur.

2   RELATED POLICIES

We hold a number of related policies including our:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing and Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreements
- Curriculum Policy

3   LEADERS AND DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DSLS)

Our senior team and DSLs have ultimate responsibility in dealing with all incidents of harmful sexual behaviour, including online. It is the expectation that all incidents of harmful sexual behaviour/sexual violence and

harassment are reported to the school in line with school safeguarding and child protection procedures. We ensure that both our strategic and operational DSL's receive appropriate training so that they are confident in school safeguarding processes. They know when it is necessary to escalate and have information on what national specialist support is available to support all children involved in harmful sexual behaviour and are confident as to how to access this support when required.

Both our strategic and operational DSL's have an in-depth working knowledge of key documentation, particularly Keeping Children Safe in Education (KSIE), September 2023 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and its consultation draft September 2023 . We ensure that they receive appropriate specialist training, commensurate with their role, and provide ongoing training for all school staff.

It is the role of school leaders and DSLs to ensure that all staff and Governors receive training specific to harmful sexual behaviour and that it is included as part of induction.

4 STAFF

It is the responsibility of all staff to have read and understood this policy and associated policies. All staff must report any incidents or suspected incidents of harmful sexual behaviour in line with school policy and ensure they are informed of the threshold of intervention in place. It is expected that all staff will challenge any harmful sexual language or inappropriate behaviour. Staff have a duty to ensure that the school environment is one which is safe, and which supports learners to understand safe and healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour through delivery of our curriculum.

5 GOVERNORS

We ensure our governors receive appropriate training about what harmful sexual behaviour is, when it can pose a risk to children and how to keep children safe. Our governors receive regular training and updates, both in terms of what sexualised behaviour is, but also how to effectively support establishments and their stakeholders whilst holding provision to account.

As part of the headteacher's report, our governing body has the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the approach to harmful sexual behaviour to ensure it is adequate and effective. This includes evaluation of the curriculum, pupil voice activity and evaluation of parent/carer engagement. It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure that risks relating to these issues are identified, that a number of reporting routes are available, and that risks are effectively mitigated.

6 STUDENTS

All students have the right to learn in a safe, healthy and respectful school environment. Our students benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. They are taught about healthy relationships and how and when to report and that a range of different reporting routes are available to them. Our students are encouraged to report any harmful sexual behaviour, even if they are not directly involved. All students will be listened to if they make a disclosure and will be treated sensitively - whilst we cannot guarantee confidentiality, their requests will be considered when supporting them.

7 PARENTS/CARERS

We work hard to engage parents and carers by:

- Running regular in school sessions

- Sharing newsletters
- Sharing information online e.g., website, social media
- Providing curriculum information

Our parents and carers are made aware of how and when to report any concerns to the school; that all incidents will be handled with care and sensitivity, and that it may sometimes be necessary to involve other agencies.

8   VULNERABLE GROUPS

We recognise that, nationally, vulnerable learners may be more likely to be at risk of experiencing harmful sexual behaviours (HSB).

These include:

- 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 has been exploited or at risk of being exploited (CRE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- A care experienced child
- A child who goes missing or is missing education
- Children who identify as, or are perceived as, LGBTQI+ and/or any of the other protected characteristics
- Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. We work to ensure that any vulnerable learner is offered appropriate support, both within and outside school, sometimes via specialist agencies

9   TRAINING

Through the provision of good quality training and support, we strive to foster in our DSLs, and their deputies, a good understanding of HSB. This will form part of their safeguarding training. Supporting them in planning preventative education and measures, drafting and implementing an effective child protection policy and incorporating the approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment into the whole school or college approach to safeguarding. All staff also receive training on this.

Our training strategy supports staff to respond effectively to different types of harassment and sexual misconduct incidents. An assessment of the training needs of all staff will be undertaken regularly and will form the basis of our training strategy. This strategy will be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Training will be made available on an ongoing basis for all staff and students to raise awareness of harassment and sexual misconduct with the purpose of preventing incidents and encouraging reporting where they do occur.

10   HELPFUL LINKS

Child Exploitation and Online Protection command

CEOP is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be

reported on their website and a report made to one of their Child Protection Advisors.

[The NSPCC](#)

provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff, and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies).

Specialist Sexual Violence Sector Organisations

You can access support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as [Rape Crisis](#) or The [Survivors Trust.](#)

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has developed guidance for schools about [Sexual and sexist bullying.](#)

[The UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

Provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and [mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](#). The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff regarding online safety issues.

[Internet Watch Foundation](#)

If the incident/report you are dealing with involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).

[Childline/IWF Report Remove](#)

is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.

[UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-nudes Advice](#)

Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).

[Thinkuknow](#)

from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online.

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

has developed a range of helpful resources to identify and respond to child sexual abuse, including a [guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of HSB](#).

[Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#)

is a UK-wide charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. They work to prevent abuse from happening in the first place by working with all those affected including adult male and female abusers

[Marie Collins Foundation](#)

Support people to recover from technology assisted sexual abuse in childhood. We do this directly by supporting individuals and their families, and indirectly through advocacy and education.

[NSPCC National Clinical and Assessment Service](#)

(NCATS) a national service that offers assessment, treatment, consultation and training for and about children and young people where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour

[Project deSHAME from Childnet](#)

Provides useful research, advice and resources regarding online sexual harassment.

11   EDUCATION

Our school's educational approach seeks to develop knowledge and understanding of healthy, problematic or sexually harmful behaviours, and empowers young people to make healthy, informed decisions. Our approach is delivered predominantly through PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) with additional opportunities provided through:

Other opportunities are used to deliver teaching and learning around HSB such as assemblies, pastoral/form time, computing lessons, visits from outside agencies etc

Our approach is given the time it deserves and is authentic i.e., based on current issues nationally, locally and within our setting. It is shaped and evaluated by learners and other members of the school community to ensure that it is dynamic, evolving and based on need. We do this through:

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Parental engagement
- Staff consultation
- Staff training

In line with good practice, we are creating child-friendly versions of key safeguarding policies, produced which are regularly evaluated in consultation with young people.

12   REPORTING

Our systems are well promoted in order to be easily understood and easily accessible for children and young people to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. All reports will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively and outcomes shared where appropriate. We also respond to anonymous reports, or reports made by third parties. This can be done via our generic safeguarding email which is listed on our website safeguarding@sacredh.lbhf.sch.uk

We also recognise that incidents will not always be reported directly to us, therefore we also train staff to recognise and spot signs of harmful sexual behaviour.

13 RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OR DISCLOSURE

We recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic and harmful sexual behaviour.

Our response is always based on sound safeguarding principles and follows school safeguarding processes (staff reporting on Safeguard and others reporting using our safeguarding email referred to above; backed up where appropriate with direct conversation with DSLs). It is considered appropriate and puts the learner at the centre of all decisions made.

The school will always adopt a multi-agency approach and seek external support and guidance, in line with school policy, if deemed necessary. This may include:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), Early Help, CAMHS, Police etc

14 RISK ASSESSMENT

The school may deem it necessary to complete a harmful sexual behaviour risk assessment as part of the response to any reported incidents. The purpose of the risk assessment is to protect and support **all those involved** by identifying potential risk, both in and out of school (e.g., public transport, after school clubs etc) and by clearly describing the strategies put in place to mitigate such risk (see **Appendix 1**)

The risk assessment will be completed following a meeting with all professionals working with the learner, as well as parents or carers. Where appropriate, the learners involved will also be asked to contribute.

The risk assessment will be shared will all staff who work with the learner, as well as parents and carers. It will respond to any changes in behaviour and will be regularly updated and evaluated to assess impact.

The following diagram showing what might constitute a harmful behaviour may help in the assessment

A continuum of behaviours

It is vital for professionals to distinguish normal from abnormal sexual behaviours. Chaffin, Letourneau and Silovsky (2002, p208) suggest a child's sexual behaviour should be considered abnormal if it:

- occurs at a frequency greater than would be developmentally expected

- interferes with the child's development

- occurs with coercion, intimidation, or force

- is associated with emotional distress

- occurs between children of divergent ages or developmental abilities

- repeatedly recurs in secrecy after intervention by caregivers.

Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	• Problematic and concerning behaviours	• Victimising intent or outcome	• Physically violent sexual abuse
• Socially acceptable	• Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	• Includes misuse of power	• Highly intrusive
• Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	• Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	• No overt elements of victimisation	• Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance	• Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/ or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
• Shared decision making	• Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Consent issues may be unclear	• Intrusive	• Sadism
		• May lack reciprocity or equal power	• Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim	
		• May include levels of compulsivity	• May include elements of expressive violence	

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs

- Pupils, staff and parents/carers understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority.

15   RATIFICATION

This Policy has been approved by the Headteacher and Ethos Committee in November 2024.

Mrs S O'Donovan
Headteacher

Mr Patrick Sadd
Chair of Ethos Committee

APPENDIX 1: HARMFULSEXUAL BEHAVIOURS - A DEFINITION

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is an umbrella term that describes a range of sexual behaviours.

Hackett et al. (2016; p.12) define HSB as *'sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, that may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult'.*

This definition captures a range of behaviours, both offline and online, such as sexualised, gendered or sexist name calling, sexual 'image sharing' without consent, unwanted sexual touching, sexual assault and rape.

Sexual behaviours are seen across a continuum ranging from normal and appropriate sexual behaviours that are expected from people of a certain developmental age through to sexual behaviours that are inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent.

The toolkit uses Hackett's (2010) continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviour

APPENDIX 2

TEMPLATE FOR ASSESSING RISK AND SUITABLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THIS RISK

Score is calculated by multiplying the likelihood (1-5) with the impact (1-5) where 1 is low and 5 is high

Risk No.	Broad Area of Risk	Description of risk	Inherent Risk			Description of mitigation Measures	Residual Risk			Any further action Required
			Likelihood	*Impact*	*Score*		*Likelihood*	*Impact*	*Score*	