Cornerstone Learning CIC

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Risk Policy

Alternative Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs

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1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the commitment of Cornerstone Learning CIC to safeguard and protect children and young people from the risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). Children with special educational needs (SEN) may face increased vulnerability to exploitation due to social, emotional, cognitive, and communication difficulties. Our provision recognises these risks and places the highest priority on early identification, prevention, and protection.

We adopt a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of exploitation and abuse and will work proactively with pupils, families, external agencies, and safeguarding partners to keep children safe.

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2. Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Provide a clear framework for identifying, assessing, and responding to risks of CSE.
- Ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children from exploitation.
- Establish effective procedures for information-sharing and partnership working.
- Support pupils with SEN in developing protective behaviours, resilience, and awareness of healthy relationships.

This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers, visitors, and contractors working at Cornerstone Learning CIC.

3. Definitions

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): A form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child into sexual activity, often in exchange for attention, affection, gifts, or perceived status.

Vulnerability Factors: Children with SEN may be more susceptible due to:

- Communication difficulties limiting ability to disclose.
- Reduced capacity to recognise risky or exploitative behaviour.
- Social isolation and desire for acceptance.
- Dependence on adults or peers for support.
- Challenges in understanding consent and healthy relationships.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Directors**: Ensures safeguarding arrangements are compliant with statutory guidance.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**: Leads on all CSE concerns, oversees training, referrals, and liaises with statutory agencies.
- **All Staff**: Responsible for being vigilant, recognising indicators of CSE, recording concerns, and reporting immediately to the DSL.
- **Parents and Carers**: Encouraged to work in partnership with the provision to promote safety and resilience.

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5. Recognising Risks and Indicators

Staff will be trained to identify signs of potential exploitation, including (but not limited to):

- Unexplained gifts, money, or new possessions.
- Associations with older peers or adults.
- Secretive use of technology, social media, or mobile phones.
- Changes in mood, behaviour, or attendance.
- Self-harm, substance misuse, or unexplained injuries.
- Expressions of confusion about relationships, affection, or boundaries.

Special attention will be paid to behaviours that may be misunderstood or masked by a child's additional needs.

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6. Preventative Strategies

- **Curriculum**: Tailored PSHE input adapted to individual learning needs and appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.
- **Training**: Regular staff training on CSE, SEN-specific vulnerabilities, and safeguarding updates.
- **Environment**: Providing a safe, nurturing environment where pupils feel listened to and valued.
- **Empowerment**: Supporting children to recognise unsafe situations, build self-esteem, and seek trusted help.
- **Partnerships**: Working with local safeguarding partners, health services, social care, and the police.

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7. Responding to Concerns

- All concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

- The DSL will assess risk using recognised tools (e.g., CSE risk assessment frameworks).
- Concerns will be recorded factually, dated, and stored securely in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Where exploitation is suspected, referrals will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- The child's wishes, voice, and communication style will always be taken into account.
- Staff will follow "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (DfE) and "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE).

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8. Supporting Children at Risk

- Individualised support plans, adapted to the child's SEN.
- Access to trusted adults, mentors, and key workers.
- Provision of therapeutic and wellbeing support where appropriate.
- Liaison with parents/carers and external agencies to ensure coordinated care.

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9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, in line with safeguarding legislation and GDPR.
- Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child making a disclosure.
- The safety of the child will always be the priority.

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10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if new legislation, guidance, or safeguarding concerns arise. The DSL will monitor implementation and report regularly to the governing body/proprietor on safeguarding practice and incidents.

11. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or when necessary to ensure it remains in line with best practices and legal requirements.

Acknowledgment

All staff members are required to read, understand, and adhere to this policy.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read, understood, and agree to comply with the Cornerstone Learning CIC Staff Code of Conduct.

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant. Feedback from children, parents, and staff will be considered in the review process.

Quality Assurance

Cornerstone Learning will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures.

The directors will ensure action is taken to swiftly remedy any identified weaknesses within its procedures.

Policy Dates

Date of Policy Implementation: 4/02/2025
Date of Next Review: 04/02/2026

Approved by: Carina Greening