



**National  
Autistic  
Society**



**Robert  
Ogden  
School**

## **Safeguarding: Child Sexual Exploitation/Grooming Statement**

**Robert Ogden School takes the safety of its pupils and staff seriously and parents will be informed immediately of concerns. Safeguarding procedures will be followed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is any suspicion of sexual abuse, including “grooming” of individuals. (See school Safeguarding Procedure and National Autistic Society Safeguarding Children Policy).**

### **What is child sexual exploitation?**

Child sexual exploitation is when someone grooms and controls a child for a sexual purpose.

It can happen to boys and girls, it can happen over a wide range of ages, it can happen in rural and urban areas, it can happen face to face and it can happen online. It is a form of child abuse and should be treated as a child protection issue.

The terms 'child sexual exploitation' or the 'commercial sexual exploitation of children' are used to refer to a range of illegal and abusive activities.

These activities can be broadly separated into two areas:

- Sexual exploitation through street grooming, this can take place over a number of months.
- Online sexual exploitation – see school online safety policy.

Sexual exploitation through grooming can include:

- Grooming a child for a sexual purpose. This might involve befriending the child, gaining their trust, giving them drugs, alcohol or gifts, asking them to perform sexual acts as a favour or in exchange for something.
- The movement of children within the UK for the purpose of sexually abusing them (also referred to as internal trafficking).
- The trafficking of children into the United Kingdom from other countries for the purpose of sexually abusing them.
- Controlling a child through physical or psychological means or through the use of drugs for a sexual purpose.

- Receiving money or goods in payment for someone to have sex with a child (also referred to as child prostitution).
- Paying or exchanging goods for sex with a child.

Online sexual exploitation can include:

- Grooming children online for the purpose of sexually abusing them. This might involve an adult pretending to be a child, befriending the child through online chat rooms, social networking websites, email, mobile telephone messaging, gaining their trust, stalking their online activities.
- Asking children to participate in non-contact sexual activities such as engaging in sexual conversations online or via mobile telephone.
- Asking children to take and share indecent images of themselves online or through a mobile telephone or other electronic means.
- Asking children to display sexualised behaviours or perform sexual acts that are recorded or shared live via webcam.
- The creation, storage and distribution of child abuse images (also referred to as indecent images).
- Arranging to meet a child in person for the purpose of sexually abusing them.

### **Keeping children with autism and associated disorders safe.**

Key characteristics of autism which impact on a child's ability to themselves from grooming or exploitation can be defined as:

- Difficulties with communication.
- Difficulties with social relationships.
- Difficulties with rigidity and flexibility of thought and social imagination.

As a result of these factors autistic children and those with associated disorders are particularly vulnerable to grooming and sexual exploitation. Autistic children may have the same need for social interaction and friendships as their mainstream peers but they do not always have the skills to manage these relationships effectively.

Autistic children may not see the warning signs or be able to draw back from people who have an intention to harm them. They may not have the social imagination to predict what could happen in situations and take the necessary precautions. Some children may develop a strong fascination or obsession with a particular person making it very easy for that person to exploit them.

### **Supporting children at Robert Ogden School.**

All staff have regular training in safeguarding and have read and understood 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2019 part one). Staff are trained in how to record and report concerns.

The Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum covers wider skills which are the precursors to developing effective relationships.

There is a strong focus on developing on-line safety awareness and materials are provided for parents and carers on a regular basis. The IT Coordinator and Designated Lead for Online Safety are available to offer guidance and support to individual families as and when required.

**References:**

Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2019  
National Autistic Society Safeguarding policy  
PSHE curriculum

Updated 09.12.19