



# CHILD ON CHILD POLICY

Review cycle:	Annual
Reviewed by:	Vice Principal Inclusion
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VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
1	13 December 2022	TP	New policy
2	21 March 2024	TP	Top of page 3 - Having a zero-tolerance approach to violence, bullying and prejudice Page 4 - Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports will be reported to the DSL should consider whether the pupil and/or the person who made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. If this is the case, it may be appropriate to make a referral to children's social care. Any report that is <b>deliberately invented or malicious</b> , will be followed up using the academy's behaviour policy.
3	3 March 2025	TP	Page 4 – clarification added to the implementation of a risk assessment (bullet point 3)

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## 1. Introduction

Child on child abuse may also be referred to as peer-on-peer abuse or child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and should be taken to include child on child abuse of any description.

Child on child abuse left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals and their families. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Such abuse which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where our pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive, and those that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement. In

the main, therefore, this document refers to child on child sexual violence, sexual harassment. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as 'abuse'. Bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues and would normally be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and procedures which includes anti-bullying procedures. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as 'abusive' if:

- There is a significant difference in power (e.g. age, size, ability, development etc.) between the young people concerned
- Violence and/or behaviours are motivated by: race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities.
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person. If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

This policy should be read alongside and in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Inclusion Policy

## **2. Child on Child Abuse**

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We are mindful that not all child-on-child abuse is reported but it could still be taking place.

Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under the behaviour policy, but this child on child abuse policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent such as; hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, otherwise causing physical harm & initiation or hazing type violence and rituals
- Involves bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol Note: child-on-child abuse can also involve sexual abuse and sexual harassment (see section 3 for further information on this.)

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student, this is reported to the DSL/DDSL who will undertake the investigation which will include:

- Meeting with relevant staff, students & parents (if appropriate) to establish any immediate risks.
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made (perpetrator/s) and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images.

Having a zero-tolerance approach to violence, bullying and prejudice.

- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially through their usual safeguarding channels
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that child on child abuse could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves.

### **3. Child-on-child sexual violence and harassment**

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and or online. Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, it is important to note that it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.

Students with special educational needs and disabilities are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage, this is referred to as harmful sexual behaviour.

All staff working with children should maintain the attitude of that child-on-child, sexual violence and sexual harassment could happen here.

The academy has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Physical behaviour that is potentially criminal in nature will always be challenged, this includes but is not limited to: grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. All victims should be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Examples of child-on-child sexual violence/sexual harassment might include where the alleged behaviour involves:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Sexual comments
- Sexual jokes or taunting

- Physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Upskirting
- Online sexual harassment (inc on social media) such as consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, sharing of unwanted explicit content.
- Sexualised online bullying (unwanted sexual comments and messages)
- Sexual exploitation and coercion

If a student makes an allegation of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment against another student, this must be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL. The DSL will undertake the investigation which (in consultation with part 5 KCSIE 2024) will include:

The DSL will make an immediate risk assessment.

- Considering the wishes of the victim, meeting with relevant staff, students and parents (unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm) to establish any immediate risks.
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
- The DSL will consider whether a written risk assessment needs to be put in place. This will be considered on a case by case basis and will consider, at all times, the wishes and needs of the victim and whether there are any other victims involved. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool will be used to help determine the need for a risk assessment.
- A risk assessment and support plan will be put in place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made (the perpetrator) and any others affected) with a named person that will oversee and review plan. The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services if necessary.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Consideration will also be given to supporting children who have witnessed sexual violence.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports will be reported to the DSL should consider whether the pupil and/or the person who made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. If this is the case, it may be appropriate to make a referral to children's social care. Any report that is **deliberately invented or malicious**, will be followed up using the academy's behaviour policy.

#### 4. Child on child abuse and SEND

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEND) and or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with SEND and or disabilities are especially vulnerable when identifying concerns due to their impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

We recognise that the ways in which abuse may present in children with special educational needs (SEND) may be different and therefore, care must be taken to ascertain any changes in mood or behaviour without attributing that to the child's condition.

Every effort will be made to overcome barriers to communication and ensure the voice of the child is heard.

Once a referral or concern has been raised involving a student with SEND, special consideration will be made of the following:

- The student's ability to communicate clearly.
- The student's ability to understand any investigation.
- The risk to the student and the student's ability to keep themselves safe.
- Whether the student is able to understand what has happened to them.
- Whether the student has knowledge of body parts, privacy and what is inappropriate.
- What may have prompted the behaviours – eg: something they have heard or learnt in school.

All staff have been informed of students with special educational needs and disabilities. If necessary, the SENCO will be informed and will offer advice and support in how best to proceed to ensure that the student's individual needs are taken into consideration during any investigation and to inform any subsequent risk assessment.

## **5. Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude images and videos**

All incidents involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (sexting), must be reported to the DSL/DDSL immediately.

Staff **must not**:

View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery.

Ask a student to share or download it

Any imagery that has already been viewed by accident, must be reported to the DSL

Delete the imagery or ask the student to delete it.

Ask the student(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)

Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the student(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.

Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

Staff should:

Explain the need to report the incident and reassure the student(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguardship team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

Whether there is an immediate risk to student(s)

If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care

If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)

What further information is required to decide on the best response

Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)

Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment

If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual

Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

The incident involves an adult.

There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)

What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent

The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the images or videos is under 13

The DSL has reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy. Further review by the DSL If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks. They will hold interviews with the students involved (if appropriate). If at any point in the process there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Informing parents The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm.

## Appendix A

### Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool

#### Behaviour age: 9-13

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

#### What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability and reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

#### What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information

#### Green behaviours 9-13

- solitary masturbation
- use of sexual language including swear and slang words
- having girl/boyfriends who are of

the same, opposite or any gender

- interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online
- need for privacy

consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peers

#### What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences. A potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur.

#### What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

#### Amber behaviours 9-13

- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- verbal, physical or cyber/virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) targeted bullying
- exhibitionism, e.g. flashing or mooning
- giving out contact details online
- viewing pornographic material

#### What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening and involving significant age, developmental or power differences. They may pose a concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

#### What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action

#### Red behaviours 9-13

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- distributing naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- sexually explicit talk with younger children
- sexual harassment
- arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret
- genital injury to self or others
- forcing other children of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities
- sexual activity e.g. oral sex or intercourse
- presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- evidence of pregnancy

## **Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool**

### **Behaviour age: 13 - 17**

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response.

It is the level of intervention that will vary.

#### **Green behaviours**

- solitary masturbation
- sexually explicit conversations with peers
- obscenities and jokes within the current cultural norm
- interest in erotica/pornography
- use of internet/e-media to chat online
- having sexual or non-sexual relationships
- sexual activity including hugging, kissing, holding hands
- consenting oral and/or penetrative sex with others of the same or opposite gender who are of similar age and developmental ability
- choosing not to be sexually active

#### **Amber behaviours**

- accessing exploitative or violent pornography
- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress,
- withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- concern about body image
- taking and sending naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- single occurrence of peeping, exposing, mooning or obscene gestures
- giving out contact details online
- joining adult- only social networking sites and giving false personal information
- arranging a face to face meeting with an online contact alone

#### **Red behaviours**

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- preoccupation with sex, which interferes with daily function
- sexual degradation/humiliation of self or others
- attempting/forcing others to expose genitals
- sexually aggressive/exploitative behaviour
- sexually explicit talk with younger children
- sexual harassment
- non-consensual sexual activity
- use of/acceptance of power and control in sexual relationships
- genital injury to self or others
- sexual contact with others where there is a big difference in age or ability •
- sexual activity with someone in authority and in a position of trust
- sexual activity with family members



## Appendix B

### Child on Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviours Risk Assessment

Student Name: .....

Date Prepared: .....

Agreed Review Date: .....

<b>Details of concern</b>  Include a summary of initial incident and any concerns the school has.	<b>Description</b>  Include the Nature and level of risk.	<b>Potential risks</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Actions taken to minimise risk</b>	<b>Person responsible for action</b>
Describe the types of behaviour or language observed, when and where it has happened					
What are the concerns for school?  What are the specific HSB behaviours of concern and what are the concerns about risk? Use the Brook Traffic Light model for guidance.					

Who could be harmed and how?  Are there specific concerns about age groups, gender, vulnerable children?					
Record any known areas / times of concern.  E.g. particular lessons, activities, times of day, activity outside of school, toilets, changing rooms etc.					
Record transport arrangements to and from school and associated risks					

Staff signature: .....

Student signature: .....

**Very Low Risk**

Improbable - unlikely to happen

**Low Risk**

Remote but possible – unlikely, though conceivable

**Medium Risk**

Possible/likely – could occur at some time

**High Risk**

Probable/very likely to occur/occurring/expected to occur