Lightmoor Village Primary School

Child- on- Child Abuse Policy 2024- 2025

Approved by: Staff	September 2024
Approved by: Governors	29.09.24
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Definition

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider child associations.

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, child-on-child grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content and harassment.

There are different forms that child-on-child abuse can take, such as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)

- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment. Part five of this guidance sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos

- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence43), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

For more information please see definitions within our Child Protection Policy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 states:

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children (including online). All staff should be clear about their school policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that their child protection policy includes:

• Procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse.

• Systems in place (and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

• How allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt
With.

• Clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by
child-on-child abuse will be supported.

• A recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such
abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

• A statement which makes clear there should be a zero-tolerance approach to
abuse, and it should 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.

• Recognition that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but
that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

While it is recommended that Child on child abuse is associated with the Child Protection and Safeguarding
Policy, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with child on child abuse this separate policy
guidance template has been completed to annex Lightmoor Village Primary School Child Protection and
Safeguarding Policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Positive Behaviour Policy and
Online Safety policy.

Intent

At Lightmoor Village Primary School, we believe that children have a right to attend school and learn in a
safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults and other children in school and at home.
we are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child
abuse and to ensure that any form of child-on-child abuse or sexually harmful behaviour is dealt with
immediately and consistently.

This will be achieved by:

 • Creating a culture of mutual respect amongst all pupils (through assemblies, our curriculum and through
our behaviour policy).

 • Teaching pupils about behaviour that is acceptable and unacceptable (through our assemblies and our
curriculum offer).

• Identifying and making provision for any pupil that has been subject to abuse. (Through our safeguarding
policy and procedure).

• Ensuring that members of the governing body, the headteacher and staff members understand their
responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child-on-child
abuse and know to refer concerns to the DSL. (Through ongoing training).

• Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear and easy to understand for
staff, pupils and parents. (We check this through staff meeting and PD day quizzes and spot checks during
our Health and Safety Governor committee meetings).

The lead DSL is Lucy Cowan (Head teacher).

The Deputy DSL's are trained to the same level and can also deal with issues and concerns linked to child protection including child-on-child abuse. DSL deputies are John Newton, Natalie Roberts and Claire Ballisch.

All staff will be trained in our settings policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. This policy applies to governors and members of staff including volunteers.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse.

However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:
- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- 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.

Vulnerabilities

As a school we will recognise any child can be vulnerable to child-on-child abuse including:

- Individual and situation factors can increase a child's vulnerabilities to abuse by their childs such as the sharing of an image or photograph
- Children who are socially isolated from their childs
- Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse
- Children with certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs
- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

A whole-school approach to tackling child-on-child abuse

The school will continue to involve all members of the school community, including the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse.

The governing body will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including child-on-child abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the school.

The school will ensure that procedures for handling child-on-child abuse are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the school community who wishes to access them.

The school will implement a contextual approach to safeguarding pupils against child-on-child abuse and will ensure that all procedures take into account incidents of child-on-child abuse that occur outside of school or online.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff receive adequate training on handling child-on-child abuse.

The school will prioritise cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils and ensure that all pupils are aware that the school will adopt a zero-tolerance stance on child-on-child abuse of any kind.

The school will promote respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff will model appropriate and respectful behaviour.

Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as 'boys will be boys' or describing such behaviour as 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up', as these phrases can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and normalised abuse.
The school will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of child-on-child abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage.

The school will have a clear set of values and standards that will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life and will be underpinned by the school's policies, procedures and curriculum.

The school will manage all early help and intervention for pupils that show early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Prevention

As a school, we will actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:
- Educating all governors, its senior leadership team, staff, students, and parents about this issue.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via the curriculum.
- Engaging parents on these issues.
- Supporting the on-going welfare of the student body by drawing on multiple resources that prioritise student mental health, and by providing in-school counselling and therapy to address underlying mental health needs.
- Working with governors, the senior leadership team and all staff, students and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community.
- Creating conditions in which our students can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture.
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the DSL and deputies so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify students who may be in need of additional support.

We will actively engage with TWSP in relation to child-on-child abuse, and work closely with external agencies. The relationship our setting has built with these partners is essential to ensuring that we are able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of child on child abuse. The DSL (or deputy) will regularly review behaviour incident logs which can help to identify any changes in behaviour and/or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage.

We will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Teaching in line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance 2019, providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus (Character Education) which develops pupils understanding of acceptable behaviour.
- Educating children about keeping themselves safe, the nature of child on child abuse and what is meant by consent

- Having a robust Online and Mobile Technology safety programme which develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self-protection when using the internet and social networking.
- Having robust monitoring and filtering systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and act appropriately when using information technology in school.
- Having systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued in a non-judgemental environment.
- Delivering targeted work on keeping safe to all pupils.
- When required, developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.
- Creating a safe culture in school by implementing policies and procedures that address child on child abuse and harmful attitudes, promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender and sexuality.

Risk assessment/support and safety plan

A whole school risk assessment is completed annually to highlight areas of risk and what the school has in place to lower the risk of child-on-child abuse from happening, this is stored in safeguarding file on Tdrive.

For cases of child-on-child abuse the DSL or a deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment, and develop a support and safety plan any time that there is a report of sexual violence (see appendix 1 for a template for this).

For reports of sexual harassment, a risk assessment/support and safety plan will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Risk assessments/support and safety plans are not intended to replace the detailed assessments of experts, and for incidents of sexual violence it is likely that a professional risk assessment by a social worker or sexual violence specialist will be required.

Risk assessments will consider:
• The victim.
• The alleged perpetrator.
• Other pupils at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded, either on paper or electronically, and kept under review in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

Managing the report

The decision of when to inform the alleged perpetrator of a report will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a report is being referred to children's social care or the police, the school will speak to the relevant agency to discuss informing the alleged perpetrator. There are four likely outcomes when managing reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

• Managing internally
• Providing early help
• Referring to children's social care
• Reporting to the police

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Taking action

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their child(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their child(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL (or deputy) without delay.

Following a disclosure the DSL or a deputy will decide the school's initial response, taking into consideration:
• The victim's wishes.
• The nature of the incident.
• The ages and developmental stages of the pupils involved.
• Any power imbalance between the pupils.
• Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
• Any ongoing risks.
• Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a pupil's life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
• The best interests of the pupil.
• That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other pupils involved.

Where there is a safeguarding risk the Designated Safeguarding Lead should contact Family Connect to discuss the case. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.

If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police will become involved.

Parents, of both/all the student/s concerned with the disclosure/allegation and the alleged victim/s, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy on cpoms.

If the allegation highlights a potential risk to the school and the pupil, the school will follow the school's behaviour policy and procedures and take appropriate action.

In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

Where a disclosure or allegation indicates that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL will consider what line of action is to be taken in line with the Child Protection and Online safety policies and whether or not devices are to be confiscated, the police contacted, Family Connect informed and if the images have been uploaded to the internet what specialist help may be required for the images to be removed.

The DSL (or a deputy) will engage with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Our risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting our pupils and students and updating our own risk assessment.

The DSL may use and consider the TWSP Sexually harmful behaviour - risk assessment tool.

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Appendix 1

Risk Assessment Template

*A risk assessment should be completed for all cases relating to sexual violence or alleged sexual violence. Sexual violence is defined by the sexual offences act 2002 as "criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault".

*This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education 2020, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges 2022.

Aspects to consider	Risk (Consider victim, alleged perpetrator, other pupils and staff)	Risk Level (High, Medium, Low)	Actions to reduce risk	Revised risk level (High, Medium or low)
What are the wishes of the victim?				
What was the nature of the incident?				
Was it a crime?				
What are the ages of the children involved?				
What are the developmental stages of the children involved?				
Consider the power balance between the victim and perpetrator – For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?				
Is the alleged incident one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from				

the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?			
Is either the victim or the alleged perpetrator at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by childs)?			
Do they share classes?			
Do they share break times?			
Do they share transport to/from school?			
Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?			
How can such contact be limited?			
Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?			

Any further Actions taken by School:

Action	Yes/No	Date	Reason for Action
Family connect informed			
Police informed			
Referral to MASH			
Referral to external support services – Early help			
Referral to external support services – Children's social care via Family connect			
Referral to internal support services – Pastoral support			
Referral to CAMHS			
Other			