Child-on-Child abuse

(including harassment and violence)

Policy & Procedures

Written: July 2026
To be Reviewed: July 2027

This policy is provided to all staff and should be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy

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Introduction

'Keeping Children Safe in Education (1 September 2026; paragraph 191) states that 'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), with 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 and how allegations of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with. Furthermore, the school is required to state the clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) will be supported.

While it is recommended that child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) is part of the Child Protection Policy, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), detailed policy and procedures have been separate from the main Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Purpose and Aim

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence). The purpose of this policy is to explore the many forms of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) and include a planned and supportive response to the issues.

Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children's Act, 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (31 March 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools' guidance
- UKCIS 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' guidance

Definition and Recognition

The Trust recognises that child-on-child abuse is a **safeguarding issue** and can happen:

- between children of any age or gender;
- inside and outside school;
- online and offline;
- as a one-off incident or as part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

Furthermore, we recognise that:

- child-on-child abuse may be harmful to the child who experiences the abuse;

- child-on-child abuse may be harmful to the child who has caused harm, who may also require safeguarding support;
- 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 Zero Tolerance Approach

At The Pioneer Academy, we take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. All child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Abuse and harmful behaviour

Abusive behaviour can happen to pupils and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter'; 'just joking; 'part of growing up'; or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

The Trust continues to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the child, with full consideration to impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Preventing Child-On-Child Abuse (including Harassment and Violence)

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' emphasises that child-on-child abuse is **preventable**, and early identification and evidence-based support can prevent escalation.

At The Pioneer Academy, we prioritise proactive measures to prevent child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) rather than simply responding to incidents after they occur.

The first and most crucial step is recognising that child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) can happen in any setting, regardless of the strength of policies and support systems in place. Acknowledging this reality allows us to continuously assess and manage risks while refining our strategies to better support children in discussing concerns. By encouraging open communication and ensuring all staff are well informed, we create an environment where issues can be addressed effectively.

To foster this open environment, we ensure that children feel safe to express concerns about anything that may be upsetting or worrying them. This is reinforced through a strong and positive PSHE/SMSC curriculum, which directly addresses topics such as prejudiced behaviour. Providing an open forum for discussions helps children process their experiences in a supportive setting, reducing the likelihood of harmful interactions occurring in private or unmonitored situations.

Creating such an open and honest environment also requires that all staff feel confident in addressing these issues and challenging inappropriate language and behaviour among children. To achieve this, we provide comprehensive staff training and continuous professional development (CPD) on recognising abusive behaviours and engaging in meaningful conversations with children. Staff must avoid dismissing concerns as mere 'banter' or a normal part of growing up, as minimising such issues may discourage children from seeking further help or support. Every case should be considered on an individual basis, ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

Additionally, it is essential to provide accessible signposting for children who may not feel comfortable raising concerns directly with staff or peers. A resource board with information on various support services allows children to seek guidance independently if needed. Furthermore, external organisations and support programs can be brought in to educate children on specific issues, reinforcing the importance of prevention and early intervention.

Finally, empowering children to take an active role in shaping their school environment is key to fostering a culture of respect and accountability. At The Pioneer Academy, we encourage pupil participation through the school council and pupil voice initiatives. Pupils are also involved in establishing "rules of acceptable behaviour," helping to create a positive school ethos where all children understand appropriate boundaries before behaviours escalate into abuse.

By implementing these strategies, we strive to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and protected.

As such, we reduce risks of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) through:

- a positive safeguarding culture;
- clear expectations for respectful behaviour;
- effective behaviour policies;
- supervision and identification of higher-risk times/locations;
- curriculum teaching (including relationships, sex and health education);
- online safety education; and
- promoting equality, respect and inclusion.

Reporting mechanisms and listening to children

The Trust recognises that children are more likely to report concerns about child-on-child abuse when they feel safe, valued, listened to and confident that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Each school will ensure that clear reporting systems are in place, which are **well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible** to all children, including those who may require additional support to communicate their concerns.

Children will be taught and reminded regularly about how they can report worries, concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence. This will include knowing:

- **how to report a concern**, whether this is in person, through a trusted adult, safeguarding reporting system, online reporting route or another identified method;

- **who they can speak to**, including members of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL(s), or another trusted adult;
- that they can report concerns on behalf of themselves or another child;
- that concerns can be reported even if they are unsure whether what has happened is abuse;
- that they will be listened to and treated with dignity, respect and compassion;
- that their concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately;
- that they will be supported throughout the safeguarding process.

Schools will ensure that reporting mechanisms take account of the needs of all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), children who may have communication difficulties, children who are reluctant to disclose, and children who may feel unable to report concerns directly.

Staff will create a culture where children understand that abuse, harassment, violence, bullying and harmful behaviours should never be dismissed as "banter", "just a joke" or "part of growing up". Children will be encouraged to speak out and seek help early and staff will respond to all concerns with curiosity, sensitivity and appropriate professional challenge.

All reports of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) will be recorded, assessed and managed in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures. Children who raise concerns will be kept informed, where appropriate, about actions taken and will receive ongoing support. The school will ensure that children understand that speaking up is valued and that they will not be blamed, dismissed or disadvantaged for reporting abuse or seeking help.

Types of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

There are different forms of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) such as:

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyberbullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.

Prejudiced Behaviour: The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Discriminatory Bullying
Discriminatory bullying is behaviour that targets a child because of a protected characteristic or perceived difference, including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. It may involve prejudice-based language, harassment, exclusion, threats, intimidation or online abuse.

Upskirting - This is a criminal offence, 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.

Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, physical assaults, serious physical harm, threats involving weapons or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. **Sexual violence** includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault while **Sexual harassment i**ncludes sexual comments, sexual jokes, unwanted sexual remarks and online sexual harassment.

This may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse. It also includes 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.

Harmful sexual behaviour from children is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a child engages in harmful sexual behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the child who instigates it as well as the child it is intended towards.

At The Pioneer Academy, we follow the Part five of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026' guidance which 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 (including AI-generated intimate images/deepfakes): the use of taking or distributing indecent images of children under the age of 18 is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support children may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sharing of nude and semi-nude images is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, children are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

At The Pioneer Academy, we follow the 'Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools' guidance and the UKCIS 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' guidance which outlines how to respond to an incident of nude and/or semi-nude images and/or videos being shared.

Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (including teenage relationship abuse).

Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Misogyny and Harmful Attitudes

The Trust recognises that misogyny and harmful attitudes can contribute to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, intimidation, discrimination and other forms of gender-based harm. Misogyny refers to attitudes, beliefs or behaviours that express hostility, prejudice, contempt or disrespect towards girls and women.

Harmful attitudes may include:

- sexist language, jokes or comments;
- objectification or sexualisation of others;
- beliefs that excuse, minimise or normalise harassment or violence;
- stereotypes about gender roles or relationships;
- online content or influences that promote disrespect, inequality or hostility towards others.

The Trust will challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours and promote respectful relationships, equality and dignity for all children. Concerns relating to misogyny, sexism or gender-based harm will be taken seriously, recorded and addressed through safeguarding, behaviour and educational approaches.

Serious Violence and Weapons

The Trust recognises that serious violence and weapons-related incidents can be forms of child-on-child abuse and may place children at significant risk of harm.

Serious violence may include incidents involving weapons, serious physical assaults, threats of violence, gang-related activity, criminal exploitation or other behaviour that causes, or has the potential to cause, significant harm.

Children may be at risk of serious violence as victims, witnesses or through involvement in harmful or exploitative behaviour. Staff will remain alert to indicators that a child may be at risk of, or involved in, serious violence, including changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries, carrying weapons, association with harmful peer groups, exploitation or increased involvement in risky situations.

The Trust will take all concerns relating to serious violence and weapons seriously. Incidents will be recorded, assessed and responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures, with appropriate referrals made to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies where required.

The Trust will promote a culture where children understand that threats, intimidation, violence and the carrying or use of weapons are unacceptable. Prevention work will include education around healthy relationships, conflict resolution, safety, online influences and seeking help when concerns arise.

Technology-Facilitated Child-on-Child Abuse (Online Child-on-Child abuse)

The Trust recognises that child-on-child abuse can take place online as well as face-to-face, and that technology may be used to facilitate, escalate or continue harmful behaviour.

Online abuse may occur through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, online communities or other digital spaces.

Technology-Facilitated Child-on-Child abuse may include harassment, threats, intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, sharing of intimate images without consent, coercion, exploitation, and the creation or sharing of harmful content, including AI-generated or manipulated images.

The Trust recognises that children may be harmed by the creation, sharing or distribution of nude or semi-nude images, including where images have been altered or generated using artificial intelligence. Children may not always understand the risks or recognise that they are being harmed or exploited.

All concerns involving online child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures. Staff will consider both the online and offline context, provide support to children affected, and take appropriate action to reduce risk, including working with parents/carers and relevant external agencies where required.

The Trust will promote online safety education to help children understand digital risks, respectful online behaviour, consent, privacy and how to seek help when they experience or witness harmful behaviour online.

Responding to allegations and concerns

Although Child-on-Child abuse (including harassment and violence) may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

Expected action taken by all staff

It is important to deal with a situation of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon as possible and not after the child(ren) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example; do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

In all cases of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to children and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the children to tell us what happened. Only interrupt the child from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?)

Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess)

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a child to be able to harm another?

Decide on the next course of action

If from the information that we gather **we believe any child to be at risk of significant harm** we must make a safeguarding referral to Children's Social Care immediately (where a crime has been committed the Police should be involved also). If this is the case, once Children's Social Care has been contacted and made a decision on what will happen next then we will be informed on the next steps.

If Children's Social Care and the Police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the children in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that Children's Social Care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case we may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, we agree with the decision, we may then be left to inform parents.

Informing parents

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from Police/ Children's Social Care, we have agreement to inform parents or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then we need to inform the parents as soon as possible.

The Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance says that:

- parents of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator should generally be informed and supported,
- decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis,
- safeguarding considerations come first,
- and information should not be shared if doing so would place a child at greater risk of harm.

If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents.

At The Pioneer Academy, informing parents is normally appropriate:

- when an incident has occurred between pupils,
- when support or behavioural intervention is needed,
- when risk assessments or safeguarding plans are being put in place,
- or when a child has been harmed or accused of harming another child.

However, we may delay or limit parental involvement if:

- a child is at risk of significant harm,
- there are concerns about domestic abuse or family violence,
- informing parents could compromise a police or safeguarding investigation, OR
- the child's wishes and safety indicate that immediate disclosure would be unsafe.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then we would encourage the child to share the information with their parent (the child may be scared to tell parents that they are being harmed in any way).

The Pioneer Academy will always act in the best interests of the child.

The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a child may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Points to consider:

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the children involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1–4-year-olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage.

This, however should not be overlooked if other issues arise (see following):

- Where did the incident or incidents take place?
- Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?
- Can each of the children give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the children involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one child different from another and why?
- What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?
- Do the children know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the child's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the child have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If we are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, we will seek advice from Children's Social Care.

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way, it must be considered, has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

Supporting the children involved

For the child who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual child. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this child continues to be

monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the child may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other children or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyberbullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the child feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the child who has displayed harmful behaviour

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the child has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Particular support from identified services may be necessary through a Team around a child/strengthening families/early help referral and the child may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the child has been met, it is important that child receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the child they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of harmful sexual behaviour, it may be a requirement for the child to engage in one-to-one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the Police or Youth Offending Service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this child cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the children will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the child has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This would be completed via a multiagency response to ensure that the needs of the child and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the child and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the child or protective strategies if the child feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

At The Pioneer Academy, we may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the child to reflect on their behaviour.

Recording and Managing Incidents

All concerns, allegations and incidents of child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence, will be recorded promptly, accurately and securely in line with the Trust's safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

Where a school uses **CPOMS** (or another approved safeguarding recording system), staff must record concerns as soon as possible and provide a clear, factual account of what has been reported, observed or disclosed. Records should include:

- the date, time and location of the incident or concern;
- the names and details of the children involved, including the child affected and the child alleged to have caused harm;
- a factual description of what happened, using the child's own words where appropriate;
- any immediate actions taken, including steps to ensure children's safety;
- details of any witnesses;
- the staff member's response and any advice sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL;
- decisions made, actions taken and the rationale for those decisions.

Staff should record **facts, not opinions or assumptions**, and should avoid language that minimises the seriousness of the behaviour, such as "banter", "just joking" or "falling out", unless these are the words used by a child and are clearly recorded as such.

All child-on-child abuse concerns recorded on CPOMS will be reviewed by the DSL or Deputy DSL to determine the appropriate safeguarding response. This may include internal investigation, support for children involved, risk assessment, behaviour interventions, parental engagement and referral to external agencies where required.

Records must demonstrate:

- how the concern was assessed;
- how the voice and wishes of the child affected were considered;
- how risks were managed;
- what support was provided;
- how decisions were reached.

The school will ensure that safeguarding records relating to child-on-child abuse are stored securely, shared appropriately and retained in accordance with statutory requirements and the Trust's record retention procedures.

Monitoring and Reviewing Incidents

The Trust recognises that the impact of child-on-child abuse may continue beyond the immediate incident and that children involved may require ongoing support. Following an incident, the school will ensure that appropriate monitoring and review arrangements are put in place to support the wellbeing and safety of all children involved, including the child who has experienced harm and the child who has caused harm.

Children's responses to incidents may change over time. Feelings such as remorse, regret, shame, anxiety, distress or unhappiness may emerge at a later stage and children may need support to process what has happened and understand the impact of their actions. Schools will remain alert to any signs that a child's emotional wellbeing is affected following an incident.

Regular reviews will be undertaken, where appropriate, with the children involved to:

- ensure they continue to feel safe and supported;
- monitor emotional wellbeing and behaviour;
- assess whether risks have reduced or changed;
- identify any further support required;
- prevent recurrence of harmful behaviour;
- ensure that children do not respond to distress through further harmful behaviour towards others or themselves, including self-harm.

The school will consider the individual needs and circumstances of each child and may use a range of support approaches, including safeguarding interventions, pastoral support, restorative approaches where appropriate, behaviour support, counselling or referral to external services.

The DSL will oversee the monitoring of child-on-child abuse incidents and ensure that actions, reviews and outcomes are recorded appropriately. Where concerns continue or escalate, the school will take further safeguarding action, including seeking advice from or making referrals to relevant external agencies.

Staff Training and Awareness

The Trust recognises that effective prevention, identification and response to child-on-child abuse depends on staff having the knowledge, confidence and skills to recognise concerns and take appropriate action.

All staff will receive safeguarding training and updates that ensure they understand:

- the different forms of child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, bullying, discriminatory bullying, online abuse, sharing of intimate images, serious violence and other harmful behaviours;
- the indicators and warning signs that a child may be experiencing, witnessing or causing harm through child-on-child abuse;
- that children may disclose concerns in different ways and may not always use safeguarding language or recognise that what has happened to them is abuse;
- how to respond appropriately to a disclosure, including listening carefully, reassuring the child, avoiding leading questions, not promising confidentiality, and reporting concerns promptly;
- the importance of acting on concerns and not assuming that another member of staff or professional will take responsibility;
- when and how to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL(s);
- the importance of recording concerns promptly, accurately and factually, distinguishing between what has been seen, heard or disclosed and professional opinion or assumptions.

Staff will understand that child-on-child abuse should never be dismissed as “banter”, “just a joke”, “part of growing up” or normal peer behaviour. All concerns will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and responded to in line with the Trust’s safeguarding procedures.

The Trust will ensure that safeguarding training is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in statutory guidance, emerging risks and learning from incidents, enabling staff to maintain a strong safeguarding culture where children feel safe to speak out and confident that concerns will be acted upon.

Our Commitment

The Trust is committed to creating a culture where every child feels safe, respected, valued and able to speak out. Child-on-child abuse, in all its forms, will never be accepted, excused, minimised or dismissed as "banter", "just a joke" or "part of growing up". Every concern will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to with compassion, fairness and appropriate action.

We recognise that children who experience harm and children who cause harm may both require support, guidance and safeguarding intervention. Through early identification, effective reporting systems, appropriate responses and ongoing support, the Trust will work to prevent harm, protect children and promote positive, respectful relationships.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff has a vital role in recognising concerns, challenging harmful behaviour and ensuring that every child's voice is heard.

The Trust will continue to learn, reflect and improve its practice so that all children are protected from harm and can thrive in a safe and inclusive environment.

References

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (1 September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (31 March 2026)
- Whatis.com http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/cyberbullying
- New Choices Inc http://newchoicesinc.org/educated/abuse/TDV/def
- This is abuse campaign https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/41001 0/2015-03-08_This_is_Abuse_campaign_summary_report__2_.pdf
- Stop bullying.gov
- http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is bullying/definition/index.html#types
- Holding Together: equalities, difference and cohesion, a resource for school improvement planning, published for Derbyshire Education Authority by Trentham Books, summer 2009.
- EACH resources for LGBT
- CEOP
- https://www.ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2009/What-does-sextingmean
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools (DfE July 2022)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (UKCIS, February 2024)