Safeguarding -Child on Child Abuse Policy

Version control			
Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	12/11/2023	Trust Lead – Inclusion and Safeguarding	New Policy
2	9/9/2024	Trust Lead – Inclusion and Safeguarding	Updated KCSIE 2024 Removal of the word 'trans' and replaced with 'gender questioning'
3	17/9/2025	Director of Secondary	Updated KCSIE 2025

Lead professional: Director of Secondary
Adopted:
Review timescale: Annual
Consultation path:
Trade union approval: n/a
Next review: September 2026
Reviewer: Audit and Risk Committee
Statutory: no

Child on Child Abuse Policy

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Child on Child Abuse Policy

Introduction

Safeguarding is a whole system approach, driven through our Futura Trust values, **Respect, Opportunity, Collaboration and Aspiration.** We create safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments where every member of our educational community can thrive. Futura is committed to the well-being, protection, and holistic development of all our students, staff, and stakeholders. Through rigorous policies, continuous training, and proactive measures, we will empower individuals with the knowledge, skills and support needed to identify, prevent, and respond to all safeguarding concerns effectively. Safeguarding is not just a priority but a **fundamental** part of our culture, fostering a sense of security, trust and growth for all.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity on what is meant by child-on-child abuse in all its forms
- Understand the culture within our setting
- Evidence how ALL staff support the children in our setting
- Give children confidence that they will be supported and informed
- Give parents/carers the assurance that staff know how to deal with this abuse
- Evidence how our safeguarding staff handle reports/concerns/disclosures
- Inform of the post incident management process/ongoing support/safety planning

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

- Futura's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Futura's Whistleblowing (Concern at Work) Policy
- Futura's Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Futura's Health and Safety Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies

- Northgate Behaviour Policy
- Northgate Online Safety Policy

Legal framework and Legislation

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Children Act 1989**
  (1) Section 17: Duty to support children in need.
  (2) Section 47: Duty to investigate if a child is at risk of significant harm.
- **Children Act 2004**
  (1) Emphasises inter-agency cooperation and accountability.
  (2) Introduced the role of Directors of Children's Services and safeguarding board.
- **Education Act 2002 (Section 175)**

(1) Requires schools and education providers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- **Children and Social Work Act 2017**
  (1) Strengthens safeguarding duties and introduces new child safeguarding practice reviews.
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
  (1) Defines child sexual offences and abuse of trust.
  (2) Relevant for child-on-child sexual harassment or violence.
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
  (1) Article 3: Protection from inhuman or degrading treatment.
  (2) Article 8: Right to private and family life.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
  (1) Establishes the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and barred lists.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
  (1) Sets out expectations for multi-agency working.
  (2) Emphasises child-centered and whole-family approaches.
  (3) Includes national child protection standards.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
  (1) Mandatory for all schools and colleges.
  (2) Contains specific guidance on child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, harassment, and online abuse.
- **Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)**
  (1) Relevant for safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism.

What is 'Child -on-Child abuse - Context and Definition

Definitions

"**Child on Child abuse**" is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as any form of abuse inflicted by one child or a group of children, i.e. individuals under the age of 18, against another child or group of children.

This policy covers Child on Child abuse both in and outside of school and both in person and online.

'Boy(s),' 'Girl(s)': means a child/children whose biological sex is male and female respectively, as well as boys and girls who are 'gender questioning', whose gender identity will be different from their biological sex. It is acknowledged that there will also be some children who identify as non-binary or gender fluid and who will not recognise the term boy or girl in respect to themselves. '

Victim' and 'alleged perpetrator': the DfE states that, with respect to:

- **Victim':** "It is a widely recognised and understood term
- '**Alleged Perpetrator(s)' and, where appropriate, 'perpetrator(s)'**: "These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate.
- **Language** used of front of children be considered carefully. Schools should use more appropriate language in front of children for example; The CSA Centre refers to 'the child who has harmed', and Lime Culture refers to 'the reported student/pupil'

"Harmful sexual behaviour" is defined as any sexual behaviour which:

- Does not observe and respect any individuals on the receiving end of the behaviour, e.g. touching someone without their consent.
- Is inappropriate for the age or stage of development of the pupil.
- Is problematic, abusive or violent. The policy will use the following terms to describe pupils involved in child on child abuse:

Types of Child on Child Abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive.

Physical abuse - This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, 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 young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Child-on-Child abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):

Bullying – including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory (including misogyny/misandry) 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 young people 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: Young people 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.

Online Bullying

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc.) to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm

- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

Hate incidents and hate crimes – which may also include an online element.

Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse') – which may also include an online element.

Physical abuse – such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.

Racism – occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, or cultural group. Racist behaviour can include verbal abuse, physical attacks, exclusion from activities or opportunities and microaggressions, which can be conscious and unconscious. It can occur in person or online.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) – is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive. HSB can occur online and/or face to face, and can also occur simultaneously between the two – and includes, for example: › Sexual violence – such as: – rape – assault by penetration – sexual assault – 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 – threatening the above behaviour, whether in person or by digital communications

Sharing nude or indecent imagery - The term 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes/sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will follow the UKCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges 2024 guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settingsworking-with-children-and-young-people

Sexual harassment – which is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school can include (but is not limited to):

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names, intrusive questions about a person's sex life, and spreading sexual rumours
- sexual "jokes" or taunting – suggestive looks, staring or leering
- sexual gestures – physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting – which is a criminal offence, involving taking a picture or film under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their underwear, genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm, and – online sexual harassment

- this may be stand-alone or part of a wider pattern of sexual violence and/or harassment. It may include: » non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- sharing of unwanted explicit content » revenge pornography, which is a criminal offence »sexualised online bullying » unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media
- sexual exploitation, coercion and threats coercing others.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment - This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

They will give consideration as to whether to:

- Manage internally
- Refer to Early Help
- Complete a Safeguarding referral to Local Authority
- Report to the police sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards.

Further information including an evidence-informed operational framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours can be found here:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf

- **Initiation/Hazing -** 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 ceremony 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.
- **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 – for example 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), sexual identity or gender reassignment.
- **Teenage relationship abuse** - Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive

teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation

- **Misogyny** – commonly defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against girls and women.
- **Misandry** – commonly defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against boys and men.

Child Exploitation

- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** – including in the context of abusive relationships, and/or gang activity, and/or county lines – including in the context of modern slavery and human trafficking; and/or
- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE**) – including in the context of abusive relationships, and/or youth or serious youth violence, and/or gang activity, and/ or county lines – including in the context of modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. › CSE and CCE do not always involve physical contact; CSE and CCE can also occur through the use of technology.
- **Online child-on-child abuse** is any form of child-on-child abuse where an element might be facilitated by digital technology, for example, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/ or videos (sometimes called 'sexting'), online abuse, coercion and exploitation, child-onchild grooming, misogyny/misandry, threatening and hate speech delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content (which might be youth-produced, commercial pornography or pseudo sexual images), and harassment.

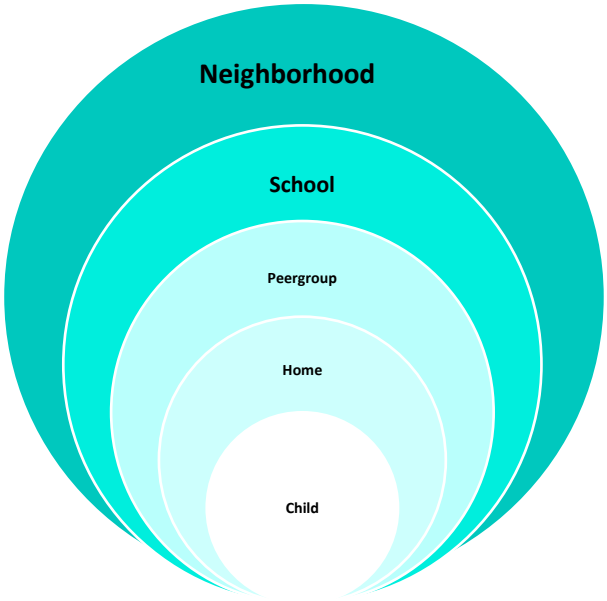
The abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Contextual services of vulnerability include:



Staff Responsibility

ALL staff at Northgate Primary School:

- Recognise the increasing national concern regarding this issue as highlighted in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025);
- Are aware of the level and nature of risk that our pupils are or may be exposed to;
- Understand the important role that they play in the culture of vigilance;
- Recognise child-on-child abuse of all types;
- Are confident and competent in responding promptly and appropriately with timely challenge of the attitudes and behaviours of child-on-child abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- Listen to children, capture their voice, and help to create a culture in which our children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment;
- Will not downplay behaviours and dismiss them as 'just banter', 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up';
- Understand that by dismissing unacceptable behaviours it can lead to an unsafe environment for children and, in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not having the confidence to come forward, speak out and report what has happened to them;
- Report and record their concerns following our safeguarding referral processes;
- Understand that even if there are no reports of this type of abuse that it 'could happen here';
- Are committed to a whole setting, whole staff approach, to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our setting and beyond;

- Recognise and understand that children who harm others, may have additional or complex needs of their own, e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse, witnessing/ suffering abuse as well as educational under-achievement and possibly an involvement in criminal activity and therefore they too, will need support;
- Parents to communicate with us so that we can work together to ensure and enable a prompt and appropriate response to any type of child-onchild abuse;
- Know that putting a stop to child-on-child abuse of any type and ensuring the safety of our children is a priority in our education setting;
- Regard the introduction of this policy as a positive, proactive, and preventative measure

At Northgate Primary School we work hard to create a culture where child-on-child abuse does not happen. We strive to create an ethos of mutually respectful behaviour. However, if this type of abuse is seen, heard or reported, **ALL** staff are confident in their actions and subsequent support.

Expected Staff Action

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously.

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 (Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

- Always take complaints seriously
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Record all incidents and all action taken

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

All staff must be confident to recognise child on child abuse and refer to the DSL / DDSL who will conduct the following actions as required.

Annex B provides a flowchart for DSLs / DDSLs when peer child on child abuse is reported. In determining the appropriate actions, the DSL / DDSL will make a decision whether to refer the case to an appropriate leader within the school, for example, the Head of Year or Head of Key Stage.

Annex C provides a guide for investigating a case of child on child abuse including any points to consider.

Recognising child on child abuse

An assessment of an incident between children should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved

- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- Whether the sexual orientation of the peers is a factor
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of child on child abuse immediately. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. 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. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Responding to a concern/incident/disclosure of child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse may occur in our education setting, on the way to or from our setting or out in the community. Consideration will be given to many aspects of the abuse and here are a few examples:

- Does it involve a single incident or has occurred over time?
- Is the behaviour problematic and concerning?
- Does it involve any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination, e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability?
- Is there any element of coercion or pre-planning?
- Does it involve a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power?
- Has there been a misuse of power?

It is also important that we:

- Ascertain if there were there any witnesses to the abuse;
- Make notes and record ALL conversations with children spoken to as well as parents/carers/other professionals, including any actions taken;
- Treat all children involved as being at potential risk - while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves;
- Ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both victim and alleged perpetrator.

Consideration should also be given to supporting children who have witnessed child-on-child abuse of any kind. This is likely to be traumatic and support may be required. We will signpost to agencies and support services available where needed.

We will do all that we can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed following this.

Social media is likely to play a part in the fall out from any incident and friends from either side could well harass the victim or alleged perpetrator online as well as face to face. Any evidence we have of students using social media or inappropriately will be sanctioned according to our existing policies.

Responding to all reports and concern of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children.

We have covered above what we do when responding to child-on-child abuse concerns/disclosures and these all apply to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children disclosures; however, we recognise complexity and challenges that we face following the report of this particular type of abuse.

Guidance is clear in that it does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every particular case; it provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process and on a case by case basis.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy/ies (DDSLs) will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse using their professional judgement and working together practices. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure and it is important to maintain a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

We understand that it is not easy for children to tell us about this type of abuse and they may struggle to make a direct verbal report. Therefore, observations of changes in presenting behaviours is key.

We understand the importance of our initial response to a report and how this can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment. The culture in our setting is key to this.

On occasions the victim may not wish for their identity to be known and there are no easy or definitive answers when this is requested. If the victim does not give consent to share information, we may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest. For example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The victim(s) should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered - we will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children.

- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the students involved.
- The developmental stages of the students involved.
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. Is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?).
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature).
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff.
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation.

When we talk about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children, we will refer to 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. This does not mean that we are taking sides nor making any judgement, but for the purpose of this policy we will refer to children involved in this way.

Victim - When we speak to the 'victim' we will:

- Listen and take any disclosure seriously;
- Never make them feel that they are creating a problem or be ashamed;
- Reassure them that they will be kept safe;
- Handle the situation with sensitivity;
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child;
- Ask open questions and not lead the victim;
- Ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight 'hot spots' or vulnerable locations in our setting or within the community which may need to be revisited by either ourselves (in school) or by alerting police/partners if it is in the community;
- Ascertain if other children witnessed this abuse;
- Consider ongoing support within our setting;
- Consider any referrals for external support.

Parents or carers of the victim will be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk). Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes and the DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children within the school setting.

If we do decide to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will in most cases be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered. We will also consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- That the victim(s) should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. (We will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children).
- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the students involved.

- The developmental stages of the students involved.
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?).
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature).
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff.
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation.

We will give all the necessary support for the victim to remain in school; however, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school or college will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

Alleged perpetrator - When we speak to the 'alleged perpetrator' we will:

- Listen to what they say and not dismiss their account;
- Handle the situation with sensitivity and a non-judgemental approach;
- Offer ongoing support;
- Record all conversations and all action taken;
- Consider any referrals for external support, e.g.

When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a decision that will be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations.

There are four likely scenarios we will need to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

a) Manage internally - In some cases of sexual harassment (for example, one-off incidents), we may take the view that the students concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally using our own sanctions in line with

Behaviour for Learning Policy including statement of behaviour principles September 2025

Anti-Bullying Strategy September 2025

and by providing pastoral intervention and support.

b) Early Help - We may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help where we are the lead professional. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. This will help to evidence the support that we have given, the work undertaken and if desired outcomes have been achieved.

c) Referral to the social care – See below

d) Referral to the police – See below

Reporting to the Police

At **Northgate Primary School** we understand our responsibilities to call the Police and reporting forms of Child-on-child abuse. This does not mean that we are looking to criminalise children, and this may not always be necessary.

The guidance that we follow is:

When to call the police (guidance for schools and colleges)

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes; advice for education settings

In any form of child-on-child abuse where it is believed that an offence has been committed, a report may be made to the Police.

Where a report has been made to the police, we will consult with the police and agree what information is appropriate to disclose to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

This may also include the development of a clear and robust safety and support plan as part of this early help process. However, as you will see further on in this policy, risk assessing and safety planning is a key aspect of all child-onchild abuse .

With regard to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, where there is a report of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is that this should be passed to the police who will advise and log according to their own guidelines.

Referring to Childrens Social Care

In all cases of child-on-child abuse, but in particular with sexual violence and sexual harassment, consideration will be given to the reporting of the matter to Children's Social Care

- The DSL will immediately inform First Response by telephone
- **0300 123 2224 children's services somerset direct**
- **0300 123 23 27 Duty team**

In making this decision, we must consider whether a child is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger. In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide that a statutory intervention is not appropriate and, in these circumstances, we will consider other support mechanisms, such as early help, specialist support/referrals and pastoral support within a formalised plan. We will consider starting an Early Help process where we are the lead professional.

At this referral stage, we will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of children's social care.

If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. This collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children requiring support.

We will not wait for the outcome, or even the start of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for us to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

Working with our parents and carers

At **Northgate Primary School** we will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of child-onchild abuse including sexual or sexual harassment. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information provided to the respective parents or carers about other children involved and when to do so.

In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view on this aspect, and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing. It should be the case that we will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education.

We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed including any referrals, if appropriate.

We realise that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided on the school website and at the end of the policy.

Sanctions

We will decide appropriate sanctions on a case by case basis in line with our Behaviour Policy and any graduated response required. As already mentioned in this Policy, it may be that other children in our setting start to 'take sides' and become involved and may behave in ways that cause upset and distress to other children.

We will take their behaviour seriously and again use a graduated response to this, whilst also educating them the importance of resolving any conflict in a respectful and restorative way.

If there is police involvement, we will work closely with them to ensure that any disciplinary action taken by us, as a result of the incident, does not jeopardise the police investigation.

Behaviour for Learning Policy including statement of behaviour principles-September 2025

Anti-Bullying Strategy-September 2025

Post Incident Management

It is vital that all children involved in child-on-child abuse are given appropriate and ongoing support for as long as it is required/needed. This may include referrals to other agencies/professionals outside our setting and this decision will be made in conjunction with the children, their parents/carers, and other professionals.

If there are other professionals involved, then we will liaise with those colleagues to ensure that we are working together and understand one another's role in this support.

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. However, we will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator, and other children in the school and moving forward with our post incident management.

Support planning is vital, and it is it is imperative that following any incident the children involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they tell us that they are coping and managing. Sometimes feelings of embarrassment, remorse, regret, or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage. We will do our best to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) will happen as part of this plan.

Referrals may have already happened as mentioned previously in this policy, but it is important to establish which professionals continue to work with ALL children involved in this process and this is helped with robust planning.

Safety planning/Risk assessment

Integral to post incident management is robust safety planning/risk assessment and this is an invaluable and necessary process. It is one of our key priorities as part of the post incident management. When looking at this process, consideration should be given to the following:

- If this is an ongoing police investigation, we will ask the police if we have any questions about the progress of the matter for example, are there any bail conditions in place or has there been a charging decision. It is key to have a central point of contact with the police for updates and progress. Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us to manage our safeguarding responsibilities. Where bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, as above, we will work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard our children;
- The importance in ensuring that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education;
- The importance of the alleged perpetrator in continuing to access education and support;
- Do the victim and alleged perpetrator share classes;
- What measures need to be put in place when children move between lessons/classes;
- What measures need to be put in place for unstructured time (break and lunchtimes); • what measures need to be put in pace for the arrival at the start of the school day and leaving at the end of the school day;

- Do the victim and alleged perpetrator travel to and from school using the same form of transport;
- Appropriate information sharing with staff in our setting in order that the plan is manageable and as successful as possible;
- If it is the case that the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs

In all cases, we will record our decision making together with the rationale behind those decisions.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the of all that we do as part of this process (supported by parents and carers as required). Our safety plan/risk assessment will be kept under review **(See Annex C)**

Preventative Strategies

Child on child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. It is important to develop appropriate strategies to proactively prevent child on child abuse.

This school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive PSHE/RSHE curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another. The school makes sure that 'support and report' signposting is available to young people.

Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

Young people are part of changing their circumstances and, through school council and pupil voice, for example, we encourage young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

Additional support and Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units
- Children missing education
- CEOP-Safety centre
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes
- Searching, screening and confiscation
- Preventing bullying
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes
- Cyberbullying advice

- Equality & Human Rights Commission
- The NSPCC email help@nspcc.org.uk
- Specialist Sexual Violence Rape Crisis
- The UK safer internet centre email at helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation
- Think u know
- NICE - NG76 - Child Abuse and Neglect
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)

Monitoring arrangements

The Trust is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate this policy regularly to ensure that the systems are in place to allow all of our pupils to achieve their full potential in a safe environment with appropriate and relevant support.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every year.

Annex A – Flowchart of Actions

Report Received -(from the victim or third party – Onsite, offsite or online)

Definitions

Sexual violence
Rape
Assault by penetration
Sexual assault

Sexual Harassment
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual remarks, sexual taunts, physical behaviour or online sexual harassment

Victim Reassured

- Taken seriously and kept safe
- Confidentiality not promised
- Listen to victim, non judgmental
- Record the disclosure (facts as reported)
- Two staff present (One being DSL, or reported to DSL ASAP)
- Victim sensitively informed about referral to other agencies
- If victim does not give consent to share, staff may still lawfully share in order to protect child from harm and promote the welfare of the children
- Parents of victim informed

Anonymity – Note that in cases of sexual violence there is a legal protection of the victims identity. Remember this also included sharing on social media and discussion amongst pupils at school

Record Keeping
Remember, to record all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions

Considerations (Sexual violence, sexual harassment and Harmful sexual behaviours
Immediately consider how to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator

- Wishes of the victim
- Nature of the alleged incident
- Ages of children
- Development of the child
- Any power imbalance
- One-off, or part of a pattern of behaviour
- Any ongoing risks
- Other related issues and wider context

Manage Internally
One off incidents which the school believes that the child(ren) are not in need of early help or statutory intervention, which would be appropriate to deal with internally under the schools behaviour policy or anti-bullying policy

Early Help
Non-violent Harmful Sexual Behavious (see Harmful Sexual Behaviours Framework (NSPCC) and th Brook Traffic Light Tool)

Refer to Social Care
All incidents where a child has been harmed, is at risk or harm or is in immediate danger. Social Care staff will decide next steps. Be ready to escalate if necessary

Refer to Police
All incidents of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault
Discuss next steps with police, for example, disclosing information to other staff, informing alleged perpetrator and their parents.

Risk Assessment (Case by Case Basis)

Safeguard and Support Victim and (Alleged) Perpetrator

Disciplinary Measures Taken (See Schools Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy)

Risk Assessment – Immediately
Do not wait for outcome of referral before protecting victim
Emphasis on victim being able to continue normal routines
Alleged Perpetrator removed from any classes with victim (also consider shared spaced and journey to and from school. Not a judgement of guilt.

Safeguard and support victim and alleged Perpetrator

Annex B – Investigating an alleged case of child on child abuse

- **Conviction or caution: Follow behaviour policy, consider permanent exclusion. If pupil remains in school, make clear expectations, keep victim and perpetrator apart. Consider victims wishes.**
- **Not guilty: Support victim and alleged perpetrator**
- **No Further action: Support victim and alleged perpetrator**

isciplinary Measures taken (may be undertaken based on balance and probabilities, unless prejudicial or unreasonable)
Ensure actions taken do not jepodise the investigation (Schools to work closely with police and/or other agencies.)

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atement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the Intent

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

Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If the Local Authority and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

Informing parents/carers

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

Is the pupil 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer. Be aware that the child may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way.

Points to consider

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people 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.

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 young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people 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 young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning? What has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

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?

Risk Assessment / Safety Planning

Basic Information	
Referrer name and role	
Referrer contact details (email, address and phone number)	
Name of School(s) for victim(s)	
Name of School(s) for child/ren alleged to have caused harm	
Did incident occur on School premises? If not, where did the incident occur?	
Date for risk assessment/safety plan review	

	Risk (consider victim, child, alleged to have caused harm, other pupils and staff)	Risk Level (High, medium or Low)	Actions to reduce risk	Risk Level (High, medium or low)
What is the incident? Who was involved? Where did it happen				
Does this incident constitute a crime? Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing of indecent images of children, etc. As such has this been referred to the police?				
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 child alleged to				

have caused harm to the victim and/or others?				
Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm, at risk of physical harm because of this incident				
Do they share any classes/lessons?				
Do they share break times? Do they share child/friendship groups?				
Do they share transport to/from school?				
Are they likely to meet each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?				
How can this contact be limited?				
Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

Further action taken by the school: Please complete for each child involved

Action	Yes/No	Date
Police informed		
Referral to CHaD (Child Health and Disability)		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to Early Help		
Other		

Action	Yes/No	Date
Police informed		
Referral to CHaD (Child Health and Disability)		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to Early Help		
Other		

Annex D – Child on Child Abuse Summary