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Child on Child Abuse Policy

Reviewed on: 9th December 2024

Next Review due: Autumn 2025

Signed by: Chair of Governors

Signed by: Headteacher

Introduction

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse within our school and beyond. Our school recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Child on Child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or "growing up" and we understand that non-recognition/downplaying the scale and scope will lead to a culture in the setting of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We recognise that Child on Child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery.
- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Physical abuse
- Up skirting (now a criminal offence and has reporting requirements)

**Note: Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour.*

In cases where Child on Child abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation. There may also be a need to reference other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

This policy concentrates on Child on Child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and should be read in conjunction with Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it. The school has also written this policy taking into account the 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges' guidance 2021.

Aims The policy will:-

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing Child on Child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved. Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community.

Understanding Child on Child abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. Incidents of this nature could happen inside, outside of school or online. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. School will respond to all reports and concerns of this nature. Even if there are no reported cases of peer-on-peer abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. All staff recognise that "it could happen here."

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

The school's initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

The Context
All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour - HSB). We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as:

"Sexual behaviours expressed by children…that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child…or adult."

Vulnerable groups
We recognise that **all** children can be at risk however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities). Children who identify or are perceived as LGBT, race, religion (protected characteristics).

Whilst research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and experience unwanted touching, this is not confined to girls. Staff should be aware that boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience Child on Child abuse but they do so in gendered ways.

A child may not disclose directly, and staff must be vigilant, and rather than waiting for a disclosure recognise that young people may not always make a direct report. Information may come from overheard conversations, observed behaviour changes, increased absence from school or signs of physical injuries. All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they have/are being abused. They may not recognise their experiences as harmful (for example children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, threatened). This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, language barrier or sexual orientation. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns.

Regardless of the sex of the victim, they 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. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and treated equally seriously.

Responding to Alleged Incidents & Reports (including sexual violence and sexual harassment)
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 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 or have their experience minimised. Victims should be made aware, in a way that avoids alarming or distressing them, that the law is in place to protect children rather than criminalise them.

All reports of Child on Child abuse will be made on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as children's social care or the police as required.

The immediate response to a report

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Reports will be managed with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy). However, where this is not possible, the DSL will be informed as soon as possible.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching screening and confiscation and UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings. Staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.

Reporting Children (victims and/or witnesses) are encouraged to report any such instances to 'a trusted adult' so it can be dealt with promptly. Children are given examples of trusted adults – class teacher, AHTs, DSL & Deputy DSLs – and asked to think of more at school and home. Staff recognise that
an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident, and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse. Similarly, parents and carers are encouraged to share any concerns with their child's class teacher, with the knowledge that they can also discuss any issues with senior leaders or the Head Teacher. Information on how to report concerns is shared regularly via newsletters and online with the school community. Supply staff or other visitors all agree to pass on any concerns related to children to a senior member of staff, when signing into the school upon entry. A child may not disclose directly, and staff must be vigilant, and rather than waiting for a disclosure recognise that young people may not always make a direct report. Information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes.

Recording

The member of staff who received an initial concern will record their information. As with any safeguarding concern, staff should log any allegations of Child on Child abuse straight away using CPOMs. If concern is urgent, inform Senior DSL/Deputy DSL immediately and record on CPOMs. If CPOMs is not accessible, due to internet issues, a written record should be recorded on paper forms (available from the safeguarding display in the staff room) and given to DSL/Deputy DSL immediately. If no forms are available, record your concern on paper with your name, signature and date.

Actions following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

- The following will be considered:
- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- The ages of the children involved;
- The developmental stages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?

- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature);
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers;
- Importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff?
- Are there other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation?

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim, and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator(s) is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) will be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school will also carefully consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s). For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing premises and school transport, will be considered immediately. In all cases, the initial report will be carefully evaluated.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:
The victim, especially their protection and support;
Whether there may have been other victims;
The alleged perpetrator; and
All the other children (and, if appropriate, adults, pupils and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms;

Risk assessments will be recorded and be kept under review.
The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will engage with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required.

Any such professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and updating their own risk assessment. In all cases pupils will be made aware of a named individual (trusted adult) within school whom they can be open with, this is particularly pertinent for pupils who are lesbian, gay, or trans (LBGT) as they may be targeted by other children.

Actions to take & options to manage the report

It is important that every report is considered on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should 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, the school will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this will not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard children.

There are four likely scenarios for schools to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

Any of these responses are underpinned by the principle that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated in the school.

The four scenarios are:

1. Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals do not need to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, through utilising the behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded on CPOMs.

2. Early help

In line with 1 above, the school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help. 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 nonviolent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. The school's designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the Early Help process is and how and where to access support.

The school recognises that multi-agency early help will work best when placed alongside strong school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

Early help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: a school could manage internally and seek early help for both the victim and perpetrator(s).

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMs.

3. Referrals to children's social care

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to the MASH following locally agreed protocols. At the point of referral to children's social care, school will generally 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 make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the DSL will work alongside the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support. School 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. The risk assessment (per paragraph above) will help inform any decisions. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator(s), any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school will be immediate.

In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The DSL will be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMs.

4. Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a MASH referral to children's social care (as above). The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. At this stage, the school will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

The DSL (and deputies) at the school are aware of their local arrangements.
In some cases, it may become clear very quickly that the police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, the school will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) as required.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), the DSL (or a deputy) will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMs.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children, considering any suitable action following the school's behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school expectations will be made clear regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school thinks are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school. The school will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

Whatever arrangements are in place, the school's DSL will consider what and if additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within the school.

Particular regard will be given to:

- the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim
- the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness

- the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).

Managing any delays in the criminal process

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. The school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children in the school. The risk assessment (as per above paragraph) will help inform any decision.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious report.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded on CPOMs. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed. If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the behaviour policy.

Ongoing response:

Safeguarding and supporting the victim.

The following principles will be considered:

- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.
- The age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse.
- By the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s). The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- The proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.
- Victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, schools should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their teacher or designated safeguarding lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's (as far as reasonably possible).
- A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While schools should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, the school will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw. It may be necessary for schools to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time.
- Sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). SARCs offer confidential and non-judgemental support to victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They provide medical, practical, and

emotional care and advice to all children and adults, regardless of when the incident occurred.

Support may include:

- Early help and children's social care
- Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs) provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with school to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim.
- Police and social care agencies can signpost to ChISVA services (where available) or referrals can be made directly to the ChISVA service by the young person or school or college. Contact details for ChISVAs can be found at Rape Crisis and The Survivors Trust.
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is used as a term for all services that work with children who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing. Services vary depending on local authority. Most CAHMS have their own website, which will have information about access, referrals and contact numbers.
- The specialist sexual violence sector can provide therapeutic support for children who have experienced sexual violence. Contact Rape Crisis (England & Wales) or The Survivors Trust for details of local specialist organisations. The Male Survivors Partnership can provide details of services which specialise in supporting men and boys.
- NHS - Help after rape and sexual assault - NHS (www.nhs.uk) provides a range of advice, help and support including advice about the risk of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI), reporting to the police and forensics.
- Rape and sexual assault referral centres services can be found at: Find Rape and sexual assault referral centres. Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) offer medical, practical and emotional support. They have specially trained doctors, nurses and support workers. If children, young people, or their families are unsure which service to access, they should contact their GP or call the NHS on 111.
- Childline provides free and confidential advice for children and young people.

- Internet Watch Foundation works internationally to remove child sexual abuse online images and videos and offers a place for the public to report them anonymously. Childline / IWF: Remove a nude image shared online Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online, to see if they can be removed from the internet.

Ongoing Considerations:
It is important that the school does everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made. Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers). It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes was considered (above) in the 'immediate response to a report'. Once the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) has decided what the next steps will be in terms of progressing the report, they will carefully consider again the question of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) sharing classes and sharing space at school. This will inevitably involve complex and difficult professional decisions, including considering their duty to safeguard children and their duty to educate them. It is important each report is considered on a case-by-case basis and risk assessments are updated as appropriate. As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, the best interests of the child should come first.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator(s) to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students). Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school should, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator(s) is going to remain at the school, the Head Teacher will continue to keep the victim and perpetrator(s) in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport.

In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator(s). Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-bycase basis. In all cases, the DSL will record and be able to justify their decision-making. All of the above should be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review. It is recognised that abuse or precursors to abuse can happen online. School publishes its approaches to remote education and online platforms/sites which it advocates and ways which pupils can communicate on these. The school curriculum and in house filtering/monitoring strives to keep pupils safe online and make them aware of risks presented (for instance under aged usage of

social media platforms). Where pupils are asked to undertake work online outside of school hours parents will be informed as to what the children are being asked to do, how they will access this and also who (if anyone) their child is going to interact with online.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) and children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour

- The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):
- The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the victim (and the wider pupil/student body) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s), the nature of the allegations and frequency of allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children.
- HSB in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials.
- It is important that the perpetrator(s) is/are also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. It is important that if an alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

Prevention

The school actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes:
    - (a) Contextual Safeguarding;
    - (b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and
    - (c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum.

- Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
- They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero tolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Engaging parents on this issue by:
    (a)Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
    (b) Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks;
    (c) Involving parents in the review of School policies and lesson plans; and
    (d) Encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.

- Ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the School's Designated Safeguarding Leads so that they can ensure individual incidents are followed up and dealt with correctly. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy. This information will be discussed by senior leaders on a half termly basis and data analysis shared with Full Governing Body every term.
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- Working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community;
- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a nonjudgmental environment, and have them listened to; and
- Responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

Review

The school will regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve policies and practices. It will be important in all scenarios that decisions and actions are regularly reviewed and that relevant policies are updated to reflect lessons learnt. Leaders will analyse potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the school will decide on a course of action. Consideration should be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Resources and support

A wealth of information (non-exhaustive) to support those involved is available in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education.