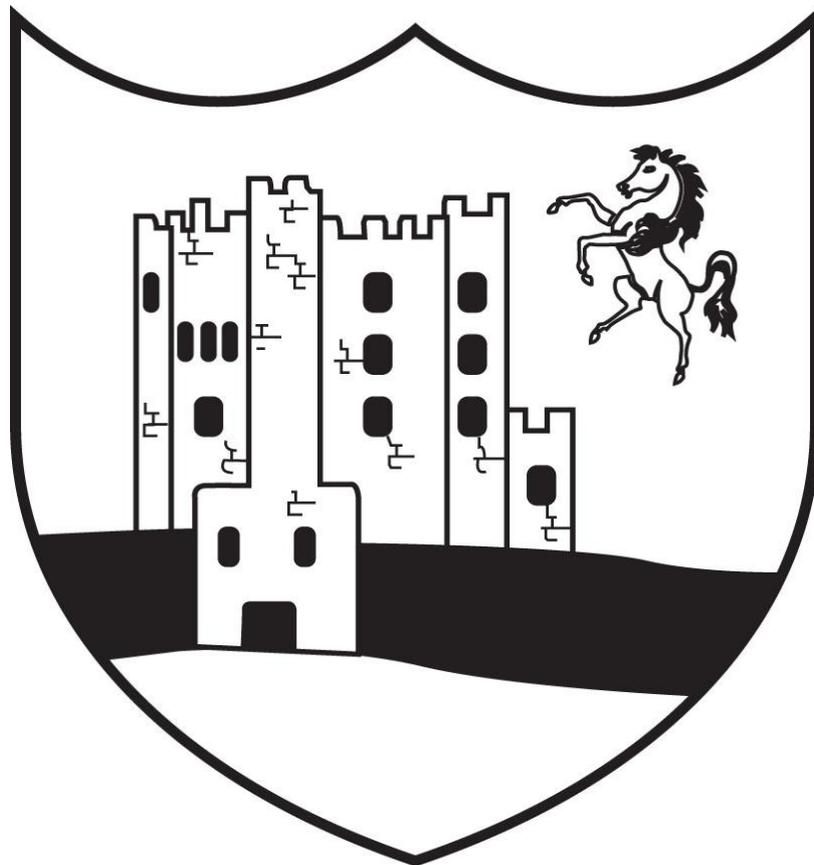


Balfour Infant School

Child on Child Abuse and Sexual Violence or Harassment Policy



Date Written: September 2025

Date ratified by Governors: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Key Contact Personnel in School

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Joseph Pomeroy

Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Miss Cara Watson and Mrs Miranda Forbes

Named Governors with lead responsibility: Safeguarding governor Sue Moon

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to explore some forms of child-on-child abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to the issues.

At Balfour Infant School we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- 3.1 Anti-Bullying Policy which includes sections on Online Bullying
- 3.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- 3.3 Managing Allegations / Whistleblowing Policy
- 3.4 Behaviour Policy
- 3.5 Health & Safety Policy
- 3.6 Online Safety Policy

Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. (Working Together, 2018:21) This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Context and definition

It is essential that all the staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below and are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalizes abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. (KCSIE 25)

Balfour Infant School staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child and report it with urgency to the Designated Safeguarding lead/Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

Child on child abuse is behavior by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

All staff should recognize that children are capable of abusing other children. A child is any individual under the age of 18.

All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from child on child abuse including and not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- 'Upskirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Nude or semi-nude image sharing also known as 'sexting' or youth produced/involved sexual imagery
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, culture 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

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can be at least as damaging than physical bullying. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, we will:

- Implement a robust anti-bullying policy.
- Provide an age/ability appropriate PSHE and RSE curriculum.
- Support child's voice and awareness by taking part in the NSPCC's Speak out Stay Safe Assemblies.
- Provide a range of reporting mechanisms such as worry boxes, diaries.
- Provide safe spaces for children to share information in a range of ways such as Play Therapy, Time to Talk and 1-1 sessions with trained mental health workers and therapists.
- Ensuring parents can contact the DSL/Deputy DSLs in confidence and receive an immediate response.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Balfour Infant School's Governing Body to ensure that

"Systems (are) in place and they (are) well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously" KCSIE 2025

All staff are responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy. The Headteacher/DSL will feedback to the Governing Body with regard to its impact at least annually.

Child on child abuse is referenced in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with child on child abuse necessitate separate policy guidance.

At Balfour Infant School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Abuse and harmful behaviour

It is necessary to consider

- what abuse is and what it looks like
- how it can be managed
- what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by other children. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include but is not limited to:
abuse within intimate partner relationships;
bullying, including cyberbullying,
sexual violence and sexual harassment;
physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime, for example mugging, including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

Types of abuse

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

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 accidental actions before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

When responding to concerns relating to child on a child sexual Balfour Infant School follows the guidance outlined in part five of KCSIE 2025 which has now merged with the content of DfE guidance '[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges](#)'. When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where possible KCSIE 2025 recommends that two members of staff manage reports of sexual violence and harassment.

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.

“Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also 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." KCSIE 2025

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.

Sexually harmful behaviour may include :

inappropriate sexual language

inappropriate role play

sexual touching

sexual assault/abuse.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys";
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Upskirting: where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
- Information overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes.
- How essential it is that all victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- There is immediate consideration to be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted.

When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim, especially their protection and support, the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, adult students and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.

Reports will initially be managed internally by [Balfour Infant School](#) and where necessary will be referred to Integrated Children's Services and/or the Police.

The decision making and required action taken will vary on a case by case basis, but will be informed by:

- the wishes of the victim;
- the nature of the alleged incident including whether a crime may have been committed; the ages and developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or Balfour Infant School staff; and, any other related issues or wider context.

We will reassure and teach our pupils to understand that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them.

Balfour Infant School will regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve policies and practice.

The school will consider the physical and mental health implications for both the victim and perpetrator. It is identified that both individuals will need additional support and provision of further information about harmful sexual behaviours and may need signposting to further sources of support.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among 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, harmful and include an imbalance of power:

Young people who bully use their power to control others by use of:

- physical strength,
- access to embarrassing information,
- or popularity

Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

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 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 e.g. social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated in the section above.

Online bullying can take many forms

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comment
- Abuse 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

Balfour Infant School monitors all internal correspondence and internet use and has regular monitoring and auditing of filtering systems to support safe use by staff and pupils in line with KCSIE 2025.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff and some pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Balfour Infant School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Balfour Infant School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our [anti-bullying/behaviour policy].

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Balfour Infant School recognises both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This can involve children abusing other children.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Sexual exploitation can be difficult to spot and sometimes mistaken for "normal" teenage behaviour. Knowing the signs can help protect children and help them when they've no one else to turn to. To support in identifying the signs of child sexual exploitation please refer to the [Exploitation Identification – Toolkit Kent and Medway](#) and [the MSCP Risk Assessment tool for sexually active young people.](#)

Gangs, County Lines and Serious Violence

Criminal exploitation of young and vulnerable people is a form of harassment and exploitation and is a common feature in the facilitation of county lines drugs supply. This may take the form of an imbalance of power/coercion to provide the storage or supply of drugs, the movement of cash, or to secure the use of dwellings held by vulnerable people in the rural marketplace. This is commonly referred to as cuckooing. This can involve child on child abuse.

All staff have been trained and recognise the need to be vigilant for the signs and aware of risk factors which may increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, exploitation, and gang activity including but not limited to:

- Being male. While exploitation of girls can be very different to that of boys and indicators may not be the same professionals need to be aware that girls are just as much at risk as boys.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Change in friendships/relationships with others/groups
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment
- Unexplained gifts/new possessions – these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs.
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Further advice for schools and colleges is provided in the [Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults:](#)

[county lines guidance. County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#) - The Children's Society in partnership with Victim Support and National Police Chiefs' Council

Where an exploitation concern has been identified, the form linked below is to be used to provide intelligence to the police to get a better understanding of local exploitation concerns and issues.

Through this portal you can report **Perpetrators** of child exploitation, **Places and Spaces** where Child Exploitation is suspected of taking place and **vehicles** believed to be connected to be exploiting children. Please use the link to - [Report an Exploitation Concern Online](#).

This is for Child Exploitation specifically. But for general vulnerability concerns, they still need to be reported directly to the police in the usual way (101 or 999).

Please note, this portal is also not suitable for reporting crime as is not monitored 24/7.

Balfour Infant School will make referrals to Children's Social Care and the police. Should we have reason to believe a student has become involved in this activity.

Sexting | Sharing nude or indecent imagery

The term '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.

Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

DSLs will respond to concerns as set out in the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (Updated December 2020)

The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' is used to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams of/by young people under the age of 18. Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s, including those created and shared with consent, is illegal which makes responding to incidents complex.

When made aware of concerns involving nude or semi-nude image taking/sharing involving children, staff are advised to:

- Report any concerns involving nude or semi-nude image sharing involving children to the DSL immediately.
- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a child has shown it to them), this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
- Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
- Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.

- Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.

Nude and semi-nude image is also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “sexting”

Balfour Infant School recognises this as a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL or Deputy DSL.

The DSL will :

- Hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff and will speak with the children involved if appropriate.
- Inform parents and carers at an early stage so they can be involved in the process to best support children and in doing so should consider whether there is good reason to believe that involving parent/carers would put a child at risk of harm.
- Make a referral to Children’s Services and/or the police immediately if:
 - The incident involves an adult (over 18).
 - There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, age of SEND).
 - The image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child’s developmental stage, or are violent.
 - A child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- Record all decisions in line with child protection procedures ensuring all decisions made are based on the consideration of the best interests of any child(ren) involved.
- Choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.

If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

Upskirting: typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

DSL will follow the UKCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges 2016 guidance.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439 KG NCA Sexting in Schools WEB 1 .PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB_1_.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) and sexual identity.

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.

Expected staff action

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-school actions.

Balfour Infant School will not tolerate, dismiss or minimise any harmful behaviours in school and will take swift action to intervene when this occurs. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated school policies, including the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy.

- Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse may be supported by ensuring :
 - Reports are taken seriously
 - Children are listened to carefully and gain the facts
 - Assess the needs of the victim and the alleged perpetrator -Victim blaming is avoided
 - Record all incidents on CPOMs and actions taken accurately

- Convene a risk management meeting and make a robust risk assessment
- Appropriate pastoral support is provided
- School works with parents/carers
- There is a culture of rigorously reviewing educational approaches
- In cases of sexual assault, the police and/or First Response are informed
- Contribute to all multi-agency assessments

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
- 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 and sensitively. 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.

Recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement 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 MASH 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://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-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 (they 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 about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of 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?

Next Steps

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

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

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

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important 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) are imperative.

Preventative Strategies

Child on child abuse can and may 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.

The school will take steps to ensure that appropriate curriculum time is dedicated to enable children to develop an awareness and understanding of abusive behaviour and minimise the risk of all forms of child-on-child abuse. We will also ensure that children recognise warning signs and supports of support both within the school and externally such as Kent Police, ChildLine etc.

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.

This policy will be reviewed annually.