

Overdale Infant School

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of physical and mental health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.



Sexual Violence and Harassment Between Young People Policy

Academic Year

2025-2026



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Statement of Intent

Overdale Infant School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing other children. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Abuse to children by other children will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or "growing up". Our school adopts a zero tolerance to sexual violence, harassment and harm between children and young people.

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of abuse within our school and beyond.

We understand the importance of identifying, recording and responding to **all** safeguarding concerns, regardless of their perceived severity. We understand that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. 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, while a concern may be low-level, that concern can escalate over time to become much more serious.

Our school prides itself on creating a safe environment for all pupils. We are committed to following statutory guidance on how schools should respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and or online.

INTRODUCTION

All our staff working with children are aware and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. This will also develop a culture of respect.

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.

In our school we are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college, including intimate personal relationships.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

We recognise that all children can be at risk of sexual violence, harassment or child-on-child abuse. However, some groups of children may be more vulnerable due to barriers in communication, social circumstances, or increased risk factors. These groups include (but are not limited to):

- Children with experience of abuse, neglect or trauma within their family environment;
- Children living with domestic abuse;
- Children with a social worker, including those on child in Need or child protection plans, or who are looked after children (LAC) and previously looked-after children.
- Children who go missing from education;
- children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or additional needs (including communication difficulties, social interaction needs, or physical disabilities).KCSIE 2025 emphasises the importance of recognising that children with SEND may face additional barriers in disclosing abuse. Staff will be trained to adapt communication and reporting systems to meet these needs.
- Children who identify as, or are perceived to be, LGBTQ+ or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Whist research shows thatt girls are more frequently identified as being subjected to unwanted sexual touching and harassesment, boys can also experience sexual violence and harassment.

Boys are less likely to disclose and may display other behaviours such as withdrawal or antisocial behaviour. We therefore remain vigilant to signs in all pupils. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child sexual violence and harassment and /or Child-on-child abuse.

All staff are expected to be alert to indicators that may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include changes in behaviour and/or wellbeing, increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a

significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

It is **essential** that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, supported, and kept safe. Victims will never be made to feel ashamed of as though they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Our policy will refer to children as victims and perpetrator however, we will be conscious of how we describe children when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which most appropriately matches their individual situation. KCSIE 2025 notes that the terms victim and perpetrator should be used carefully and context-specifically (to avoid stigmatisation). We will normally use the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator' in line with statutory guidance, while being sensitive to individual preferences.

Along with providing support to children who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, our school will consider the need to provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Typical Sexual Behaviour

Staff in school are aware that all children go through stages of sexual development.

Typical sexual behaviour would be:

- playful and curious, not aggressive or angry (National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, 2013)
- displayed towards children of a similar age, stage of development and physical size, who know each other well (National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, 2013; National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), 2009)
- voluntary and consensual (NCTSN, 2009).

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour

Typical sexual behaviour can become inappropriate sexual behaviour if the regularity of incidents increases and if children are actively seeking out opportunities to engage in certain behaviours.

- Staff are vigilant and required to report any of the following behaviours to the DSL.
- Kissing
- Children showing their private parts or asking others to show them.
- Pinching or hitting another child's bottom

- Persistent rubbing of their own genitals.
- Children entering toilet cubicles when other children are in them.

Sexual violence

It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence in this policy, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Including, Rape, Assault by Penetration, Sexual Assault: (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.) Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose.

Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity.
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment

For this policy, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;

Online sexual harassment

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. (Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence).
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content.
- Upskirting (is a criminal offence).
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Our school will challenge and deal with sexual harassment so as to create a culture that addresses inappropriate behaviours and promotes a healthy and safe environment to minimise potential sexual violence.

The school has robust online filtering and monitoring systems in place for proactive monitoring and filtering in line with statutory guidance. From KCSIE?

Harmful sexual behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent.

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. See Appendix 1.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Overdale Infant School recognises our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. This policy has been developed with reference to the following key statutory and non-statutory guidance:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)** – statutory guidance for all schools and colleges.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** – statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)** – duties on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003** – provides the legal framework for offences relating to sexual behaviour.
- **Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)** – sexual violence or sexual harassment may breach any or all of a child's rights under Articles 3, 8 and 14, depending on the conduct and circumstances.
- **Equality Act 2010** – schools must not unlawfully discriminate and must take proactive steps to eliminate harassment and victimisation.

- **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance (DfE July 2025)** – requires schools to teach about respectful relationships, consent, boundaries, and online safety.
- **DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (Sept 2023)** – requires governing boards and school leaders to ensure robust systems are in place to protect children online.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PREVENTION

Overdale Infant School notes that the best responses to child sexual violence and harassment are those which take a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection. This means involving everyone in our school, including the governing board, all the staff, children, adult students and parents and carers.

Overdale Infant School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of sexual violence and harassment for our pupils.

Overdale Infant School has systems in place that are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. Children know their concerns will be treated seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.

Overdale Infant School implements the following as prevention against child sexual violence and harassment in our school.

- Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils and parents about this issue. This includes annual training for Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child sexual violence and harassment, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. Ongoing updates are also shared with staff during team briefings.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child sexual violence and harassment within Personal Development lessons (RSHE, PSHE) and the wider curriculum. There is a focus on healthy relationships that will help children who are experiencing or witnessing unhealthy relationships know where to seek help and report abuse. Health Education addresses important aspects such as mental wellbeing.
- The school's RSHE curriculum incorporates teaching about consent, respectful relationships, and online safety as per the DfE RSHE statutory guidance updated in 2025
- 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. This includes online abuse.
- Children are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of sexual violence and harassment.

Engaging parents on this issue by:

- Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;

- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks.
- Involving parents in the review of school policies and lesson plans; and
- Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue.
- Ensuring that all child sexual violence and harassment issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who maybe in need of additional support. These concerns will be recorded on the school's safeguarding systems name these and will be routinely discussed by the safeguarding team.
- 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.
- Responding to cases of child sexual violence and harassment promptly and appropriately
- Overdale Infant School provides an open forum for children to talk things through. Such discussions may lead to increased safeguarding reports.
- Children are made aware of the processes to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This includes processes when they have a concern about a friend.
- All our staff are aware of how to support children and how to manage a safeguarding report from a child.

RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OF INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

All incidents are reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded on CPOMS. The DSL will use the Brook Traffic Light tool to decide if the behaviour is Green, Amber or Red.

Green behaviours – A member of staff will talk to the child about the behaviour and why it is not appropriate. Direct work will be carried out if there has been more than one incident. Parents will be informed.

Amber behaviours – Direct work will take place. A meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss behaviour. A referral to Early Help may be considered.

Red Behaviours – Direct work carried out. A meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss behaviour. A referral to Social Care or Police may be considered. A risk assessment will be created. (See Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Responding to an alleged incident of Sexual Violence and Harassment)

RESPONDING TO ALLEGED INCIDENT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be considered and managed 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 social care or the police as required.

In cases where there are child protection concerns, a concern about possible criminal behaviour or particularly complex scenarios referrals should be made to police and social care as per local processes.

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- **All reports are taken seriously.** Victims will be reassured that they are being listened to, supported, and kept safe.
- **Victim-centred approach.** The wishes of the victim will be central to decisions about next steps, balanced against the school's duty to protect all pupils.
- **Support runs in parallel.** Taking disciplinary or protective action in relation to an alleged perpetrator does not preclude the school from also offering them safeguarding support. Victims and alleged perpetrators will both be supported, with arrangements tailored to their individual needs.
- **No tolerance of minimisation.** Behaviour will never be passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".
- **Proportionality.** Responses will reflect the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, considering the ages, needs, and vulnerabilities of those involved.

The immediate response to a report

- We take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe. This will be in all cases including if the abuse took place away from school, is not recent and/ or is online.
- All our staff will be trained to manage a report.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding 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, we will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible.
- If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff 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 (or a deputy) will consider the following: • parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk); • the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to children's social care; and • rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police.
- The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the designated

safeguarding lead (or a deputy) decide to go ahead and 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 be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

- We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

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. At all times, the school or college should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- Whether there may have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.
- Risk assessments will be recorded on our safeguard system and be kept under review.
- The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and any specialist services as required. The school risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the schools or college's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and students and updating their own risk assessment.

ACTION FOLLOWING A REPORT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Following an incident, we will consider

- 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. Victims 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. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
- The ages and vulnerabilities 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.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff, and other related issues and wider context?
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police: The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the school. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

OPTIONS TO MANAGE THE REPORT

Manage internally

1. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.
2. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored by the DSL on our safeguarding systems.
3. In line with 1 above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions 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 non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.
4. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to social care following locally agreed protocols.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, 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 and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be made through 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, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

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. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school/academy we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think 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 or college.

We 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, we will continue to offer support and offer protection 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.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY SEXUAL-ASSAULT

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of local agencies and national organisations. (see Appendix 2)

We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL will support this move.

Where there is a criminal investigation the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. 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 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, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). 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. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will 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.

Support for All Children Involved

Victims will be supported through pastoral support, counselling, safeguarding services, and academic adjustments where necessary. Every effort will be made to ensure their education is not disrupted.

Alleged perpetrators will also receive safeguarding support, recognising that harmful behaviour may indicate unmet needs or experiences of abuse. Disciplinary action and safeguarding support can, and should, happen at the same time.

Other pupils and staff affected by an incident will also be offered appropriate support.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Harmful sexual behaviours (HSB)

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."

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- We will think carefully about the terminology we use to describe the "alleged perpetrator(s)" or "perpetrator(s)".
- Our responsibilities lie in balancing the need to safeguard the victim (and all other children, adult students and staff at the school) 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.
- A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. We will work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused another child. It is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator(s) is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with, a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of them abusing again.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s) and nature and frequency of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by other children to the allegations against them.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An 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. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.
- It is important that the perpetrator(s) is 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.
- Advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of

them. If the perpetrator(s) is to be excluded the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair.

- 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(s) 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, adult students and staff. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

We will also use Simon Hackett's continuum model to consider the range of sexual behaviours. (Appendix 1)

Working with parents and carers

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 sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information we provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved. In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it will be important for the school to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

It is good practice for the school to 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 good practice for the school to meet with alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact an alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. Reviews will also take place sooner if:

- There are updates to statutory safeguarding guidance (e.g. KCSIE 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)
- Lessons are learned from local or national safeguarding cases.
- Trends are identified through monitoring safeguarding data within the school.

Staff Training and Awareness

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, which will include how to recognise, respond to, and record sexual violence, sexual harassment, and child-on-child abuse.

In addition, staff will receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the year (for example, via staff meetings and/or team briefings).

Governors will also receive annual safeguarding training to enable them to carry out their strategic responsibilities.

Record-Keeping and Information Sharing

All incidents, reports, and safeguarding concerns relating to sexual violence and harassment will be recorded securely on CPOMS in line with KCSIE expectations.

Low-level concerns and patterns of behaviour will also be recorded to support a proactive safeguarding culture.

Where a child moves school, their safeguarding file, including any records relating to sexual violence, harassment, or child-on-child abuse, will be transferred securely and without delay to the new school. The DSL will ensure that the new setting is aware of ongoing support needs.

Governance Oversight

The Safeguarding Governor will monitor the implementation of this policy and review anonymised data on incidents and actions taken.

Governors will ensure that the school has effective systems for online filtering and monitoring, and that safeguarding procedures are robust and understood by all staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2026**

APPENDIX 1 – SIMON HACKETT CONTINUUM MODEL OF HSB

Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:



APPENDIX 2 – GUIDANCE AND FURTHER RESOURCES

- Keeping children safe in education. **Keeping children safe in education 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)**
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 **Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)**
- Ofsted – Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges June 2021. www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges
- Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board procedures on harmful sexual behaviours [Harmful Sexual Behaviour \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://HarmfulSexualBehaviour.proceduresonline.com)
- Further information about consent can be found here: [What is sexual consent? | Rape Crisis England & Wales | Rape Crisis England & Wales](http://Whatissexualconsent?|RapeCrisisEngland&Wales|RapeCrisisEngland&Wales)
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people
- NSPCC and Research in Practice's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework: www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/publications/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf
- Barnardo's – UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.
- Lucy Faithful Foundation – UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.
- Marie Collins Foundation – Charity that, amongst other things, works directly with children, young people, and families to enable their recovery following sexual abuse.
- NSPCC – Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse.
- Rape Crisis – National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.
- UK Safer Internet Centre – Provides advice and support to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.
- Anti-Bullying Alliance – Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support. •
- The Survivors Trust– UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.
- Victim Support – Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.
- Childline provides free and confidential advice for children and young people. Toolkits
- ask AVA – The Ask AVA prevention platform has been created to support education practitioners across the UK to develop and deliver a comprehensive programme to stop Violence Against Women and Girls.

- NSPCC - Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.
- NSPCC - Resources which help adults respond to children disclosing abuse. NSPCC also provides free and independent advice about HSB: NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework
- Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire - Child-on-Child Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse.
- Contextual Safeguarding Network - self-assessment toolkit for schools to assess their own response to HSB. Confidentiality
- Gillick competency Fraser guidelines - Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.
- NSPCC: Things to know and consider Information Sharing
- Government information sharing advice - Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.
- Information Commissioner's Office: Education - Information to help schools and colleges comply with UK Further information on sharing nudes and semi-nudes • London Grid for Learning-collection of advice - Various information and resources dealing with the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.