



Child on Child Abuse Policy

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Document Control

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Approval		
Meeting	Date	Chair
Full Governors	July 2022	Ed Robinson
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Introduction

Wirksworth Junior School is committed to a whole school approach to identifying, tackling & responding to child-on-child abuse, sexual harm/violence and harassment.

This policy supports the guidance issued to Derbyshire schools, that helps understand, identify and provides tools to respond to problematic/harmful sexual behaviours in schools.

A child/pupil as described in the policy is a child and young person up to 18 years.

The Context

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **[Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges](#)**
All staff in a school should be familiar with the relevant sections that deal with Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment.
- **[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges. Dfe, May 2018; guidance for HeadTeacher, Principals, Senior Leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.](#)**
- **[Sexting in Schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.](#)**
[UK Council for Internet Safety](#)
- **[Teaching Online Safety in Schools, DfE 2019](#)**
- **[The Voyeurism Act, 2019 \(Section Up skirting\)](#)**

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

In cases where child-on-child abuse is identified, we will use the local safeguarding procedures as set out by the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Some of these behaviours we will refer to other policies in school:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- The Behaviour policy.
- The Anti-Bullying policy.
- The IT security and acceptable use policy.
- Responding to an online incident in school.
- The Acceptable Use of the Internet and Electronic Communication Policy.

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

- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Sexting (youth produced digital imagery).
- Bullying- name calling, physical,
- Prejudiced behaviour- homophobic, disabilities.
- Cyber bullying & on-line abusive behaviour;
- Radicalisation;

- Abuse in intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse;
- Children who display sexually problematic/harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment;
- Gang association and serious violence- County Lines, initiation, hazing.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children are at risk but that some groups are more vulnerable than others and includes:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities.
- A child living with domestic abuse.
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm.
- A child who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of exploitation (CRE, CSE)
- A looked-after child.
- A child who goes missing or is missing education.
- Children who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQI+ and/or any of the protective characteristics.

Research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as having been abused by their peers and are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching and sexual harassment. They are often exploited into gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in gangs. However, we are aware as a school that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as anti-social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited /entrapped into gangs and subject to violence because of gang culture.

Bullying and Online bullying and behaviour

Child-on-child abuse can happen online and through social media. This school will respond to this form of abuse, cyberbullying and related behaviour.

This school has other policies which relate to identifying, responding to and reporting this type of behaviour by pupils. We will take a robust approach and educate all our staff to help prevent and tackle this. See our Safeguarding policy, Behaviour Management policy and Anti-bullying policy.

Responding to an incident/disclosure

Where abuse or violence, including sexual harm and/or sexual harassment, has taken place outside of school, e.g. on school transport, off-site during lunchtimes, or in the local community involving one or more of our pupils, we will investigate and act on the conduct of the pupil/s. We will also consider whether we should notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Where behaviour between children is abusive or violent, including sexual harm or sexual harassment within the school, we will use our procedures as set out by the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, and the procedures as set out by the local Children's Safeguarding Partnership. This will mean a referral to the police and a referral to Children's Social Care Services.

All concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

What are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?

What is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour, including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember, there may be other forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported.) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed, and/or have any harmful sexual behaviours been displayed?

What is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this, e.g. coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same school, classes, or transport?

What are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?

Is the behaviour age-appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?

Are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others, e.g. other children in school, adult students, Wirksworth Junior School staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang-related activity?

All these considerations will be discussed and reviewed to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Where appropriate, a risk assessment may be drawn up and shared with the relevant staff members.

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. There must also be careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on Wirksworth Junior School premises (including any before or after school activities) and transport to and from the setting.

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as local authority children's social care and the police as required.

All staff understand that all concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, we acknowledge that anyone can make a referral.

Understanding Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

Sexual harm, violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age or gender; this can either be a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any setting where pupils are together.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing having an impact on academic achievement and their emotional health & wellbeing.

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a pupil'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 healthy, problematic and sexually harmful behaviour (HSB).

As a school therefore, we may use the Brook Traffic Tool, and Hackett's Continuum, and in some cases the AIM model 2016 (Carson). These are nationally recognised and acclaimed tools to assist in determining healthy, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

We may also use a Safety and Support Plan, or an in-school Risk HSB Management Plan, depending on the outcomes of assessing risk in each individual case. **This will be saved on My Concern, along with the reasons why these actions are being taken.**

Using tools like this will help us:

- Decide the next steps and make decisions regarding safeguarding children;
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in pupils.
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from problematic/harmful behaviour.
- Assist with communicating with parents/carers about the concerns we have about their child/children.
- Assist with communicating with our partners and agencies about the concerns we have regarding a pupil in the school.

Proactive steps - Minimising bullying and dealing with incidents

Children are frequently reminded of the need to report any incident or concern about bullying, they also have their own policy which is reviewed every year. ("It's all right to tell"). This will be done by staff reminding the children in assembly, staff being proactive in their response to concerns and being supportive of the children involved in the incident.

Posters are displayed around the school advising children to share their concerns and report incidents. Parents are encouraged to report incidents. **(See the Anti-Bullying policy and the Children's anti-bullying policy)**

Proactive steps: Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the [Prevention](#) section of this policy. Children take part in NSPCC assemblies about, 'My pants are my pants' and safety surveys are sent out to the children once a year asking if they have had unwanted touching and if they require support to make this stop.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously, regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Will support the victim and perpetrator.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

Action following a report of Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

We will inform all staff that should they see or hear of any sexual behaviour they will stop the behaviour immediately; report the behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a record using 'My Concern'.

Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim and also careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the setting.

We will speak to the pupil to establish their view about what happened and why, what understanding they have, what responsibility they take for their actions, and their willingness/ability to work on their behaviours.

We will speak to the pupil/s who have been targeted to establish the impact on them of the behaviour. How the other pupil/s managed to get in a position to carry out the behaviour, how they are feeling about the other pupil now, and what support they require.

This will only be to ascertain clarification; any further investigation may have to be undertaken by the statutory agencies.

We will contact the parents/carers of those involved and share the information.

Following an incident, we will consider:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed e.g., ask about whether they want to make a police complaint. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), e.g., the intention, mitigating circumstances AND Including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the pupils involved.
- The developmental stages of the pupils are involved.
- Any power imbalance between the pupils concerned. For example, is the alleged abuser 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.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other pupils, siblings, adult students or school staff, or other related issues in the wider context?

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case:

- The alleged abuser will be removed from any classes or areas they share with the victim.
- We will consider any reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of the alleged abuser, victim and all other pupils we have a duty to safeguard.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged abuser/s at a reasonable distance apart on school premises, including transport to and from the school;
- We will use the recommended HSB Risk Management Plan if assessed as appropriate.
- We will use a Victim Support Plan.

These actions are in the best interests of the pupils involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged abuser/s.

Reporting

Any incident of alleged or an actual incident of sexual harm, violence and/or sexual harassment will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence may have been committed. In all cases, consideration is given to reporting the matter to Children Social Care Services.

There are circumstances in some cases of sexual harassment/touching which depend upon age and understanding/age of criminal responsibility (e.g., one-off incidents), in which we may decide that the child/ren concerned are not in need of Early Help or statutory intervention.

In these situations, it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, for example by utilising the behaviour and bullying policies, providing pastoral intervention and support. We may also decide that some child/ren involved do not require Statutory Interventions; however, they may benefit from Early Help.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, this can be at any point in a child's life. We will decide if an early help approach will benefit a pupil following any outcome of assessment that we may use. This may mean the development of a safety and support plan as part of the early help process.

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of child/ren than reacting later. This school acknowledges that an Early Help Assessment can be useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Sanctions

We will consider the sanctions available to use as school in reference to our Behaviour Policy.

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of child-on-child abuse and this school will consider all courses of action and intervention.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any pupil, other pupils, parents and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to attempt to resolve these.

Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents on an agreed timeframe after the incident. (No longer than 6 weeks)

Pupils who have been bullied will be offered continuous support from a trusted adult in school. The trusted adult will hold a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will be recorded on My Concern and will continue to take place once a month until the trusted adult and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult at school if bullying is repeated.

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions.
- Being able to discuss what happened.
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved **and how they can put this right.** (*Restorative approach*)
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour.
- Appropriate assistance from parents.

Pupils who have been abused by a peer will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

In cases where the effects of abuse are so severe that the pupil cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the headteacher and DSL will look to transfer the pupil to another mainstream school with the consent and involvement of the pupil's parents.

Where a pupil who has been the victim of abuse has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the pupil, their parents, the headteacher and DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

The Role of Governors

The Chair of Governors/ Link Safeguarding Governor will need to be aware of the complexities when an incident or incidents come to light, and when staff in the school are trying to manage these behaviours. This includes the use of sanctions, exclusions, pressures from parents to exclude and dealing with the parents of the alleged abuser or any alleged victim/s.

We know that as a school, the Chair of Governors and Link Safeguarding Governor will also need to consider that they may be approached by members of staff who are angry or anxious about pupils with sexual behaviours. In addition, we will also consider that there may be occasions where schools also feel pressures from external sources e.g., the local community and the media.

It is important that we as those governors are informed and can help with a consistent approach and policy on such matters, and we recognise governors should use any examples to help inform the schools future practice, ethos, reviewing any policy or procedure in light of this.

Multi-Agency Working

This school will work with our partners and agencies; Children's Social Care, the Police, Youth Offending Service, Health, School Family Support Worker, Compass, Crossroads, Change. Grow. Live and CAHMS.

We recognise that we will be invited to share information, being a part of local partnerships and local partnership groups to help identify risk and issues both within the school and in our local community.

Our local point of contact will be the chair of our local group and the Head of Service for our locality (Derbyshire)

Prevention and Training

Wirksworth Junior School is working hard at all times to create a culture where child-on-child abuse does not happen.

We are aiming to create an ethos of good and respectful behaviour, and this should extend to all areas of the school and at all times of the school day, including travelling to and from school.

Through curriculum teaching, learning and events and activities we will educate our pupils about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe. This is taught through weekly PSHCE lessons, values taught in assemblies and the wider curriculum and post learning from events on the playground.

Every year the children take part in E-safety and Antibullying days, promoting speaking out, talking to a trusted adult and knowing what to do if they do not feel safe. Children are taught what healthy relationships look like and what to do if the friendship/ relationship is not. In school, there is a Child Safeguarding Board with their own policies, which they review annually.

Children get the opportunity to share their views anonymously through online surveys which staff reflect upon and update procedures and policy to keep the children safe in school.

We will ensure that all our pupils know who to talk to, how to receive advice and help within the school. We will be able to signpost children to relevant local and national helplines and websites.

Management of the Policy

We will ensure all our staff, governors, and volunteers are trained in the awareness and response to all forms of bullying, all forms of child-on-child abuse, and include any local issues and concerns in the wider context (Contextual Safeguarding).

In addition, we will ensure all our staff, governors and volunteers are aware of this policy and the supporting guidance, in order that they are clear regarding their role and responsibilities.

The School Designated Safeguarding Lead will take on a lead responsibility to ensure all staff are trained in the use of the available assessment tools.

The Link Safeguarding Governor in the school will act to oversee and audit any training activity which takes place and activities in relation to this policy.

We will ensure that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and its availability on the school website.

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