

Anti Child-on-Child Abuse & Bullying Policy



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September 2023

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August 2025

Responsible Directorate
Safeguarding

Our Trust

*These four critical questions make it clear who we are and what we do.
We ask ourselves these questions to guide our work and our improvement.*

Why do we exist?

To **transform life chances** by achieving the highest possible standards and preparing all our students to lead successful lives.

How do we behave?

- **Hard work**
We are determined to see things through to the end and are resilient when faced with challenges.
- **Integrity**
We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.
- **Teamwork**
We work together to help everyone succeed.

What do we do?

- We educate, safeguard and champion all our learners.
- We set high standards for ourselves and our learners.
- We build the powerful knowledge and cultural capital which stimulate social mobility and lifelong learning.

How will we succeed?

1. Aligned autonomy
2. Keeping it simple
3. Talent development

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1. | Statement of Intent

- 1.1 We are committed to safeguarding children and young people from child-on-child abuse and bullying and we expect all our people to share this commitment. This policy sets out how we will deliver these responsibilities.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the latest *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (with special reference to Part 5), which is statutory guidance to be read and followed by academies and colleges, and alongside *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 1.3 This policy is our overarching policy for any issue that could constitute child-on-child abuse. It relates to and should be read alongside our *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and any other relevant policies. This policy sets out our strategy for improving prevention and identifying and appropriately managing child-on-child abuse.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all members of the school community, pupils, staff and volunteers. It is reviewed every two years and updated in the interim (if required) to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which pupils are or may be exposed.
- 1.5 This policy recognises that abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’, or ‘part of growing up’. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- 1.6 We take a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in concerns or allegations about child-on-child abuse, (in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required) including those who are alleged to have been harmed and those who are alleged to have harmed another child.
- 1.7 Although the starting point is that our response to child-on-child abuse should be the same for all pupils, regardless of age, there may be some different considerations in relation to, for example, a child aged under 10, or aged over eighteen in terms of how local agencies and/or partners respond.
- 1.8 We ensure that each incident and child is responded to as an individual with a proportionate and appropriate response to all instances of child-on-child abuse and thus promoting the zero-tolerance culture to sexism and all forms of prejudice.
- 1.9 We believe that to protect children, we must be aware of the nature and level of risk to which our pupils are or may be exposed and put in place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to our specific safeguarding context; we take a whole-school community contextual safeguarding approach to preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse.

- 1.10 We regard the introduction of this policy as a preventative measure. We do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to child-on-child abuse in response to alleged incidents of it; to tackle child-on-child abuse proactively, it is necessary to focus on all four of the following areas:
- Systems and structures
 - Prevention
 - Identification
 - Response/intervention.
- 1.11 We recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and child-on-child abuse in the academy setting, and encourage parents to challenge us on this issue, so that if their child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the academy leadership directly so that we can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response to safeguard all pupils.
- 1.12 Furthermore, we will follow the procedures set out by each academy's local safeguarding children partnership.
- 1.13 We ensure that pupils are taught about child-on-child abuse and bullying, including online behaviours, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 1.14 We will work with parents to build an understanding of the academy's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all pupils, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

2. | Legal Framework & Guidance

- 2.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and relevant guidance including, but not limited to:
- *The Education Act (2002)*
 - *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
 - *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
 - *What to Do if You Are Worried About a Child (2015)*
 - *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (2018)*
 - *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work With Children and Young People in Education Settings (2019)*
 - *The Data Protection Act (2018)*
 - *Serious Crime Act (2015)*
 - *Teaching Online Safety in School (2018)*

- *UKCIS Education for a Connected World* (2018)
- *Prevent Duty* (2015)
- *Sexual Offences Act* (2003)
- *Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement* (2013)
- *Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines Guidance* (2018)

3. | Scope of this Policy

- 3.1 This policy defines a ‘child’ or ‘pupil’ as anyone under the age of 18 years or any learner of any age on the academy roll.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all members of our staff, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, trustees, local governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 3.3 The trustees, local governors, senior leadership team, and all staff are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the academy. In this policy, the term *staff* applies also to all volunteer staff members.
- 3.4 All academies have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (SLT member), a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Nominated Safeguarding governor whose names can be found in the academy’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy or on their website.

4. | What is Child-on-Child Abuse?

- 4.1 For the purposes of this policy, child-on-child abuse is defined as any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships and wider peer associations.
- 4.2 We recognise that it is statistically more likely that girls will be victims of child-on-child abuse and that boys will statistically be more likely to be perpetrators and that child-on-child abuse can be perpetrated by the same gender, one child or a group of children and that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously and never tolerated.

4.3 Child-on-child abuse can take various forms, including, but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Financial Abuse (Including fraud)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, (physical, verbal and online) such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of 'nudes' and 'semi-nudes' images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced/involved sexual imagery)
- *Upskirting*, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm (also a crime)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

5. | What is Contextual Safeguarding?

5.1 This policy encapsulates a contextual safeguarding approach, which is about the way that professionals approach child protection when risks occur outside of the family (extra familial harm) thereby requiring all those within a Local Safeguarding Partnership to consider how they work alongside, rather than just refer into, children's social care, to create safe spaces in which children may have encountered child-on-child abuse.

5.2 We adopt a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach, which means:

- Being aware of and seeking to understand the impact that these wider social contexts may be having on our pupils
- Creating a safe culture in the academy by, for example, implementing policies and procedures that address child-on-child abuse and harmful attitudes, promoting healthy

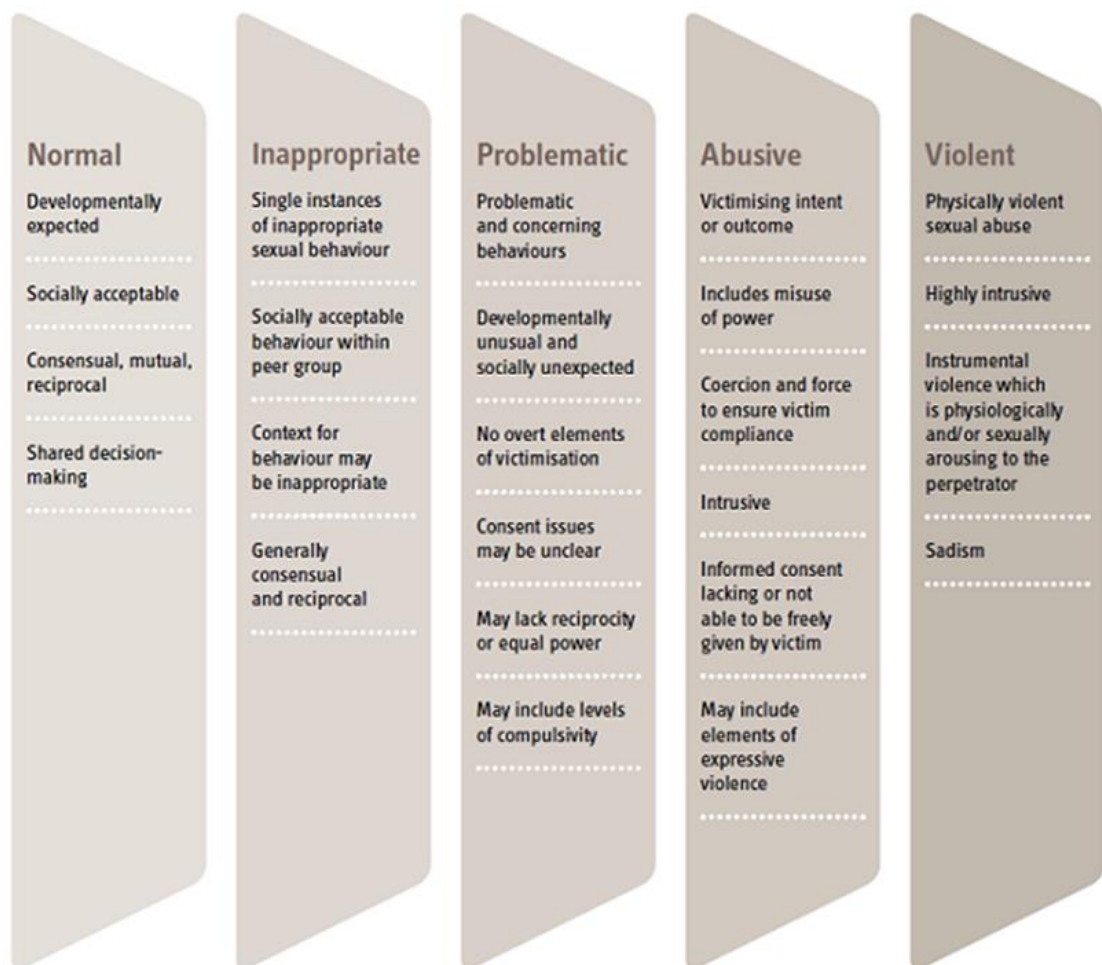
relationships and attitudes to gender/sexuality, identifying any risky areas in the academy, and conducting training on potential bias and stereotyped assumptions

- Being alert to and monitoring changes in pupils' behaviour and/or attendance, and contributing to local child protection agendas by, for example, challenging poor threshold decisions and referring concerns about contexts to relevant local agencies.

6. | Understanding Behaviour

6.1 We understand that all behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

6.2 **Sexual Behaviour-** Simon Hackett has proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it.



A continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviours
(Hackett, 2010)

- 6.3 Hackett’s continuum relates exclusively to sexual behaviours and is not exhaustive. In addition, we use the [Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#) to help professionals working with children to distinguish between three levels of sexual behaviour – green, amber and red, and to respond according to the level of concern.
- 6.4 When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett’s continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:
- Is socially acceptable
 - Involves a single incident or has occurred over time
 - Is socially acceptable within the peer group
 - Is problematic and concerning
 - Involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g., related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
 - Involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
 - Involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power
 - Involves a misuse of power.

7. | Identification of Child-on-Child Abuse

- 7.1 All colleagues must be alert to the wellbeing of pupils and to signs of abuse, and will engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by child-on-child abuse. However, colleagues should be mindful of the fact that the ways in which children will disclose or present with behaviours as a result of their experiences will differ and that there are known barriers to disclosing this abuse to adults.
- 7.2 Colleagues must be aware that pupils disclosing abuse may not reveal all the incidents of abuse at once and that the trauma of experiencing the abuse can affect memory and recall.
- 7.3 We will regularly review behaviour and pastoral incident logs which can help to identify any changes in behaviour and/or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage.
- 7.4 Any child can be vulnerable to child-on-child abuse and colleagues should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Individual and situational factors can increase a child’s vulnerability to abuse by their peers. For example, a child disclosing abuse or an image of a child being shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family.

7.5 Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child’s vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others and/or who are socially isolated from their peers may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse. Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality (or perceived to be by their peers) are also particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers.

7.6 Child-on-child abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and this difference may be the result of societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different. As a result, we explore the gender dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse within our school as part of the peer-on-peer abuse risk assessment and ensure that DSLs have sufficient training on the influence of gender and societal norms to ensure an appropriate, proportionate, safeguarding first approach all to all incidents of child-on-child abuse.

7.7 Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND¹ and additional barriers exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child’s disability without further exploration
- The potential for children with SEND to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers

Some children may be more likely to experience peer-on-peer abuse than others as a result of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, or religious beliefs.

8. | A Whole-Academy Approach

8.1 We actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by educating governors, our senior leadership team, staff, pupils, and parents about this issue.

8.2 This includes training governors, the senior leadership team, and staff on the nature, prevalence, and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify, and respond to it. Training involves learning about:

- Contextual safeguarding
- The identification and classification of specific behaviours, including digital behaviours

¹ Jones, L., Bellis MA., Wood S., Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies, 2012: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22795511>

- The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how 'low level' they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing or normalised
- Social media and online safety, including how to encourage children to use social media in a positive, responsible, and safe way, and how to enable them to identify and manage abusive behaviour online
- Educating pupils about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse, positive, responsible, and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via PSHE and the wider curriculum

8.3 Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse. They are regularly informed about our approach to such issues.

8.4 **Educating pupils** about consent includes teaching them basic facts such as:

- 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
- Consent is only consent with an individual has the freedom and capacity to choose
- Consent can be withdrawn at any point and each person may choose which sort of activity they consent to and which they do not; giving consent for one activity at one moment does not mean consent is given for another activity at the same moment.

8.5 **Engaging parents** on these issues includes:

- Talking about them, both in groups and individually- asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the academy address those risks
- Supporting the on-going welfare of pupils by drawing on multiple resources that prioritise pupil mental health, and by providing in-school mentoring and/or counselling to address underlying mental health needs.

8.6 **Wider context** includes:

- Working with local governors, senior leadership team, and all staff, pupils, and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of, acceptance, tolerance, and respect amongst all members of the academy community.
- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture which is founded on the idea that every member of our academy community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships and helping to create a safe academy environment in which bullying, violence and abuse are never acceptable.
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately

- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the academy’s safeguarding team/DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may need additional support.

9. | Multi-Agency Working

9.1 We actively engage with our Local Safeguarding Partnership in relation to child-on-child abuse, and work closely with, for example, children’s social care, the police and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership’s procedures, and other schools. The relationships that we have built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the academy is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of child-on-child abuse.

9.2 Local Safeguarding Partners help us to:

- Develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in our local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist
- Ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly
- Support and help inform the academy’s local community’s response to child-on-child abuse
- Increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils.

9.3 We respond to each incident individually and proportionately. We actively refer concerns and allegations of child-on-child abuse where necessary to children’s social care, the police and MASH and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership’s procedures. This is particularly important because child-on-child abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the alleged incident cannot appropriately be managed internally by the academy itself) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

10. | Response to Concerns or Allegations

10.1 All concerns and allegations of child-on-child abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately, proportionately, and promptly using professional judgement and listening to the wishes of the pupils involved and their parents. Any response will:

- Include a thorough investigation of the concern or allegation, and the wider context in which it may have occurred (as appropriate) – depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident. (It may be appropriate for the police and/or children’s social care to carry out this investigation).
- Treat all pupils involved as being at potential risk – while the pupil allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other pupils, they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves.
- Consider that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the pupils involved and consider and address the effect of wider societal gender norms and sociocultural contexts – such as the child’s/ children’s peer group (both within and outside the academy); family; the academy environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the pupil/pupils online presence.

10.2 We will consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the pupil/pupils needs and to mitigate risk. We also consider the potential complexity of child-on-child abuse and of pupil’s experiences, and consider the interplay between power, choice, and consent. While pupils may appear to be making choices, if those choices are *limited*, they are not consenting, and how the views of the pupil/pupils are affected.

10.3 Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made or a risk assessment put in place immediately), the DSL/appropriate member of the safeguarding team will discuss the proposed action with the pupil/pupils and their parents/carers and obtain consent to any referral before it is made where possible.

10.4 We will manage the pupil’s expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so. It is particularly important to consider the wishes of any pupil who has allegedly been harmed, and to give that pupil as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and how they will be supported.

10.5 We will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the pupil who has allegedly experienced the harm, and the pupil who has allegedly been responsible for it (and the additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter).

10.6 What should you do if you suspect either that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s)?

If a colleague thinks, for whatever reason, that a pupil may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a pupil may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss the matter with their DSL as soon as possible to explain their concern and register a note of concern on the internal referral system.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.

Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made in line with the Safeguarding and Child protection policy.

If a pupil speaks to a member of staff about child-on-child abuse that they have witnessed or are a part of, the member of staff should listen to the pupil and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement without promising confidentiality. For further details please see the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

10.7 How will we respond to concerns or allegations of child-on-child abuse?

We will reassure the pupil that we have listened to them, believe them and are taking the incident seriously. We will ensure that they feel safe and supported.

The DSL will discuss the concern or allegation with the member of staff who has reported it and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected. Where any concern or allegation indicates that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL will consider what urgent action can be taken in addition to the actions and referral duties set out in this policy. See the Youth involved sexual imagery section below to seek specialist help in preventing the images spreading further and removing the images from the internet.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has a trained team that can evaluate and remove illegal images from the internet when the images are reported to them quickly. They will also share the image with the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command to facilitate an investigation. Any report to IWF will be made in consultation with the police. Colleagues should not view or forward any illegal images of children but must instead confiscate the device and take it directly to the DSL or Deputy and follow the UKCIS guidance on sharing nudes.

DSLs will always use their professional judgement to assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour (in line with statutory definitions) and determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required. In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with children's social care or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

Where the DSL considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL should contact children's social care and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of the alleged behaviour.

We will ensure that information is recorded on the safeguarding system alongside any discussion outcomes, decisions and rationale. The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action. **The DSL will always refer to the police if there are aggravating factors:**

- If the incident involves an adult (over 18)

- If there are concerns about the capacity to consent (including SEND)
- Images show atypical sexual behaviour for their development stage or abusive, violent, or harmful acts
- Images show sex acts with a child under age 13
- The disclosure places the pupil (or any child) at risk of imminent harm (self-harm, exploitation, harmful response from home etc).

11. | Risk Assessment & Safety Plans

- 11.1 We will carry out an appropriate risk assessment or safety plan in respect of:
- Any pupils alleged to have been involved in an incident of sexual violence and on a case-by-case situation for any pupil involved in an incident of sexual harassment
 - Any pupil who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is abusive or violent or harmful
- 11.2 Where it is alleged that a pupil has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL will use their professional judgment – based on the particular concern or allegation raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual children in question – to determine whether it would be appropriate to contact children’s social care, and to carry out a risk assessment or safety plan.
- 11.3 Careful judgment and consideration are required as to whether alleged behaviour which might be judged to be inappropriate by an adult risks actual harm to another pupil. Consultation is recommended with children’s social care if there is any doubt about this. Where the incident is HSB, DSLs will use the Brook Traffic Light Tool to establish the level of harm before making referrals to external agencies.
- 11.4 Careful consideration will also be given to a range of factors including the context, severity of the alleged behaviour, impact of the alleged behaviour on others, risk to others, and whether there are any patterns of behaviour occurring.
- 11.5 Where other pupils have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration should also be given by the DSL to whether there might be any risks to those children, and whether a safety plan would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

12. Information Sharing, Data Protection & Record Keeping

12.1 When responding to a concerns or allegation of child-on-child abuse, we will:

- Always consider carefully, in consultation with children’s social care, the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), how to share information about the concern or allegation with the pupil(s) affected, their parents, relevant staff, and other appropriate individuals
- Record the information that is necessary for the academy and other relevant agencies (where they are involved) to respond to the concern or allegation and safeguard everyone involved including decisions and rationale
- Keep a record of the legal purpose for sharing the information with any third party, including relevant authorities, and ensure that the third party has agreed to handle the information securely and to only use it for the agreed legal purpose, and
- Be mindful of and act in accordance with its safeguarding and data protection duties, including those set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and the HM Government advice on Information Sharing.

13. | Disciplinary Action

13.1 We will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any pupil involved in child-on-child abuse linked into the behaviour policy. In addition, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that we work in partnership with the police and children’s social care.

13.2 Where a matter is not of interest to the police or children’s social care, academy leaders will still consider what is the most appropriate action to take to ensure positive behaviour management and the safety of all pupils.

13.3 Disciplinary action is appropriate to:

- Ensure that the pupil(s) involved take responsibility for and realise the seriousness of their behaviour
- Demonstrate to pupils and others that peer-on-peer abuse is not acceptable and will never be tolerated
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of other pupils.

- 13.4 These considerations must be balanced against any police investigations, children's own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns.
- 13.5 Before deciding on appropriate action we will always consider our duty to safeguard all pupils in its care from harm; the underlying reasons for a pupil's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the pupil; the risk that the pupil may pose to other pupils; and the severity of the child-on-child abuse and the causes of it.
- 13.6 Academy leaders will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves, alternative provision or exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. For example, action may still need to be taken by the academy in relation to other pupils who have been involved with and/or affected by child-on-child abuse.
- 13.7 Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils. In the event of any managed move, consideration must be given to sharing information with the receiving school regarding the child-on-child abuse in order to allow best protection of children in the new school.
- 13.8 Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of child-on-child abuse, and the academy will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above and below.

Appendix 1- Procedure for Youth Involved Sexual Imagery (Sexting, Nudes or Pics)

We recognise that ‘youth involved’ and ‘sexting’ are not terms that children and young people generally use, and it is important for colleagues in our academy to understand the language that is used by children and young people when discussing this issue with them or creating a policy.

Definitions:

Youth involved sexual imagery best describes the practice because:

- *Youth involved* includes children sharing images that they, or another child, have created of themselves
- *Imagery* covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the policy)
- A judgement of whether something is *decent* is both a value judgement and dependent on context – so we do not use it.
- The term *sexual* is clearer than *indecent*, although the DSL will nevertheless always need to use professional judgement when determining whether a photo is *sexual*.

Types of incidents that are covered by this policy:

- A child creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer (also under the age of 18)
- A child shares sexual imagery created by another child with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult
- A child is in possession of sexual imagery created by another child

Types of incidents that are not covered by this policy:

- The sharing of sexual imagery of children by adults constitutes *child sexual abuse* and the academy will always inform the police
- Children sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which do not contain imagery
- Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child and not shared

Education will be inclusive, age appropriate, and provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss and ask questions. Where education does consider the legal issues associated with youth involved sexual imagery, it should consider the nature of the legislation and likely police responses, rather than simple declarations of illegality.

When considering the sharing of youth involved sexual images among peers, a lot of online safety messaging centres on telling children that they should not produce images of themselves and send them to people because it is illegal, or in doing so they are placing themselves at risk.

We find this approach problematic because:

- These messages are likely to result in a child being abused, coerced, or exploited as a result of such behaviour feeling that they cannot ask for help or disclose abuse because they did something wrong and, therefore, they deserve what is happening to them; and
- The nature of this messaging can contribute to victim blaming
- The more problematic behaviours around the sharing of youth involved sexual images does not lie with the initial generation of the image but the distribution, or threat to distribute, by the recipient to third parties. Therefore, we tackle the subject by focusing on the non-consensual sharing and the potential punishment for those individuals, rather than potentially suggesting that for anyone who creates and sends an image deserves the abuse they receive.

Disclosure:

Any disclosure by a pupil will be taken very seriously. A pupil who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in the academy is a last resort, and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

Colleagues must recognise that they may not have the full set of information from the initial disclosure because of embarrassment, fear of peer retaliation or adult judgement or because of the impact of experiencing the trauma on memory. This does not mean that what was shared was untrue.

Handling Incidents:

When an incident involving youth involved sexual imagery comes to a member of staff's attention:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL as soon as possible, certainly that day.
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate colleagues. The DSL will follow the procedures and guidance set out in 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (2020)
- There will be subsequent **discreet** interviews with the pupils involved
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm
- Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately
- Any report to the police should be considered against the severity of the concerns and/or allegations, the impact on any child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and broader context of the production and distribution of the image (for example: was production consensual or coerced? Was sharing consensual? Was production volunteered or requested? What are the ages of the children involved?)
- [Report Remove Tool](#)

Always refer to the police if there are aggravating factors:

- If the incident involves an adult (over 18)
- If there are concerns about the capacity to consent (SEND)

- Images show atypical sexual behaviour for their development stage or violent acts (harmful in the Brook tool)
- Images show sex acts with a child under the age of 13
- The disclosure places the young person at risk of imminent harm

Depending on the facts of the particular concern or allegation, a report to the police does not necessarily mean that the child will be criminalised.

However, in the event of coercion, exploitation, further harm, or aggravated behaviours, it is valid for police involvement to result in criminal charge. We will communicate with their police liaison to determine awareness of Outcome 21 recording and its appropriateness in any given incident.

Appendix 2- Bullying Specific Procedures

We will refer to and work within the guidelines set out in the DfE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying.

Definition: (repeated, deliberate harm – likely power imbalance)

For the purposes of this policy, bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group and includes child-on-child abuse.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)
- Deliberate Isolation
- Microaggressions
- Disguised compliance

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and Bi-Phobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's actual or perceived transgender status.

Gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate, or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal, or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Specialist support for schools on sexual and sexist bullying can be found [here](#).

SEND/Ableist Bullying: Bullying behaviour based on another person's special educational needs or disability.

Statutory implications:

Under the *Equality Act (2010)*, we understand that we have a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the *Human Rights Act (HRA) (1998)*, we understand that we could have charges brought against it if we allow the rights of children and young people at the academy to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

Under the *Malicious Communications Act (1988)*, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

The Protection from *Harassment Act (1997)* makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Section 127 of the *Communications Act (2003)* makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

Signs and indicators of Bullying:

Some of the signs that a pupil may be victim of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning

- Decreased involvement in schoolwork
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental issues, so will still be investigated.

Prevention:

Prevention is at the forefront of our *Anti-Child-on-Child abuse (Anti-Bullying) Policy*.

Staff treat reports of bullying very seriously and never assume that it is 'just banter'. Any disclosure of bullying is reported through the electronic safeguarding system to the DSL. Staff take action immediately; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored.

Staff respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others in-line with the safeguarding disclosure process, please refer to the safeguarding and child protection policy.

Follow-up support is given to both the alleged victim and alleged bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped. Staff colleagues follow up with a meeting with those involved to discuss how effectively they felt the incident has been dealt with to inform future practice and to inform the termly review.

The academy clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement that is regularly promoted across the whole academy.

All disclosed, reported or witnessed instances of bullying in the academy are challenged by a member of staff. All members of the academy community are made aware of our Anti- child-on-child abuse Policy. All colleagues receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All pupils are educated on our anti- child-on-child abuse policy, what bullying is and why it happens, what we do to prevent it and the consequences when peer-on-peer abuse occurs. We educate pupils on the responsibilities of anyone who witnesses bullying and the role of culpability bystanders as well as other roles pupils may unintentionally be placed in when bullying/ child-on-child abuse is taking place.

The same information is shared with parents and transitioning pupils through transition evenings before they join the academy to ensure that our values are understood before pupils arrive at the academy. (if you haven't done this – do send out the information! *delete me)

Bullying and child-on-child abuse is the focus on at least one annual whole-academy event/display with PHSE/Relationship and Health Education sessions designed to embed and build up pupils understanding and empathy as they progress through their academic career.

Staff encourage pupil co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.

All types of bullying are discussed as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various subject lessons.

Potential victims of bullying are drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

Where potential for bullying is identified the changing and organising seating arrangements in lesson helps to prevent instances of bullying. A safe, supervised place is available for pupils to go to at lunch if they are involved in conflict with their peers.

SEND/Ableist Bullying:

Pupils who are on the SEND register are more prone to bullying than their peers, but this does not mean that all pupils with SEND will be bullied. We continually monitor our SEND pupils through the SENDCO.

When a pupil is identified as socially vulnerable because of their SEND we take every precaution to prevent such incidents occurring.

In addition to this we recognise that it might be more difficult for some pupils with SEND to express their concerns about bullying and so with the enrolment of each new pupil we spend additional time ensuring that they understand the policy, their rights and ensuring that they feel comfortable with the mechanisms for reporting a concern should one arise for themselves or a peer.

Note due to the individual nature of SEND pupils these strategies are continually evolving in line with their individual needs and where necessary additional prevention strategies will be put in place.

Procedures for dealing with disclosures of concerns about bullying:

Minor incidents are reported to academy pastoral staff who investigate the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and informs the DSL in writing of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

(If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to the school nurse/first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries and proceed as advised)

- An incident will be recorded on the system to ensure that the DSL is aware and can monitor that the process is followed in line with the policy.
- Statements will be sought from both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, and the academy will do everything possible within the new context to establish the most truthful version of events (on the balance of probability).
- Members of staff seek to reduce the possibility of contact between the pupils interviewed, including electronic communication during the process.
- A room or safe quiet place is used that allows for privacy during interviews.

- A witness' viewpoint is sought when appropriate.
- Unless there is a very strong reason not to engage parents, they will be contacted, and the situation explained.
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgmental at this stage; members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.
- Support will be offered to both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and consequences will be considered where appropriate in line with our behaviour policy.
- Where appropriate we will seek to support the pupils in understanding each other's point of view and offer additional sessions (face to face or remotely as required) to help them to overcome their situation.
- Where pupil/pupils are at risk of harm as a result of this incident, we will make appropriate external referrals to seek support for those involved.
- Some pupils may experience poor mental health or feel anxious after experiencing bullying and the academy will seek to support and address this by working closely with the pupil, family, and relevant external agencies.
- Where the impact of bullying has a significant impact on the relative academic achievements of the pupil involved the academy will seek to address these through targeted interventions, supportive strategies and eventually, if required a SEND assessment in line with the DfE guidance referred to at the top of this appendix.
- The process and outcomes will be recorded on CPOMs and appropriate timely referrals made as the need arises during the process. The process will be overseen by the DSL, though other colleagues will likely support the process.
- The incident will not be closed until both pupils agree that they are happy with the outcome. Until then, the academy will continue to address the pupil's concerns as far as possible and work towards a resolution to address their concerns. The academy will agree with the pupils how often they feel able to review the situation but ideally:
 - An identified member of the pastoral team informally checks whether the bullying has stopped on a weekly basis for a month after the initial complaint of bullying.
 - An identified member of the pastoral team formally checks whether the bullying has stopped the week after the bullying, and again during the same half term.

Where all those involved with an incident agree that the issues have been resolved; the case will remain open for at least a further six weeks to allow staff to seek pupil voice after a reasonable time has passed to ensure that the issues have not resurfaced or to seek to offer support if they have.

Concerns, disclosures, referrals and actions will be recorded and appropriate further referrals made if necessary. Pupil voice will be recorded when the incidents are followed up after the initial support and interventions have been implemented in line with the above procedure.

Follow up actions or support may include but are not limited to:

- If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.
- The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

- The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school club or activity.
- If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to, believed, and reassured
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with a member of the pastoral team or a member of staff of their choice
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate
- Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:
 - Receiving a consequence for their actions
 - Being able to discuss what happened
 - Reflecting on why they became involved
 - Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
 - Appropriate assistance from parents/carers
 - External referrals for support if required

Bullying outside of the Academy:

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the academy premises. This can relate to any bullying, or child-on-child abuse incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on academy or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Please refer to the Behaviour Policy.

Where bullying outside school is reported to academy staff, it is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff.

The Principal has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Principal the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

The DSL and behaviour lead are responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil.

If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

Roles and responsibilities related to bullying specifically:

Governors evaluate and review this policy to ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to be alert to possible bullying of pupils and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.

The Director of Safeguarding reviews and amends this policy, taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures.

The DSL keeps a Bullying Record of all reported incidents including which type of bullying has occurred to allow for thorough and regular (termly) analyses of the data collected which will be reported to the Principal.

The DSL analyses the data in the Bullying Record at termly intervals in order to identify any trends in the types of bullying occurring and implement the appropriate measures to tackle it.

The Leadership Team arranges appropriate training for staff members.

An appropriate colleague identified by a member of the Leadership Team corresponds and meets with parents/carers where necessary. They also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Tutors are alert to social dynamics in their class or group and are available for pupils who wish to report bullying. They also provide follow-up support after bullying incidents.

Teachers ensure that they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the pastoral team of such observations.

All colleagues will avoid gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.

Throughout the year, the composition of pupil groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.

The school nurses, often the first people to receive reports of bullying, offer emotional support to victims, and alert the DSL.

Parents/carers are advised to inform their child's tutor if they are concerned that their child may be bullied or be involved in bullying.

Pupils are advised to inform a member of staff if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying.

Pupils are taught not to make counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.

Pupils are taught to walk away from any dangerous situations and avoid involving other pupils in incidents.

Pupils are advised to retain and disclose all evidence of cyber bullying as well as offered additional signposts for support outside of the academy.

Appendix 3- Harmful or Problematic Sexual Behaviour

Sexual Harassment:

- Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.
- Sexual harassment violates a pupil's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment.
- If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual harassment includes: (Physical, Verbal and Online Conduct)

- Sexual comments such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" and taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone else.
- Sexual threats or pushing someone to do something sexually that they don't want to or aren't ready for.

Online sexual harassment includes:

- Non-consensual sharing of images and videos, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Sharing of sexual images and videos (often known as sexting, nudes or pics)
- Inappropriate comments on social media, exploitation, coercion and threats – online sexual harassment may be isolated or part of a wider pattern.

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

Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with a penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB):

The term “harmful sexual behaviour” is used to describe behaviour that is problematic, abusive and violent, and that may cause developmental damage. All behaviours receive a proportionate response and even low level HSB is treated as an opportunity to reflect and learn to how to make positive healthy choices and be mindful of risks or harm.

Harmful sexual behaviour may include:

- Using sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Sexual violence or threats.
- Full penetrative sex with children or adults.
- Sexual interest in adults or children of very different ages to their own.
- Forceful or aggressive sexual behaviour.
- Compulsive habits relating to sexual or body-focused behaviours.
- Sexual behaviour affecting progress and achievement.
- Sexual behaviour can also be harmful if one of the individuals is much older (especially where there is two or more years difference, or where one individual is prepubescent and the other is not) and where the child may have SEND.

Identifying Harmful, Problematic or Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour:

All colleagues are aware that pupils of any age and gender identification are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

All colleagues are aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including sexting, nudes or pics, gender based abuse, being sexually touched or assaulted, and pupils being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

All colleagues are aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND. Adults will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil’s SEND and will always explore potential indicators further as report them.

The academy’s response to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) involving pupils of the same gender will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between pupils of the opposite gender or gender identification.

Pupils will be made aware and actively encouraged 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. We recognise the numerous additional barriers that young people face in disclosing harmful sexual behaviour to adults and will never rely on disclosures alone; colleagues are trained to be vigilant to the signs and indicators of abuse and act on them appropriately and in line with the guidance.

Recognising one or more of the following signs in a pupil may mean they are a victim of harmful sexual behaviour:

- Missing school completely or showing an unwillingness to attend certain lessons
- Injuries such as bruises – either being sustained at school or the pupil may come to school with injuries
- Showing signs of anxiety or depression, or feeling panicked
- Being withdrawn, shy or feeling nervous
- Looking dishevelled due to a lack of sleep
- Being abusive to other pupils or staff members

Allegations of harmful sexual behaviour:

Support available if a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger, or at risk of harm:

- If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children's Services and the police and other local agencies as appropriate.
- Within one working day, a social worker should respond to the referrer to explain the action that will be taken.

Support available if early help, section 17 and/or section 47 statutory assessments are appropriate:

- If early help, section 17 and/or section 47 statutory assessments (assessments under the Children Act 1989) are appropriate, academy staff may be required to support external agencies. The DSL and deputies will support staff as required.
-

Support available if a crime may have been committed:

- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report includes such an act, the police will be notified. The DSL will be aware of the local process for referrals to both Children's Services and the police.
- The academy will report criminal activity to the police irrelevant of the alleged perpetrators age. In these cases, the police will take a welfare approach rather than a criminal justice approach.
- The academy maintains a relationship with the local police force and the DSL will liaise closely with them.
- Where there is a case of alleged sexual violence the DSL will always complete the Trust HSB incident response risk assessment and draw up pupil plan involving pupils, parents and agencies involved. The RA will be uploaded to the online safeguarding system and reviewed regularly. The next review date should be booked in during each review.
- Where there is a case of sexual violence or sexual harassment the DSL will consider:
 - All immediate safety concerns
 - The wishes of the child that has been harmed
 - The nature of the incident
 - Whether a crime has been committed
 - The ages and developmental stages of the children involved
 - Any power imbalance (age, confidence, social standing, SEND, gender identification)

- If the abuse has taken place within the context of an intimate personal relationship
- If the incident was a one off or part of a pattern or escalation of behaviours
- If siblings or other children may be at risk of intra familial harm
- Other related issues or wider context linked to exploitation

Support available if reports include online behaviour

- The academy recognises that there is potential for an online incident to extend further than the local community and for a victim, or the alleged perpetrator, to become marginalised and excluded both online and offline. There is also strong potential for repeat victimisation if the content continues to exist.
- If the incident involves sexual images or videos held online the Internet Watch Foundation or childline will be consulted to have the material removed: [Report Remove Tool](#)
- **Staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child. If they are made aware of such an image, they will contact the DSL.**

Managing disclosures

We will refer to the statutory guidance in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Alleged victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Alleged victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

- If a friend of an alleged victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will take action – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will *consider why* the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of the DSL.
- Where an alleged incident took place away from the academy or online but involved pupils from the academy, the academy's duty to safeguard pupils remains the same.
- All staff will be trained to handle disclosures.
- All staff will ensure that they use the formal reporting system to record and share with the DSL any information or concerns that they have about the safety or wellbeing of a pupil.
- Where online sexual harassment has taken place or images are involved staff will not or forward any illegal images of a child but will instead consult the guidance from [UKCIS: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes](#).
- The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate the devices to preserve evidence and hand them to the police of inspection.

Effective safeguarding practice includes:

- Offering reassurance and safety and never blame the victim.
- Never promising confidentiality at the initial stage.
- Only sharing the report with those necessary for its progression.

- Explaining to the victim what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- Recognising that the person the child chose to disclose the information to is in a position of trust.
- Being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Not asking leading questions and only prompting the child with open questions.
- Waiting until the end of the disclosure to immediately write a thorough summary. If notes must be taken during the disclosure, it is important to still remain engaged and not appear distracted.
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them – not the opinions of the note taker.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching, screening and confiscation advice and UKCCIS sexting advice.
- Wherever possible, managing disclosures with two staff members present (preferably with the DSL or a deputy as one of the staff members).
- Informing the DSL or deputy as soon as possible after the disclosure if they could not be involved in the disclosure.
- If the allegations of harmful sexual behaviour is against a pupil with SEND, they will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO and the DSL, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

The DSL or a deputy should decide the school's initial response, taking into consideration:

- The victim's wishes.
- The nature of the incident.
- The ages and developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
- Any ongoing risks to any children involved or siblings, or in the wider context of the school
- Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a child's life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
- The best interests of the child.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration should be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other children involved.

For reports of sexual violence whilst the school establishes the facts, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes shared with the victim. The academy will consider how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises, and on transport where applicable. These actions should not be seen as a judgement of guilt on the alleged perpetrator, the actions are to protect all pupils involved.

For reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and the suitability of shared classes, premises and transport should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated and the wishes of the victim, nature of the allegations and requirement to protect all children should be taken into consideration.

Anonymity

There are legal requirements for anonymity where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system. The academy will do all it can to protect the anonymity of pupils involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. It will carefully consider, based on the nature of the report, which staff will be informed and what support will be in place for the pupils involved.

The academy will refrain from making comments on any ongoing cases of harmful sexual behaviour on social media and will always act appropriately in line with our *Social Media Policy*.

Risk Assessment

The DSL or a deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment using the COCA/Sexual Violence Incident Response Risk Assessment any time there is a report of sexual violence. Please contact the Director of Safeguarding for the template as required.

For reports of sexual harassment, a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risk assessments are not intended to replace the detailed assessments of experts, and for incidents of sexual violence, it is likely that a professional risk assessment by a social worker or sexual violence specialist will be required.

Risk assessments will consider:

- The context of the incident.
- The pupil or pupils that have been harmed
- The pupil or pupils that have caused harm.
- The time and location of the event
- Other pupils at the academy, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.
- Risk assessments will be recorded on CPOMS and kept under review in accordance with the academy's Data Protection Policy.

Further guidance on for formulating an Academy-based Safeguarding Risk Reduction Plan for a pupil who may pose a risk of sexual harm to others:

<https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/4428/protocol-for-managing-peer-on-peer-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools-4-final.pdf>

Useful Websites:

NSPCC: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1540/sexual-violence-harassment-between-children-schools-colleges-england.pdf>

Appendix 4- Weapons

If a pupil is discovered to have brought a weapon into the academy the parents and the police will be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

The DSL and Principal will consider contextual safeguarding (extra familial harm and familial harm) risks to the pupil who carried the weapon and risks to any intended harm to individuals and the wider academy community. Referrals to children's services will be made as soon as it is safe to do so where there is a concern for the welfare of any person.

The pupil will likely be placed on a fixed term exclusion and an investigation will be carried out.

Weapons include guns, pellet guns, BB guns, air guns, replica guns, knives, nun chucks, death stars and other martial arts objects; screwdrivers, hammers, chisels, bradles and any tool that has/attempted/threatened to be used offensively; razors, razor blades, aerosols, chains, scissors, etc.

This list is **not** exhaustive, but it should be noted that weapons also describe 'homemade' implements manufactured to injure, threaten, or intimidate. If an item such as a pair of scissors is picked up in the academy and used or threatened to be used as a weapon, then any sanction referred to in the behaviour management policy may be recommended to the local governing body.

At this hearing the following issues will be discussed:

- How the weapon was found, discovered, or reported
- The nature of the weapon
- The location and storage of the weapon on the academy site
- Knowledge of third parties as to the weapon being in the academy
- What the perceived purpose was of having the weapon in the academy
- Preceding behaviour and attitude of the pupil whilst attending anonymous (unless a weapon has previously been brought into the academy by the same pupil).
- Any contextual safeguarding risks relating to the pupil or the incident
- Safeguarding implications for all pupils involved should the perpetrator be excluded.

Please refer to the behaviour policy for the full procedures relating to disciplinary actions.