Child on Child Abuse Policy

Head Teacher Signature:	Chris Litchfield
Date Adopted:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2027

Introduction

At Kneesall C of E Primary School we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). We believe that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys." We will respond to all signs, reports, and concerns of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises, and/or online.

We recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers, and we take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. We recognise that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening- it may be the case that it is just not being reported — we understand that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. We acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable. We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

In cases where child-on-child abuse is suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures, taking a contextual, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation including the victims) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed) and alleged perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children).

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff working with children maintain an attitude of, "It could happen here," and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. The Head teacher, Chris Litchfield, has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), Academy Trust (SNMAT) and outside agencies.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility — however, all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies in our school is Mr. Litchfield and Mrs Childs.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is Mr A. Whitchurch.

Child-on-Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-related and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- 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, 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 nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), 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 o 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).
- This may also be an indicator of wider exploitation such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and/or County Lines.

Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content

Recognising

At Kneesall C of E Primary Academy we recognise that behaviours associated with child-on-child abuse take place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on this spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. We recognise that all children grow and develop at their own pace. We will use our professional judgement and knowledge of child development when responding to child-on-child abuse.

Reporting and Responding

At Kneesall C of E Primary Academy we want children, parents, carers, staff and visitors to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We recognise that our school's initial response to a report of child-on-child abuse is incredibly important-how we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims to report or come forward.

As a school we will also respond to reports of alleged child-on-child abuse that have occurred online or outside of school. These reports will be treated seriously, and the school remains committed to supporting and safeguarding all parties including the victim(s) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed), alleged perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children), and any other child(ren) who may be affected. We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking the leading role and using their

professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as the Local Authority, Children's Social Care and the Police as appropriate. We will ensure that we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community: the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Children (including bystanders)

It is important to understand that a victim (a child who has been harmed) may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally-some children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim (a child who has been harmed) may not make a direct report. We recognise that in some instances another child may report on another child's behalf. All children will know how to report concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse.

We ask that all children report any concerning behaviour to a member of school staff — this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the child and make an initial note of their concerns. They will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping children safe in education, we will never promise a child that we will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child. The member of staff will make a formal record of the concern, report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has a worry box in each classroom where the child can put their name/a brief note about their concerns/draw a picture of their concern — these worry boxes are introduced to the children at the start of the year, and children are reminded of them regularly. Our school also has a designated Safeguarding email address — if a child feels unable to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, they could send an email with their concerns, and these will be followed-up/responded to by the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

Parents & Carers

We understand that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with making or receiving a report that their child has been the victim of (has been harmed) or is an alleged perpetrator (has allegedly harmed a child or children) of child-on-child abuse.

In line with the statutory guidance, we will seek advice and support from other services as decided on a case-by-case basis. All decisions and actions taken by the school will consider the needs of the individual children involved, and the wider school community. We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on-child abuse, that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (in person/via telephone call/via email) to explain their concerns.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will make a formal record of the report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers speak directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online. Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of child-on-child abuse. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and ongoing investigations by statutory services. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

If a parent and/or carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Staff

Our staff work closely with our children and therefore may notice a change in a child's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a child or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or are concerned that a child is displaying behaviours that may show they have been the victim of (are being harmed/has been harmed) or that they are perpetrating (are harming/have harmed a child or children) child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead/directly to the Head teacher. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency, etc.).

We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about child-on-child abuse, that they have witnessed, or have been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/the Head teacher/a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the concerns on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

Recording and evaluating

We will ensure a written report is made as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated. We will ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will be informed as soon as possible, if they were not involved in the initial report. All incident reports will be recorded using our online system, CPOMs. We will ensure that details of decisions made and reasons for decisions are recorded as well as any outcomes. We will ensure that any 'safety plans' are recorded and kept under review. These will be uploaded to CPOMs.

Strategies for Prevention

Our school Kneesall C of E Primary Academy actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

- Staff training — including for supply staff, governors or management committees, volunteers, and visitors.
- Undertaking training linked to all forms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Contextual safeguarding (harms outside the home' or extra-familial harm)
- Identification and classification of specific behaviours — SVSH, HSB etc.
- Making it clear there is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse (especially in relation to SVSH) that it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Ensuring it is never passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys."
- Recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting-up skirts
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- Ensuring that the Governing body are aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities (effective child protection policy — child-on-child abuse policy)

- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify those children who may need additional support
- Training and regular updates regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety information for children
- Creating an ethos and culture in which all children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a nonjudgmental environment, and have them listened to.

All children are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience any form of child-on-child abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it. They are regularly informed about the school's approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including the school's zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of child-on-child abuse, the process for reporting their concerns of child-on-child abuse and where to go for further help, support, and advice.

We seek to:

- Educate all children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via a well embedded RHE/RSHE curriculum, PSHE curriculum or wider curriculum
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- Deliver the teaching of age-appropriate information regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety. Provide information for parents and carers
- Talking to parents, both in groups and one-to-one
- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie child-on-child abuse — in school and/or the wider community Ensuring parents /carers are aware of the ethos and culture of the school
- Sharing of regular information regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety RHE (Relationships and Health Education) / PSHE curriculum

The school have a clear set of values and standards, upheld, and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life, which is supported by a planned programme of evidence based PSHE curriculum. Our RHE/PSHE programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and/or other vulnerabilities).

We will, through our RHE/PSHE programme promote:

- Healthy, respectful and kind relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Equality and raise awareness of stereotyping and prejudice
- Body confidence and self-esteem

- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to — sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, teenage relationship abuse (intimate personal relationships between children), and how to access support
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Breaches and or Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body. If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Date to be reviewed: September 2027