Nottinghamshire County Council

Child-on-Child Abuse Guidance and Policy

2026-2027

This Policy for Child-on-Child Abuse has been written to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1 September 2026) Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The term 'peer on peer abuse' has been replaced by the term 'child-on-child abuse'

Banks Road Infant and Nursery School

Nottinghamshire County Council Policy Guidance and Policy Template for Child-on- Child Abuse – 2nd September 2026

This guidance and policy template has been developed with direct reference to **Part 5: Child-on-Child Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence** of Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping children safe in education (publishing.service.gov.uk) – there are direct references to Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB) and Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (SHSV).

This document consists of three separate resources:

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1. Guidance for your school's/setting's Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Key changes reflected in this 2026 guidance and policy template

The 2026 edition of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* places increased emphasis on:

- understanding Child-on-Child Abuse as part of a continuum of behaviour, from inappropriate and problematic behaviour through to abusive and violent behaviour;
- early identification and intervention in relation to Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB);
- recognising and responding to misogyny and harmful gender-based attitudes as potential safeguarding concerns;
- prevention-focused and whole-school approaches to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence;
- understanding links between Child-on-Child Abuse, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), discrimination and harmful social norms;
- increased awareness of harmful online influences, influencers/content creators and gaming platforms, including incel ideology and content which may promote misogyny, discrimination, violence or harmful beliefs about relationships and gender;
- technology-assisted abuse, including image-based abuse, AI-generated content, digitally manipulated images and videos, and deepfake imagery;
- recognising that safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation and may overlap with other forms of harm and vulnerability.

This guidance and policy template has been updated to reflect these developments.

Recommended definition of Child-on-Child Abuse

Nottinghamshire County Council recommend the definition of Child-on-Child abuse provided by the Safeguarding Network (which has been adapted from Keeping Children Safe in Education):

Inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, all forms of bullying, coercive control, hazing/initiation rituals between children and young people, both on and offline (including that which is within intimate personal relationships).

The use of the word exploitation has been included throughout the KCSiE document to highlight that exploitation is a key Child Protection concern. Exploitation can take many forms and children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. Children may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse.

Recommended language / Key terminology

It is important to be mindful about the language we use when referring to children involved in incidents relating to possible Child-on-Child Abuse – terminology like 'victim' and 'perpetrator' may be unhelpful as it can often be interpreted as a label or something that says that's what the child *is* rather than what they've experienced, or what behaviour they have perpetrated/displayed. Wherever possible, we would recommend using strengths-based language that acknowledges the experiences that children have had but also recognises that children's behaviour can change. Some children may self-identify as a 'victim', but we should try to use language like 'the child who has been harmed/alleged to have been harmed' or 'child who has experienced/witnessed harm'. Similarly, we should try to avoid language like 'perpetrator', 'abuser' or 'sex offender'– instead we should try to use phrases like 'the child who has displayed harmful behaviour' or 'child who has allegedly harmed another child(ren)'.

This guidance uses the term "Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB)" to recognise that sexual behaviours exist on a continuum and that early identification of problematic behaviours may help prevent escalation into harmful or abusive behaviour.

Contextual Safeguarding:

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be considering the context within which incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors (sometimes referred to as 'harm outside the home' or 'extra-familial harm') are present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

KCSIE 2026 places increased emphasis on recognising that safeguarding concerns often overlap. Child-on-Child Abuse may occur alongside other forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harms, discrimination, domestic abuse, poor mental health, attendance concerns and extra-familial harm. Schools and colleges should take a holistic approach when assessing and responding to concerns. Staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns may present through a range of behaviours and experiences. This includes harmful, abusive, coercive or controlling behaviour directed towards parents, carers or family members. Such behaviours should be explored sensitively to understand any underlying safeguarding concerns, unmet needs, experiences of trauma, exploitation, domestic abuse or emotional wellbeing difficulties.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing should be considered when assessing concerns relating to Child-on-Child Abuse. Children who have experienced harm, witnessed harm, or displayed harmful behaviours may experience anxiety, low mood, trauma responses, emotional dysregulation, self-harm, suicidal ideation, school avoidance, or changes in behaviour and presentation. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider whether additional mental health support or safeguarding intervention may be required.

Schools and colleges should recognise that Child-on-Child Abuse concerns may identify a need for early help or Family Help interventions. Where concerns indicate emerging needs or vulnerabilities, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider whether a Family Help response is appropriate and work with children, families and partner agencies to secure support at the earliest opportunity.

All staff should be 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, AI-generated or digitally manipulated images and videos, including deepfake content, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

Misogyny and harmful gender-based attitudes:

KCSIE 2026 explicitly identifies misogyny as a safeguarding concern and highlights the escalatory nature of misogynistic attitudes and behaviours. Schools and colleges should recognise that sexist language, misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes may contribute to the development of Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB), Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence. Early identification and intervention are important safeguarding measures. Schools should take care however, in how they engage the whole-school community - for further advice and guidance, please contact the ESHAWH: eshawh@nottscc.gov.uk

Prejudice-Based Harm:

KCSIE 2026 identifies prejudice-based harm as a safeguarding concern in its own right. All staff should recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, disability-based prejudice, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other discriminatory behaviours can have a significant impact on a child's safety, wellbeing, welfare and educational outcomes.

Such incidents should not be viewed solely as behaviour or equality matters. Staff should consider whether prejudice-based incidents indicate wider safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately through safeguarding procedures where necessary.

Technology-assisted abuse:

Technology continues to play an increasingly significant role in Child-on-Child Abuse. KCSIE 2026 highlights the need for schools and colleges to understand and respond to online abuse, including image-based abuse, AI-generated content, digitally manipulated images and videos, and the use of technology to harass, threaten, humiliate or exploit others. Incidents occurring online should be treated with the same level of concern as those occurring face-to-face.

Staff should also be aware of emerging technologies and applications that can be used to create harmful content involving children, including nudification apps, synthetic image generation tools, deepfake technology and other forms of artificial intelligence which may be used to humiliate, harass, sexualise, threaten or exploit children.

Vulnerable Groups:

There is no way to know which children are most vulnerable to becoming victims of, or being an alleged perpetrator of Child-on-Child Abuse, but there are some factors for 'abuse-risk' to be aware of, including but not limited to:

- very young children
- children with SEN (Special Educational Needs), disabilities and/or health problems
- children who have already experienced/witnessed, or are currently experiencing/witnessing:
    - any form of child abuse
    - grooming for any form of exploitation
    - bullying including online bullying
    - forms of domestic abuse (perpetrated by an adult)
    - abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
- children who are looked after (or have been previously looked after)
- children who are young carers and children who have caring responsibilities
- children who display harmful, abusive, coercive or controlling behaviours towards parents, carers or family members, recognising that these behaviours may indicate unmet needs, trauma, exploitation, exposure to abuse, emotional wellbeing concerns or other safeguarding vulnerabilities
- children who experience prejudice-related bullying and children who experience racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia or other forms of prejudice-based harm
- children who identify as, or are perceived to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans (LGBT) or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is.

ESHAWH define prejudice-related bullying behaviour as; "derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist (ableist) in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their sex, religion or beliefs, race/ethnicity/nationality; or because they have a learning or physical disability; or because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is. It may include misogyny (or misandry) and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior."

Staff should keep in mind that certain children may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and barriers to feeling safe, included and able to seek help.

Schools and colleges also need to be mindful of the Protected Characteristics as detailed within the Equality Act 2010 and how children may be impacted. Discrimination: your rights: Types of discrimination ('protected characteristics') - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)

Additional considerations for settings:

KCSIE 2026 places greater emphasis on recognising behaviour on a continuum. While some behaviours may appear low-level, inappropriate or problematic behaviour should not be ignored. Early discussion, intervention and education can help prevent escalation into more serious harmful, abusive or violent behaviour.

When considering Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB), both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. Schools and colleges should ensure that their response to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (SHSV) between children of the same sex is equally robust as it is for Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence between children of the opposite sex.

Staff should be aware that children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to know the person responsible than not. Abuse can occur within friendship groups, peer groups, intimate relationships and wider social networks. Staff should avoid making assumptions about the nature of relationships between children involved in incidents of sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviour.

Practice and Policy requirements:

Schools and colleges **should respond to all signs, reports, and concerns** of Child-on-Child abuse, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online.

All schools need to include Child-on-Child Abuse in their school's policies and procedures, and all staff need to be aware of these and ensure they are part of their everyday practice. Children also need to know how to report concerns and to know that they will be listened to and supported. Schools and colleges should actively promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture as part of their safeguarding responsibilities. Preventing discrimination, prejudice and harmful attitudes contributes to a safer environment where children feel valued, respected and able to seek help when needed.

It is important that schools see this guidance and model policy as a framework that will need to be adapted to fit the age and developmental stage and understanding of their pupil group. A policy template is attached to this document, the areas in red are for you to amend and ensure they reflect your school's current practice.

It is good practice to link your setting's Child-on-Child Policy with the following policies as a minimum:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy - ** Joint City and County Policy Template and Guidance available **
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE)
- Equality Policy - ** NCC Policy Template and Guidance available from ESHAWH **

The above policy guidance and policy templates can be located via Education, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing Hub (ESHAWH) The East Midlands Education Support Service.

It is good practice, as with the development of all policies, to consult with all main stakeholders, such as – pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, and the wider community.

If you are a school / setting within Nottinghamshire and you would like further support or information regarding Child-on-Child Abuse – please contact: eshawh@nottscc.gov.uk

2. Useful resources regarding Child-on-Child Abuse and related topics

When creating your Child-on-Child Abuse policy, it may be helpful to refer to the following key documents and websites:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE): Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026: Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK
- OFSTED – Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse – safety planning guidance and templates: Helping education settings identify and respond to concerns - CSA Centre
    - Communicating with children: A guide for education professionals when there are concerns about sexual abuse or behaviour (csacentre.org.uk)
    - Communicating with parents and carers: A guide for education professionals when there are concerns about sexual abuse or behaviour (csacentre.org.uk)
    - Safety planning in education: A guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of harmful sexual behaviour (csacentre.org.uk)
- Contextual Safeguarding - Contextual Safeguarding Research Durham University
- Farrer and Co 'Addressing Child-on-Child Abuse' – resource and reference document for practitioners: addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf (farrer.co.uk)
- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours:
    - Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning
    - NSPCC Learning Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning
- Shore, part of the Lucy Faithful Foundation - a safe and anonymous place for young people to get help and support if worried about sexual behaviour. The aim of this website is to prevent P/HSB among young people – shorespace.org.uk
- Support for Professionals (regarding P/HSB) from the SWGfL: Harmful Sexual Behaviour in School Resources | SWGfL and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Online Video Training | SWGfL
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership (NSCP (Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership)) Policy, Practice and Guidance: Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Understanding Behaviour in Schools toolkit: Understanding Behaviour in Schools | The East Midlands Education Support Service (em-edsupport.org.uk)
- Foundations of identity Toolkit - Identity | The East Midlands Education Support Service (em-edsupport.org.uk)
- Harms Outside the Home toolkit: Harms Outside the Home Toolkit | The East Midlands Education Support Service (em-edsupport.org.uk)

The ESHAWH have also create a variety of Padlets that have a huge range of resources including research reports, curriculum resources and lessons plans, resources for parents/carers, and links to quality assured training opportunities. These are available here:

- Child-on-Child Abuse
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)
- ESHAW Hub Directory

If you are a school / setting within Nottinghamshire and you would like further support or information regarding Child-on-Child Abuse – please contact: eshawh@nottscc.gov.uk

3. Child-on-Child Abuse Policy Template

Nottinghamshire County Council Policy Template - Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
2nd September 2026

Introduction

At Banks Road Infant and Nursery School we have a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of Child-on-Child Abuse including Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (SHSV) and Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/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 will never minimise, dismiss or downplay concerns but we will always endeavour to respond in a contextual, strengths-based and trauma-informed manner, recognising that behaviour is a form of communication and some behaviours may be indicative of a child experiencing harm or abuse themselves. We will follow our behaviour and safeguarding policies to ensure that appropriate action is taken – this may include sanctions but will also focus on interventions designed to address the behaviours of concern.

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 children who experience sexual abuse are often harmed by someone known to them, including friends, peers, partners or other individuals within their social networks. 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 Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour are themselves vulnerable.
We recognise that Child-on-Child Abuse can be linked to wider societal issues, including sexism, misogyny (and misandry), harmful online influences, incel ideology, harmful gender-based stereotypes / attitudes and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and we are committed to challenging these attitudes through a preventative whole-school approach. We recognise that the above may be indicators of safeguarding concerns. We understand the escalatory nature of misogyny (and misandry) and will challenge such attitudes and behaviours promptly to minimise the risk of Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.
We recognise that racism and faith-targeted abuse can significantly affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, identity, educational experience and sense of safety and belonging. We recognise these behaviours as safeguarding concerns and will respond promptly, appropriately and proportionately to all reports, concerns and incidents.

We are committed to promoting a whole-school culture that is inclusive, respectful and anti-discriminatory. We recognise that creating a culture where diversity is valued, prejudice is challenged, and all members of the school community feel safe, respected and included is an important part of our safeguarding responsibilities.

In cases where Child-on-Child Abuse is suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures and take all necessary steps to support all children who may have / have been affected by the situation including the victim(s) (the child who may have been / has been harmed, or the children who may have been / have been harmed) and **alleged** perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children).

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1 September 2026) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community.

This policy is available:

- Online on the school website
- From the school office

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

Roles and 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**, Helen Taylor has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), 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 Deputy in our school is Helen Taylor and Rachael Leggat.

The DSL and deputies are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding information relating to Child-on-Child Abuse is shared appropriately, recorded effectively and transferred securely when required.

The nominated **Governor** with responsibility for Child-on-Child Abuse is Evelyn Meenagh.

The Governing Body will support the school in promoting an inclusive, respectful and anti-discriminatory culture and will monitor safeguarding information, including trends relating to prejudice-related incidents where appropriate.

Definitions

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-related and discriminatory bullying)
- Discriminatory behaviour and abuse, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, disability-based discrimination, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other prejudice-related behaviours.
- 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)
- Serious violence, including serious physical assault, weapon-enabled incidents, threats involving weapons, organised violence, group violence, and behaviours associated with criminal exploitation, serious violence or gang-related activity.
- 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
- Forcing, causing or inciting another child to engage in sexual activity without consent, including requiring a child to undress, touch themselves sexually, engage in sexual activity with another person, or participate in the creation of sexual imagery.
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
- Image-based abuse, including the taking, creation, manipulation, sharing or threatened sharing of intimate, sexualised or humiliating images without consent.
- 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

- 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.
- Behaviour arising from discriminatory attitudes, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia or other prejudice-based beliefs, which may contribute to harm, abuse, harassment, exploitation or violence.
- Technology-assisted abuse, including the creation, sharing or threatened sharing of AI-generated, manipulated or synthetic images or videos, the use of nudification applications, deepfake technology and other artificial intelligence tools intended to humiliate, harass, control, threaten, sexualise or exploit another child.

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 include abusive, harassing, sexist or misogynistic / misandrist content, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, AI-generated or digitally manipulated images and videos (including deepfakes), image-based abuse, threats to create or share such content, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not wish to receive such content.#

Recognising:

At Banks Road Infant and Nursery School we recognise that behaviours associated with Child-on-Child Abuse and Problematic / Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB) take place on a continuum from inappropriate and problematic behaviours through to abusive and violent behaviours. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on this continuum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

We recognise that early identification and intervention are essential in preventing escalation and that these behaviours may be indicative that the child themselves may be at risk of or subject to harm and / or abuse. Staff should understand that children under the age of 13 cannot legally consent to any form of sexual activity. Concerns involving children under 13 should always be considered carefully in line with safeguarding and child protection procedures, taking account of the age, developmental stage and circumstances of the children involved.

We recognise that safeguarding concerns rarely exist in isolation and that Child-on-Child Abuse may occur alongside other vulnerabilities and harms including serious violence, weapon carrying, threats of violence, group-based violence, exploitation, domestic abuse, online harms, neglect, emotional wellbeing concerns and attendance concerns. Our staff will be suitably trained to identify and respond to concerns using professional curiosity and contextual safeguarding.

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 and Problematic / Harmful Sexual Behaviour. When assessing concerns relating to Child-on-Child Abuse, we will consider both risk factors and protective factors within a child's life. Protective factors may include positive relationships, supportive family networks, trusted adults, strong peer relationships, engagement with education, community involvement, resilience, personal strengths and access to appropriate services. Understanding both risks and strengths helps us to develop proportionate, child-centred support and intervention plans.

Reporting and Responding:

At Banks Road Infant and Nursery School 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 use a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach when responding to children who have or may have experienced harm and children who have displayed harmful behaviours, recognising that both may require support, intervention and safeguarding. When planning support, we will consider the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of all children involved and, where appropriate, seek support from internal pastoral services, mental health professionals, Family Help services or other relevant agencies. 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. In addition to considering statutory safeguarding and child protection responses, the DSL will consider whether Family Help services, targeted support or other early intervention pathways may be beneficial for any child involved. We will ensure that we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

Where required, the school will develop and implement individual safety plans to help reduce risk, support wellbeing and enable children to continue participating safely in education. These plans will be reviewed regularly and amended in response to changing circumstances or emerging concerns.

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 (concern form) 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.

Our school also has a designated Safeguarding email address.

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 provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 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 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/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 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 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. This will be recorded on a concern form. We will ensure that details of decisions made and reasons for decisions are recorded as well as any outcomes.

We recognise the importance of timely, lawful and proportionate information sharing in safeguarding children. Where Child-on-Child Abuse concerns exist, relevant information will be shared with appropriate staff, agencies and professionals on a need-to-know basis to support the safety and welfare of children. Decisions regarding information sharing will be recorded, including the rationale for those decisions.

Where a child leaves the school or transfers to another education setting, relevant safeguarding records, risk assessments, safety plans and information relating to Child-on-Child Abuse concerns will be transferred securely and without delay in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance.

We will ensure that any safety plans are recorded (paper or electronic), shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis, and kept under regular review. Safety plans will be child-centred, proportionate to the identified risks, and developed in collaboration with children, parents/carers and relevant professionals wherever appropriate. Safety planning will consider the needs, wishes, safety and wellbeing of all children involved. Records will clearly document decisions regarding Family Help, early intervention support, referrals, outcomes and multi-agency involvement where appropriate.

Strategies for Prevention:

We recognise that preventing Child-on-Child Abuse requires more than responding to incidents. Our approach focuses on developing a culture of safety, respect and belonging, where professional curiosity is valued, children's voices are heard, difficult conversations can take place safely, and the underlying causes of harmful behaviours are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity. Our preventative approach seeks to strengthen children's protective factors, resilience, sense of belonging, emotional wellbeing, positive relationships and ability to seek help when needed.

We recognise that safeguarding is strengthened through an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture. We seek to create an environment where diversity is celebrated, differences are respected, discriminatory language and behaviour are challenged, and all children feel a sense of belonging and safety.

Our school Banks Road Infant and Nursery School 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.
    - Identification and classification of specific behaviours (such as SHSV, P/HSB) and understanding of all forms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
    - Understanding the role of an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture in safeguarding children.
    - Promoting equality, inclusion, respect and belonging through daily practice and interactions with pupils.

- Recognising and challenging discriminatory language, attitudes, stereotypes and behaviours at the earliest opportunity.
- 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.
- Recognising that harmful attitudes, discriminatory language, misogyny, misandry, bullying and sexual harassment can exist on a continuum. Staff will be trained to identify, challenge and address lower-level behaviours before they escalate into more serious concerns.
- Recognising the impact of racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of prejudice-based harm on children's wellbeing, welfare, identity and sense of safety.
- Recognising prejudice-based harm, including racism and faith-targeted abuse, as safeguarding concerns in their own right.
- Understanding the impact of discrimination on children's wellbeing, sense of belonging, mental health and feelings of safety.
- Creating psychologically safe learning environments where children feel listened to, respected and able to express their thoughts, concerns and experiences without fear of ridicule, judgement or retaliation.
- Developing staff confidence to facilitate respectful and sometimes challenging conversations about relationships, gender, consent, equality, stereotypes, prejudice, online influences and social norms in a way that promotes inclusion and critical reflection.
- Challenging sexist, misogynistic, discriminatory and harmful attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that may underpin Child-on-Child Abuse, (some of which may be criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting-up skirts. As well as those encountered online and through social media, influencers, gaming environments and other digital platforms.
- Challenging racism, faith-targeted abuse and all forms of discriminatory behaviour whenever they occur and understanding when such incidents should be managed as safeguarding concerns.
- Developing and maintaining professional curiosity, recognising that concerning behaviours may be indicators of unmet need, trauma, exploitation, abuse, harmful experiences, or wider contextual factors. Staff will be supported to look beyond the presenting behaviour and consider "what may be happening for this child?" as well as "what has happened?".
- Understanding the importance of identifying and addressing the root causes of concerning behaviour, rather than focusing solely on sanctions or consequences. Staff will consider the child's lived experiences, safeguarding history, peer influences, family circumstances, online experiences, and wider environmental factors when assessing risk and planning support.
- Understanding how Child-on-Child Abuse may be linked to wider safeguarding concerns and societal issues, including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), sexism, misogyny, harmful online influences, incel ideology, harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes.
- Recognising that early identification and challenge of sexist and misogynistic behaviours can form an important part of preventing the escalation of Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (P/HSB), Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.
- 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 lead/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.
- Understanding emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence tools, nudification applications, deepfake content and synthetic media, and their potential safeguarding implications.

- **Information for children (pupils/students)** - give specific details of when, where, and how this information is shared – this may include:
    - We actively promote a culture and ethos where children feel safe to ask questions, challenge stereotypes, discuss concerns and seek support. Children are encouraged to understand that there are no "wrong" questions when seeking help or trying to understand relationships, behaviour, safety or wellbeing.
    - We help children understand the importance of inclusion, respect and equality and encourage them to value diversity, challenge prejudice and contribute positively to the school community.
    - 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
    - We help children develop the confidence to speak up when they see or experience behaviour that causes concern, and to act as responsible and respectful bystanders / upstanders where it is safe to do so.
    - We 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.
    - We teach age-appropriate information regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety.
    - We support children to develop critical thinking skills that enable them to question stereotypes, challenge harmful social norms, assess information from online and offline sources, and recognise misinformation, manipulation and inappropriate influences.
    - We encourage respectful dialogue and discussion skills, helping children to disagree appropriately, listen to different perspectives, express their views safely and respectfully, and engage in constructive conversations about sensitive issues.
    - We provide children with an understanding of how behaviour is influenced by emotions, experiences, relationships, peer pressure, social expectations and environmental factors.
    - We support children to develop empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation and accountability for behaviour.
    - We help children to understand the impact of harmful language, discriminatory behaviour, misogyny, prejudice and stereotypes on individuals, relationships and the wider community.

- **Information for parents/carers**
    - Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the review of school policies e.g. RHSE policy
    - 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) / RSHE curriculum**
    - Through our RHE/RSHE/PSHE curriculum, we aim not only to provide knowledge but also to develop children's critical thinking, decision-making and communication skills. We create a safe and respectful learning environment where children can explore complex topics, ask questions, challenge assumptions, evaluate information, recognise harmful attitudes and understand how their choices and behaviours affect others.
    - 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 RSHE curriculum.
    - Our RHE/RSHE/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/RSHE/PSHE programme promote:
  - Healthy, respectful and kind friendships and relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Equality and raise awareness of stereotyping and prejudice
  - Understanding diversity, inclusion and belonging.
  - Challenging racism, faith-targeted abuse, discrimination and prejudice.
  - Respect for different backgrounds, cultures, faiths, beliefs and identities.
  - 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, and
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Breaches / 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.

Links with other policies:

You may find it helpful to read this Child-on-Child Abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Whole School; Child Protection Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy	Includes details about the school's behaviour system including potential sanctions for pupils
Anti-Bullying policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and vulnerable groups
Online Safety / E-Safety / Acceptable Use Policies	Includes information about children's online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Equality Policy	Includes information about our school's approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
RSHE / PSHE Policy	Includes information about our school's RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

Further information and support can be found through the following links:

- Part 5: Child-on-Child Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
- Definitions - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours -
  - Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning

- NSPCC Learning Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning

- Shore Space – Lucy Faithful Foundation, confidential service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours

THE CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.
DATE OF REVIEW BY GOVERNING BODY: November 2025 November 2026 November 2027
This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Governing Board in December 2026 Signed: Chair of Governors_____