St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
PEER ON PEER ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	**Lucy Bone**
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	**Caroline Tetchner**
Designated Teacher for looked-after or previously looked-after children	**Lucy Bone**
Governor with Safeguarding responsibility	**Brendan Drury**

Approved by[1]	
Name:	Lucy Bone
Position:	Acting Head of School
Signed:	L.Bone
Date:	10/10/2022
Review date[2]:	10/10/2023

[1] This document requires approval from either the Governing Body or Proprietor
[2] This document must be reviewed annually

REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below provides details of the earlier versions of this document and brief details of reviews and, where appropriate amendments which have been made to later versions. Schools should devise their own version history to reflect the Policy timeline.

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	May 2022
	Updated	October 2022

Contents

Appendix A – Model continuum for sexual behaviour

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POLICY STATEMENT

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age.

Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carers, legal guardians etc.

Wherever the term 'Head teacher' is used this also refers to any Manager with the equivalent responsibility for children.

Wherever the term 'school' is used this also refers to academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and references to Governing Bodies include Proprietors in academies and the Management Committees of PRUs and will usually include wrap around care provided by a setting such as Breakfast Club and After School Clubs.

2. Introduction

Peer on peer abuse left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals and their families. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Peer on peer abuse which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where our pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and those that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as 'abuse'. Bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- there is a significant difference in power (e.g. age, size, ability, development etc.) between the young people concerned;
- the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children;
- there are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause sever harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

3. Ethos

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School (hereinafter referred to as 'the school') the health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work or volunteer here. All our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school; this is enhanced by the adoption of a robust Child Protection Policy and procedures, the Whole School Behaviour Policy which includes our procedures for preventing and dealing with cases of bullying and an Online Safety Policy and procedures.

We have adopted a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection. This means involving everyone, including the governing body, the staff and other adults working in the school, the pupils and their parents.

We wish to make it clear to parents, pupils and staff that we have effective prevention measures in place to tackle peer on peer abuse including sexual abuse and sexual harassment and all other forms of peer on peer abuse. Our approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment is reflected and is part of our wider approach to safeguarding.

If an incident arises, we will deal with it robustly, quickly and appropriately. We will not tolerate any form of peer on peer abuse within our school or by association.

4.   Aims

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 states that 'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations will be dealt with along with clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse will be supported'.

Whilst it is recommended that peer on peer abuse is dealt with as part of the Child Protection Policy and procedures, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer abuse, this Policy has been formulated and is designed to be read in conjunction with the overarching principles of the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

The aim of this Policy is therefore to ensure that any form of peer on peer abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently. Consequently, when allegations are made and appropriate responses put in place, this will reduce the extent of harm to those involved and minimise the potential impact on emotional and mental health and well-being.

5.   Entitlement

We accept and embrace our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments). Each child in our school, regardless of their background or home circumstances could be the victim of peer on peer abuse. They are therefore all entitled to the same degree of protection and support. Each child in our school will also develop the skills appropriate to their age and understanding which could enable prevention of abuse by learning about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

6.   Implementation

This Policy and supporting procedures applies to all who come into contact with children in the School, including: teachers, supply teachers, learning support staff, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, admin staff, meals supervisors, caretaker, cleaners, visiting students, parent helpers/volunteers, governors and other visitors including contractors.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related school Policies and procedures including:

- Overarching Safeguarding Statement
- Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Online Safety Policy and procedures
- Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures for preventing and dealing with bullying (including cyber-bullying and the potential for radicalisation) and racism, drug misuse, positive handling, support and physical intervention etc.
- Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs Policy/Information Report
- Attendance procedures
- Missing Child procedures

7.   Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually and more often should legislation or statutory guidance change.

PROCEDURES

1.   What is peer on peer abuse

Peer on peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group of individuals which can be a one-off incident or repeated over time. Peer on peer abuse is behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms including serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, financial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups steered by a dislike for a person's:

- race;
- religion;
- gender;
- sexual orientation;
- special educational needs or disabilities;

  or where a child:

- is adopted or in care;
- has caring responsibilities;
- is suffering from a health problem;
- is frequently on the move (e.g. those from military families or the travelling community)
- is experiencing a personal or family crisis
- has actual or perceived differences, (e.g. physical or cultural differences)

These types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

There may be reports where the alleged incident is between two pupils from the same or different schools but is alleged to have taken place away from the school premises. The safeguarding principles, and the school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils remain the same regardless of where the incident took place and regardless of whether the incident was online or offline.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. We will not dismiss abusive behaviour between children as 'normal' and our thresholds for investigating claims and allegations are the same as for any other type of abuse.

Preventing violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our school's first priority but we also acknowledge that emotional abuse can be just as damaging if not more so than physical violence. We recognise that abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of abuse having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

We also acknowledge that low level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as 'banter' or 'horseplay', it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

2. Contextual Safeguarding

Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to peer on peer abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of peer on peer abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. This can be done by adopting a 'contextual safeguarding' approach and by ensuring that our response to incidents of peer on peer abuse takes into account any potential complexity.

This Policy and procedures encapsulate a contextual safeguarding approach, which:

- is an approach to safeguarding children that recognises their experiences of significant harm in extra-familial contexts and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities;
- recognises that as children enter adolescence they spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home in public environments (including on the internet) within which they may experience abuse; and
- considers interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse has occurred.

3. Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that can occur between peers and the following list is not exhaustive:

3.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

3.2 Bullying – physical, name calling, homophobic etc.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Young people who bully and those who are bullied can have long-term problems.

To be considered as bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- an imbalance of power: young people who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- repetition: bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Details of our anti-bullying strategies and procedures can be found in our Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures.

3.3 Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for cyberbullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile devices, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as outlined in 3.2 above.

Cyberbullying can fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1) which states that a person who sends electronic communications which are "indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim" would be deemed to be have committed an offence. The Communications Act 2003 (Section 127) further supports this and states that a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends 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 or if for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another he/she sends a message by means of a public electronic communications network knowing that the message is false.

If the behaviour involves the taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no option but to involve the Police to investigate these allegations.

3.4   Bullying which occurs outside the school premises

We will follow the procedures outlined in the Whole School Behaviour Policy and our disciplinary powers to address the conduct of pupils when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, off site during lunchtimes, during the evening at weekends or during the school holidays.

Where abuse outside of school is reported to the school, we will investigate and take appropriate action. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police if we believe an offence has taken place.

3.5   Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics' or 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and the image could end up anywhere. By having in their possession or distributing to others indecent images of a person under 18, many young people are not aware that they could be committing a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Any direct disclosure by a pupil (male or female) will be taken very seriously. A child 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 school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves. When an incident involving sexting comes to a school's attention we will follow the guidance as set out in the UKCCIS publication Sexting in Schools and Colleges : Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.

3.6   Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school or sports team etc. Hazing can also be used as initiation into a street or other 'gang'. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older or established members of the organisation or 'gang', because they have all experienced this as part of a 'rite of passage'. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.

3.7   Prejudiced bullying/behaviour

The term prejudiced-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices related to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

3.8   Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse can occur online and offline and is never acceptable.

3.9   Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour.

A model continuum to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children can be used when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it. This model is replicated at Appendix A.

In relation to any reports or disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children we will:

- make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and other private areas of the body.

Ultimately any decisions on how to proceed with an allegation of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be made on a case by case basis with he DSL (or deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the Police as required.

Some situations, however, are statutorily clear:

- 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;
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law; and
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (see para 3.5 – Sexting). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

4.   Managing the disclosure

Our initial response to a disclosure from a child is that the disclosure will be taken seriously. All our staff know how to complete a child concern record which is a vital part of gathering critical information from a child relating to their disclosure.

- The member of staff to whom the disclosure is made will reassure the child that they will be supported throughout and kept safe.
- Staff will never assume that someone else is dealing with the alleged incident. If in doubt, they will speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Details of the disclosure will be passed to the DSL immediately or as soon as practically possible in the form of a written record.
- The DSL will manage the concern from the member of staff, child or parent.
- The DSL will follow the school's Child Protection procedures which will ensure they gather as much information and context relating to the disclosure as possible. Where necessary, advice will be sought from the Safeguarding Hub who will advise on how to proceed with the concern.
- Other agencies such as Police and Social Care will be notified and become involved if appropriate.

4.1   Gathering the facts

It is important to gather a broad view of the facts at an early stage.

- Wherever possible, manage the disclosure and subsequent interviews of those involved with two members of staff present (preferably one being the DSL or deputy DSL).
- All those involved in the alleged incident should be spoken to individually and separately.
- Gain a statement of facts from those involved using **consistent language** and **open questions** for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the children to tell you in their own words what happened.
- Only interrupt the child to gain clarity with open questions – where, when, why, who. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene? etc.)
- Staff will not promise confidentiality at the initial stage and will inform those involved who the report will be passed on to.
- A written record will be made immediately by the person to whom the disclosure is made and passed to the DSL for action.

4.2   Considering confidentiality and anonymity

Staff will never promise confidentiality as it is likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

We will only engage staff and other agencies who are required to support the children involved or will be involved in any investigation.

If the victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. In this event, the DSL will consider the following:

- parents should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed a referral should be made to children's social care via the Safeguarding Hub;
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. The starting point is that reports should be passed to the Police.

Ultimately, it is for the DSL (or deputy) to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the decision is taken to go ahead and report the incident, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.

Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available from DfE advice 'Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' and 'NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners'.

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment and will carefully consider which staff should know about the report and any support that will be in place for the children involved.

Full consideration will also be given to the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities and the support which may be required by the victim and his/her family should this situation arise.

5.   Response to the Disclosure

It is essential that all concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly. The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on the school environment.

Any response will:

- include a thorough investigation of the concerns/allegations and the wider context in which they may have occurred (as appropriate);
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk – whilst the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and

at risk of harm themselves. We will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it.

We will take into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, and consider and address any wider contexts such as the child/children's peer group (both within and outside the school); family; the school environment; the experiences of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence;
- the changes that may need to be made to the above contexts to address the child/children's needs and to mitigate risk;
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so, the DSL should discuss the proposed action with all those involved and their parents and obtain consent to any referral before it is made, unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents will generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the Police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed.
- the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, or at risk of significant harm, a referral to the Safeguarding Hub (if the pupil is aged under 18) and/or the Police will be 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. See Child Protection procedures for additional information.

If a member of staff believes for whatever reason that 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), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay so that a course of action can be agreed.

5.1 Internal Management

Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent, the incident will be dealt with using methods set out in 5.2-5.4 below. However, where support from local agencies is not available or the incident is considered to be inappropriate or problematic, the school may need to handle allegations/concerns internally. It may be appropriate to handle the incident using the whole school behaviour policy and procedures which includes procedures to be followed in the case of bullying. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for the decisions will be recorded either in writing or electronically. The services of external specialists may be required to support the process.

5.2 Early Help Assessment

Where appropriate and necessary, the school may undertake or contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of a child/children and their family.

5.3 Referral to the Safeguarding Hub

Where a decision is made to make a referral to the Safeguarding Hub (either Section 17 or Section 47), and a strategy meeting is convened, then the school will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it.

5.4 Reporting to the Police

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police. There are, however some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police e.g. where the existence of youth produced sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors. All concerns/allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis and considering the wider context.

6. Individual risk and needs assessment

Where there is an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school will undertake a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse including the alleged perpetrator. The risk assessment will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and/or faced by the child;
- engage the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term (unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm);
- consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child involved; and
- be reviewed at regular intervals in the light of the child's on-going needs to ensure that progress is being made which benefits the child.

If at any stage the child's needs escalate, the DSL should contact the Safeguarding Hub to determine the appropriate course of action.

7. Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will help our decision-making process regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim. We will:

- consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse;
- consider the needs and wishes of the victim. The victim will be listened to and acknowledged. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is possible. Where a pupil feels able to deal with the incident on their own or with support of family and friends, the pupils will continue to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future;
- ensure that the victim will never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report;
- consider interventions that target a whole class or year group e.g. work on cyberbullying/relationship abuse etc.;
- support the child in improving peer group relationships where bullying is a factor in the abuse and consider restorative justice work with all those concerned;
- ensure that sensitive issues are explored through the use of the curriculum (PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education).

8. Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and will support our decision-making process regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator. In relation to this we will consider:

- how we will continue to provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implementing any disciplinary sanctions. If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the pupil has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case, an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all the agencies involved including the pupil and their parents.
- the age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of them being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations made against them.
- the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable)

as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviour in young children may be a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices or materials.

Advice will be sought, as appropriate, from the Safeguarding Hub, the Police and any other agencies or specialist services in order to commission the right support for the child/children concerned.

9. Sanctions

Before deciding on appropriate action, the school will always consider its duty to safeguard all children from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the peer on peer abuse and the causes of it.

Sanctions may include additional supervision of the pupil or protective strategies if the pupil feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school response might include a sanction (in accordance with the Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures) such as a detention, SLT supervision or a fixed-term exclusion to allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour.

The school will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves 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.

A permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children in the school or, where the Head teacher, in their absolute discretion, considered the actions of the pupil(s) has damaged the school's ethos or reputation.

Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer on peer abuse, and the school will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forward.

10. Whole school approach to prevention

Our school's response to peer on peer abuse will not begin at the point at which a child has been abused. We will proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address. Our school has created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to other pupils. Our school will:

- involve parents to ensure they are clear that the school does not tolerate any form of peer on- peer abuse. We will make parents aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being abused by their peer or peers. We want parents to feel confident that our school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. We will expect parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;
- involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent peer on peer abuse, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' agreements for computers and consideration of what can still be improved;
- consider how (if at all) the school's physical environment contributed to the abuse, and how this can be addressed going forward, for example by improving the school's safety, security and supervision;

- ensure that any lessons learnt are acted upon swiftly – were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the school;
- implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of peer on peer abuse will reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that abuse is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned;
- openly discuss differences between people that could motivate abuse, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. We will also include children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. We teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable;
- provide effective staff training on how to deal with peer on peer abuse. All school staff (paid and unpaid) understand the principles and purpose of the school's Policy and procedures, how to resolve and respond to problems, and where and when to seek support from others in the school;
- make it easy for pupils to report bullying of any description so that they are assured that they will be listened to and that incidents will be acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report abuse which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- create an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss their experiences of peer on peer abuse, without fear of further abuse or discrimination;
- recognise that some children with special educational needs or disabilities may lack the social or communication skills to report peer on peer abuse incidents and we ensure our training builds in regular awareness of this;
- frequently address the impact of abuse within the school and what constitutes appropriate, safe and acceptable behaviour with our children and staff.
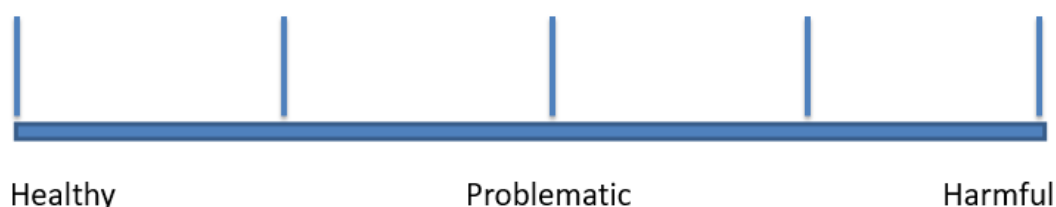
11. References

The following documents were used in the creation of this Policy and procedures and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2018 (DfE)
- Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges – May 2018 (DfE)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers – July 2018 (HM Government)
- NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners – 2015 (NSPCC)
- Working together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 (HM Government)

Model continuum for sexual behaviour

This model relates exclusively to sexual behaviour and is not exhaustive. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can also be very helpful in identifying sexual behaviours by children. Staff should always use their professional judgement and discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where an (alleged) incident involves a report of sexually harmful behaviour, staff should consult the DfE's Advice 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges : advice for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (May 2018).

	Healthy	Problematic	Harmful
1. **Type of sexual behaviour**	Age appropriate, mutual, exploratory	Not age appropriate, sexualised language, touching under clothing	Penetrative, aggressive, violent, highly coercive
2. **Context**	Open, spontaneous, playful, light hearted	No secrecy or force but other child/ren are uncomfortable	Planned, secretive, elements of threat or coercion
3. **Child's emotional response when challenged**	Embarrassed, takes responsibility, understands the impact on others	Ashamed, may struggle to accept responsibility but can show empathy / remorse	Angry, denying, aggressive – cannot take responsibility, blames others
4. **Response of other children / adults**	Engaging freely, happy, may be embarrassed	Uncomfortable but not fearful	Unhappy, distressed, frightened – possible physical injuries
5. **Relationship between the children**	Similar age / ability, would normally play together	Would not normally play together and / or one child may be more in control than the other	Clear power differences – age, size, status, gender, strength, personality, ability
6. **Frequency of the behaviour**	Ad hoc or single incidents	Intermittent but may be increasing in frequency	Frequent and disproportionate to other aspects of their life
7. **Persistence**	Behaviour is ad hoc and the child is easily diverted	Recurring behaviour and difficult to distract / deter but child is responsive	Compulsive / cannot be distracted / appears to be a means to gain comfort or attention
8. **Background information**	No known concerns	Few or some concerns about the family / other difficult behaviours	Poor attachments / previous abuse / trauma / fire setting / abuse of animals / poor peer relationships

Responses can be 'plotted' on the graph above to reach a decision across all 8 areas of behaviour