



St Mary's CE Primary School

Jesus said: 'Love One Another as I have Loved You', John 15:12

Managing Allegations of Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you."
(John 15:12)

Our Vision

As we love, we flourish
As we flourish, we aspire
As we aspire, we achieve
Together, we are a family.

Friendship, Compassion, Hope, Wisdom,
Community, Endurance.

Purpose of the policy:

At St Mary's CE Primary School, we are clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and from other pupils.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)
 - Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools (2021)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
 - Cyber Bullying Policy
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy

Definitions

The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- **'Staff' or 'members of staff'** refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, contract staff, governors and volunteers working in or on behalf of the school.
- **Child/children** refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **Child-on-child abuse** refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child-on-child abuse could include (but is not limited to):
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying).
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
 - Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse

Purpose

This policy has been written to:

- Ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse.
- Provide stakeholders with information about how St Mary's works to prevent child-on-child abuse.
- Provide stakeholders with information about how we respond to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to child-on-child abuse.
- Provide stakeholders with information about how we continue to support victims of child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Governing Body?

The governing body will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the DSL about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child-on-child abuse.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and mental health.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child-on-child abuse.

- Make referrals to Children's Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and mental health.

Role of all staff

All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of child-on-child abuse or become aware of cases of child-on-child abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on child-on-child abuse.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
- Report any concerns relating to child-on-child abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of 'sexting'. Where incidents involve sexting or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.¹

Training

- The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to child-on-child abuse.
- Staff will receive safeguarding training at least annually with additional briefings as and when needed.
- We recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all staff will be trained to understand that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

Procedures to minimise child-on-child abuse

We have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for child-on-child abuse. We do this by:

- In consultation with the School Council, all pupils are given a 'Child Friendly' child-on-child abuse policy at the start of the academic year, which has been written in a clear and concise way for pupils to understand the key messages promoted within school.
 - A safe environment is created through careful adult supervision and the establishment of a 'Peer Mediator' system whereby children can talk to an 'Anti-Bullying Ambassador' from Year 2 or 6 if they have a problem and need help sorting it out. Our 'ABA' team also run assemblies, and regularly meet with the Headteacher to discuss any issues.
 - We actively engage pupils by honest discussions in School Council and Rights Respecting meetings and also involve them in the process of developing and monitoring the school anti-bullying policy.
 - Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g., Anti-Bullying Week or links with relevant themes as a whole school curricular focus, inclusion in assembly themes when relevant).
 - Use of curriculum opportunities include: our whole school plan linking PSHE, citizenship and use of whole school assembly themes; time-tabled slot for PSHE and circle time activities in each class.
 - The school has clear School Rules which are explained each term in class and in assembly.
 - We regularly reinforce the importance of our Christian Values through school assemblies.
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- Classes have anti-bullying charters/contracts.
- There are opportunities for school leadership to discuss behaviour issues with an open and honest anti-bullying ethos. E.g., monitoring of incidents forms by SLT; reporting and monitoring of racial and hate incidents by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Governors, and close regular monitoring of behaviour on INTEGRIS and concerns recorded on MyConcern.
- Members of staff are trained to be alert to signs of child-on-child abuse and act firmly and promptly against it in line with the guidance appended to this policy. We implement CPD for lunchtime supervisors and children alike to help better develop peer support schemes and playground games.
- We actively promote 'positive contributions' both in school and in the wider community by praising children who demonstrate our Christian Values such as friendship or compassion. Certificates of recognition are given in Friday's achievements assemblies.
- We build community cohesion by celebrating and advocating fundamental British Values with respect for different cultures, difference and diversity and by making links with and engaging the wider school community in this agenda.
- We have established safer school partnerships with the local police
- Pupils are taught that St Mary's is a 'telling' school. Our children are encouraged to talk to teachers if they feel worried or frightened about anything. It is expected that all staff will take time to listen to children's fears and take them seriously.
- Parents are told that they should inform the school if they believe their child is a victim of child-on-child abuse. Parents who work or who are not able to come into school are able to contact the DSL via the school office email Office@stmarysn8.co.uk

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face child-on-child abuse than other children. We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by:

- Providing children with speech and language needs alternative ways to communicate what has happened to them.
- Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.
- We will adapt the PHSE and RSE curriculum so that all children can access it at their own level.

LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children.

The school's response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

Responding to concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse

We take child-on-child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse immediately. In conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy we will follow the procedures set out below when dealing with child-on-child abuse:

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare, act on them immediately – don't wait for a disclosure.

DO:

- Ask the child if they have been harmed and what the nature of the harm was.
- Listen and reassure them that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Reflect back, using their language.
- Be mindful that some children may face additional barriers to disclosure because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Remember that
This may be the first incident the child has reported.

Trauma can impact memory, so that the child may not be able to recall all of the details or the timeline of the abuse.

- Make a record as soon as possible, stating only the facts.
- Tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) urgently.
- Where appropriate, take action yourself:
If the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the DSL will make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team.
If an offence has been committed, report it to the police (even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10). You can confiscate devices as evidence for the police if the concern includes an online element. Find out whether the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) share classes, premises or transport and consider how to keep them a reasonable distance apart while on the premises, including both before and after school.

DO NOT:

- Dismiss the incident as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- Ask leading questions.
- Promise total confidentiality – explain who you will tell and why.
- View photos or videos of a sexual nature – if you do so by accident or think you might need to in order to deal with the issue effectively, talk to our DSL.
- Take notes while the child is talking, if possible.
- Tell anyone about the disclosure unless they need to know in order to progress it.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities.
- The impact on the victim.
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or staff.

FOUR LIKELY SCENARIOS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

1. **Manage internally**, where this is considered appropriate in the circumstances and Early Help, or statutory interventions are required.
2. **Early Help**, as outlined in [chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), where statutory interventions aren't required. The DSL will lead on this referral.
3. **Referral to children's social care / MASH team**, where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger. The DSL will lead on this referral.
4. **Report to the police** (usually in conjunction with a referral to the MASH team), where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made. Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm, which could include the use of police or court bail. The DSL will lead on this.

Where the scenario involves working with children's social care, we should not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children, the DSL or a deputy DSL will work closely with children's social care to make sure that our actions do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. There should be immediate consideration for safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and all other children.

Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, we will speak to the relevant agency to discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed.

Further information on child-on-child abuse can be found in paragraph 452 of KCSIE.

Supporting the victim

- We recognise that child-on-child abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.
- Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment because of their disclosure.
- If a victim of child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting, the DSL will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

Supporting the alleged perpetrator

- We have a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision. Options will be discussed with parents/carers and external agencies and may include:
A change of class group or cohort.
Arrangements for off-site provision if appropriate.
One to one tuition.
- We recognise that children who perpetrate child-on-child abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.
- A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.
- If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the DSL will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.
- The DSL will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of child-on-child abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies in determining the level and severity of sanction.
- Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will refer to KCSIE Part 5 for guidance.

Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by the Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership.

For further details of how the school works with partner agencies in responding to safeguarding incidents (including incidents of child-on-child abuse), please see the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Record-keeping

In line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, any incidents of child-on-child abuse will be recording on MyConcern and, if appropriate, Integris.

Risk assessments (Appendix1) will be scanned and stored on MyConcern as well as a physical copy stored in the child's white profile folder. They will be reviewed on a regularly basis. The frequency will be decided according to the severity of the incident and taking into consideration if it was isolated or part of a series of incident. The DSL will lead on writing and reviewing the document.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm.

Children will always be encouraged to speak to parents or carers about child-on-child abuse.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

The DSL will consider whether the pupil and/or the person who made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. If this is the case, it may be appropriate to make a referral to children's social care.

If we find that the report is deliberately invented or malicious, we follow up in line with our Positive Behaviour policy.

Further Resources:

Contextual Safeguarding, Child-on-child abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation:

- Contextual Safeguarding Network: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk>
- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights

Appendix 1 – Risk assessment:

AREA OF RISK	CONSIDERATIONS	CHILD 'A'	CHILD 'B'	NOTES	ACTIONS
Details of the incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How serious is the incident? Was it a crime? • Were there any other victims? [If yes, add extra columns for each other child] • Do we need to make arrangements to limit contact between the children involved, other than keeping them a reasonable distance apart on school premises including at before and after-school activities? (If the allegation relates to rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault, the answer is automatically yes) • How did the school find out about it? Was it reported directly or by someone else with knowledge of the incident? • Did the incident take place within an intimate relationship between the children? • Are there any related issues, including links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation? 				
Social risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the children share a peer group? Are people in their friend group likely to take sides? • Do they both attend your school? • Do other people know about the incident? Do those people understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who they can talk to if they have concerns about the people involved, or about their own safety and wellbeing ○ The importance of confidentiality ○ If, and how, they may need to be involved in any further investigations • Are they likely to be the subject of gossip, bullying or further harassment? • Have there been previous incidents of sexually inappropriate behaviour within their peer group(s)? • Do they risk being alienated from their friend group(s) as a result of this incident? 				

AREA OF RISK	CONSIDERATIONS	CHILD 'A'	CHILD 'B'	NOTES	ACTIONS
Physical risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they feel, or continue to feel, physically threatened by the other child? • Do you have reason to believe there is a continued risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children involved, or other pupils and staff? • Is either party at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers) • Do they share classes/break times/etc.? • Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school? How can such contact be limited? 				
Environmental risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they live in a home where violence or abuse has occurred? • Do they live in or near an area or location known to police to be high risk for sexual harassment or assault? • Are they active on social media? If so, how? Do they know how to protect themselves from online grooming? • What activities do they take part in outside of school? • Are parents clear about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How the school (and partner agencies) are handling the incident? ○ Confidentiality? ○ The conduct expected of them while an investigation is ongoing? 				

DATE	UPDATES MADE	REASONS FOR UPDATES	UPDATES MADE BY
	E.g, "Updated lunchtime arrangements"	E.g, "Feedback from Child A"	