

Date	Minute number	Signed	amendments
31/10/22			Child on Child Abuse policy updated with info from KCsIE 2022
October 2025			Updated from KCsIE 2025
September 2026			Updated KCsIE 2026



Child on Child Abuse Policy

St Oswald's fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school and beyond. We are fully committed to safeguarding our pupils through prevention, protection and support. We are also committed to actively promoting the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils are encouraged to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to live in modern Britain.

St Oswald's C.E Primary School encourages an open and inclusive learning environment where children feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying then, this is strengthened through a strong and positive PHSE curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children space to talk things through and avoid one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

At St Oswald's we have a **zero-tolerance approach** to all forms of child-on-child abuse. Abuse is **never acceptable, never inevitable, and never the victim's fault**. We recognise that child-on-child abuse is **preventable** when early indicators are identified and acted upon.

This policy reflects the requirements of the statutory *Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026*.

All staff working in St Oswald's maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' - this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy

St Oswald's recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. This forms part of our Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Equality Statement, Child Protection Policy. It is spoken about at Induction meetings and INSET Training.

The setting will take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We will respond to all reports and concerns, including those that have happened outside of the school and or online. In addition, we also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by other young people in the school, which are of a Safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, teenage relationship abuse and sexual exploitation, bullying, cyber bullying and sexting. It should be considered as a safeguarding allegation against a pupil if some of the following features are present. The allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or more vulnerable pupil.
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school.
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student.
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

What is child-on-child abuse?

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying)

- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
 - Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
 - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
 - Upskirting¹, 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
 - Initiating/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)
 - Misogyny; identifying misogynistic language and attitudes- treat misogyny as a precursor to sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- It can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour
 - Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum and different forms of abuse may overlap
 - It can affect any child/young person of any age and sex and can occur between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children
 - Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:
 - Those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
 - Young people in care
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- Those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
- Black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- There is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
- Evidence also shows that children with SEND, and LGBT+ children are at greater risk
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children/young people spend their time - home, school/college, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer
- Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

Preventing child-on-child abuse

There is a whole school approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The school will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The establishment has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life.

The school provides a safe environment, promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour, takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities. This may include targeted work with

children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

The setting deals with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via school-based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- St Oswald's C.E. Primary School behaviour policy, including bullying/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying and school/college screening, searching, and confiscating powers and how they will be used safely, and appropriately, including police strip searches
- Online safety policy
- Children who runaway or go missing
- RSE Policy and attaining the Bronze, Silver and Gold BERT Awards
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- A clear PSHE curriculum which reflects the KCSiE 2026 guidance

Systems for children to report abuse

Even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse, that certain children may have additional barriers to telling someone and children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy
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Action on concerns

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial

response to a report is very important. Members of staff will take the concerns seriously and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward.

If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases. The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the school will be treated just as seriously as that which has occurred within the education environment.

Concerns are reported on 'My Concern' there is an example 'Evidence gathering' proforma at the end of this Policy.

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns and follow the process outlined in Section 6. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare.

Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- What are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- What is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember there may be other forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmfully sexual behaviours been displayed?
- What is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this e.g. coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same school/college, classes, or transport?
- What are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning

difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?

- Is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- Are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others e.g. other children in school/college, adult students, school/college staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration is given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. Careful consideration is given to how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises (including any before or after school activities)

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as local authority children's social care and the police as required.

The designated safeguarding lead will refer to relevant assessment tools and guidance as appropriate such as:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#),
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#)
- [DDSCP Thresholds Document](#)
- [DDSCP Safeguarding Children Procedures](#), in particular Children who present a risk of harm to others and Online Safety and Internet Abuse procedures
- [When to call the police - guidance for schools and colleges](#)

Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the designated safeguarding lead

and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- Whether there have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator/s
- All the other children (and if appropriate adult students and staff) at the school/college, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s, or from future harms
- The time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- When information can be disclosed to staff and others, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

Whenever local authority children's social care and/or the police are involved, we work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/child protection file on My Concern. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment and plans recorded in writing.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via early help (emerging needs) or through local authority children's social care (complex/serious needs or child protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the Derby and Derbyshire multi-agency safeguarding [procedures](#), in particular [Children who Present a Risk of Harm to Others](#) and [Online Safety and Internet Abuse](#) procedures.

All risk and needs assessment and action plans whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

We use the Contextual Safeguarding School [Beyond Referrals](#) Self-Assessment Toolkit & Guidance to self-assess our response to harmful sexual behaviour.(as outlined in KCSiE25) All relevant policies will be updated to reflect the lessons learnt and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur.

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another education setting, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the new provider will be made aware of any on-going support needs (and will discuss this with the victim and where appropriate their parents, as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the safeguarding/child protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse another child (or adult) or where there are concerns about any other form of abuse, a referral must be made immediately to local authority children's social care and where appropriate, the police

Review Date

This Policy will be reviewed annually in line with KCSiE Documentation and the Child Protection Policy



**Evidence Gathering
Child on Child Abuse**

Name of Victim

D.O.B/Age

Name of Alleged Perpetrator

D.O.B/Age

Where did the incident/s take place?

(if the incident was in an open, visible place it may have been observed and more information can be gathered. If the incident did not take place in an open visible place then the school must consider if more supervision is required within this particular area.)

Witness/es

Explanation account of the incident; (go onto separate sheets if necessary)

Victim Account

Perpetrator Account

Witness Account

Name of person collecting information and role

Designated Safeguarding lead consulted ;

Yes

No (if no why not)

Social Services/Starting Point Contacted

Yes

No (of no why not)

Next Course of Action;

Informing Parents; (if social care are not going to be involved then the school will share the information with the parents and child together (depending on the child's age)

Support for the Victim;

Refer for counselling	
Nurture group/positive play support	
1:1 support within school	
Support in improving peer groups/relationships with other children.	
Support via the SMSC curriculum	
Support via PSHE Curriculum	
Risk assessment required	

Next steps for the child who displayed harmful behaviour

Refer for counselling	
Early Help referral via Social Care	
Consequences via the behaviour policy (this could be internal exclusion, the young person reflecting on their actions or an full exclusion following the policy)	
Nurture group/positive play support	
1:1 support within school	
Support via the SMSC curriculum	
Support via PSHE Curriculum	
Risk assessment required	