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Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy (Child on Child Abuse)

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Contents:

1. Legislative Background and Context
2. Statement of Intent
3. Definitions
4. Responsibilities
5. Education
6. Training
7. Awareness
8. Support available if a child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or at risk of harm
9. Reporting
10. Managing Disclosures
11. Confidentiality
12. Anonymity
13. Risk assessment
14. Taking action following a disclosure
15. Managing the Report
16. Managing Internally
17. Providing Early Help
18. Referring to Children's Social Care
19. Reporting to Police
20. Ongoing Support for the Victim
21. Ongoing Support for the Alleged Perpetrator
22. Shared Classes
23. Working with Parents and Carers
24. Safeguarding Other Children
25. Monitoring and Review
26. Links

1. Legislative Background and Context

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

Legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

Key Documents:

- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Department for Education: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Everyone's Invited
- Department for Education: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings working with Young People
- Ofsted: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Department for Education: Teaching Online Safety in Schools
- Department for Education: Working together to safeguard children
- Report Harmful Content: Laws about harmful behaviours

In March 2021 it was discovered that the Everyone's Invited website was holding "testimonials" about incidents that occurred in over 3000 schools in the UK. This highlighted a wide range of abuse scenarios involving children abusing other children. As a result, the Education Secretary requested a rapid review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges in England. Ofsted published their findings in June 2021. This led to a series of recommendations for schools, multi-agency partners and government.

Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook states that:

"leaders ensure that their school's culture addresses harmful sexual behaviour. Inspectors will expect schools to assume that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence are happening in the community, and potentially in the school, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them."

"Schools should have appropriate and well-communicated school-wide policies in place that make it clear that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) are unacceptable."

Ofsted will:

- Request that college leaders supply records and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to inspectors. The Independent Schools Inspectorate will also specifically request schools to provide the same records upon notification of inspection, in addition to its current practice.
- Speak with groups of pupils, where this helps them to better understand a school or college's approach to tackling sexual harassment and violence, including online.
- Feed this part of the inspection into a judgement of safeguarding and leadership and management. If a school's processes are not adequate, Ofsted is likely to judge both their safeguarding practices and leadership and management as inadequate.

2. Statement of Intent

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to any harmful sexual behaviour involving children and acknowledge that it could be occurring at Dovecotes Primary School and in our school community.

The school is proactive in its approach to assessing prevalence, responding to incidents and challenging and changing behaviour. This policy applies to all governors, staff and pupils.

Schools have a statutory duty to safeguarding the children in their setting. We work together to foster an environment that creates healthy relationships for children and young people.

Our whole-school approach encourages healthy relationships and works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. We provide high quality education within the curriculum to reduce the likelihood of the situations occurring.

We recognise that Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is harmful to both the child/children affected by the behaviours and the child/children who displayed the behaviour and provide ongoing support for all involved.

Our approach is to treat everything as a safeguarding incident in the first instance - we distinguish between behaviours that are exploratory and part of healthy age and ability appropriate development and those that may be harmful.

As a school we provide regular opportunities for school staff to understand what harmful sexual behaviours might look like and what they should do in the event of a report.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Online safety
- Acceptable Use Agreements

3. Definitions

3.1 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

As stated in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the term Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) covers a wide range of behaviours. Often these may be considered problematic, abusive, or violent and may also be developmentally inappropriate. HSB can occur online, offline or in a blend of both environments.

Whilst child on child harassment has become a widely recognised term, this is already moving towards child on child in recognition that age and development is a factor in making decisions about behaviour.

A significant age difference between the children involved in an incident may lead to a decision about the behaviour being harmful or not. For example, this could be an older child's behaviour towards a pre-pubescent child, or a younger child's behaviour towards an older child with learning difficulties.

It is important that Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) know what is and is not HSB. DSLs should be involved in planning the curriculum for HSB, planning preventative actions and ensuring a whole-schools culture that condones HSB, alongside all other forms of abuse and harassment. This template policy provides a basis for an effective approach to managing sexual violence and harassment.

3.2 Sexual Harassment

Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance 2022 and the Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges state:

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence.
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content
 - upskirting (this is a criminal offence)
 - sexualised online bullying
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

It is important that schools consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

3.3 Sexual Violence

The following are sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE- Schools and colleges should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. All victims should be taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and it is imperative that they are offered appropriate support.

When considering whether behaviour is harmful, take into account the ages and stages of development of the children.

The Brooks sexual behaviours traffic light tool can help with making decisions about whether sexual behaviour is harmful or a natural part of healthy development and no cause for concern.

- [Brook traffic light tool](#)

3.4 Child

This guidance article refers to anyone under the age of 18 as a 'child'

3.4 Alleged perpetrator

For the purposes of this guidance, 'alleged perpetrator', and where appropriate 'perpetrator', is used to describe a child accused of carrying out sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. It is important to note that any alleged perpetrator is entitled to, and deserves, a different level of support to that which might be provided to an adult alleged to have abused a child.

3.5 Victim

For the purposes of this guidance, the term 'victim' is used to describe children who have been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment; however, when using the term in a school, school staff should be conscious of the fact that some children may not consider themselves a victim and may not wish to be described this way.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads

Our leaders, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) have ultimate responsibility in dealing with all incidents of harmful sexual behaviour, including online. It is the expectation that all incidents of harmful sexual behaviour/sexual violence and harassment are reported in line with school safeguarding and child protection procedures.

We ensure that our designated safeguarding lead/s (DSL/DDSLs) and their deputies are confident in school safeguarding processes and when it is necessary to escalate. Our DSLs/DDSLs know what local and national specialist support is available to support all children involved in harmful sexual behaviour and are confident as to how to access this support when required.

Designated safeguarding lead/s and their deputies have an in-depth working knowledge of key documentation, particularly KCSIE 2022 and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE 2021). We ensure that they receive appropriate specialist training, commensurate with their role and that ongoing training is provided for all school staff.

It is the role of school leaders and designated safeguarding leads to ensure that all staff and Governors receive training specific to harmful sexual behaviour, and that it is included as part of induction.

4.2 Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to have read and understood this policy and associated policies.

All staff must report any incidents or suspected incidents of harmful sexual behaviour to DSLs in line with school policy and ensure they are informed of the outcome.

All staff will challenge any harmful sexual language or inappropriate behaviour.

Staff have a duty to ensure that the school environment is one which is safe and which supports learners to understand safe and healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour through delivery of our curriculum.

4.3 Governors

We ensure that our governing body have a good understanding of what harmful sexual behaviour is, when it can pose a risk to children and how to keep children safe.

Our governors receive regular training and updates, both in terms of what sexualised behaviour is, but also how to effectively support establishments and their stakeholders whilst holding provision to account.

As part of the headteacher's report, our governing body has the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the approach to harmful sexual behaviour to ensure it is adequate and effective. This might include evaluation of the curriculum, pupil voice activity and evaluation of parent/carer engagement.

Governors ensure that risks relating to these issues are identified, that reporting routes are available, and that risks are effectively mitigated.

4.4 Pupils

All pupils have the right to learn in a safe, healthy and respectful school environment. Our pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and are taught about healthy relationships and know how and when to report and that a range of different reporting routes are available to them.

Our pupils are encouraged to report any harmful sexual behaviour, even if they are not directly involved. All learners will be believed if they make a disclosure and will be treated sensitively - whilst we cannot guarantee confidentiality, their thoughts and wishes will be taken into account when supporting them.

4.5 Parents/Carers

We work hard to engage parents and carers by:

- regular in school sessions
- sharing newsletters
- sharing information online e.g., website, social media
- providing curriculum information

Our parents and carers are made aware of how and when to report any concerns to the school, that all incidents will be handled with care and sensitivity, and that it may sometimes be necessary to involve other agencies.

4.6 Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that, nationally, vulnerable pupils are three times more likely to be at risk from Harmful Sexual Behaviour. These include:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities.
- A child living with domestic abuse.
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm.
- A child who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of exploited (CRE, CSE),
- A care experienced child.
- A child who goes missing or is missing education.
- Children who identify as, or are perceived as, LGBTQI+ and/or any of the other protected characteristics

Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. We ensure that any vulnerable pupil is offered appropriate support, both within and outside school, sometimes via specialist agencies.

5. Education

Our school's educational approach seeks to develop knowledge and understanding of healthy, problematic and sexually harmful behaviours, and empowers young people to make healthy, informed decisions. Our school's approach is delivered predominantly through PSHE and RSE and additional opportunities are provided through:

- Cross curricular programmes (e.g. using the [ProjectEVOLVE](#) resources)
- Computing
- Assemblies

Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- a. Healthy relationships
- b. Respectful behaviour
- c. Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- d. Body confidence and self-esteem
- e. Prejudiced behaviour
- f. That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong

Pupils will be taught how to raise and report concerns, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

6. Training

It is effective safeguarding practice for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) to have a good understanding of HSB. This could form part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in planning preventative education, implementing preventative measures, drafting and implementing an effective child protection policy and incorporating the approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment into the whole school approach to safeguarding.

A clear training strategy supports staff to respond effectively to different types of harassment and sexual misconduct incidents. This should involve an assessment of the training needs of all staff. This strategy should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Training should be made available on an ongoing basis for all staff and pupils to raise awareness of harassment and sexual misconduct with the purpose of preventing incidents and encouraging reporting where they do occur.

7. Awareness

All staff are aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

All staff are aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including sexting, hazing, upskirting etc.

All staff are aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil’s SEND and will always explore indicators further. Additional barriers to recognising abuse in children with SEND include:

- Assuming that indicators of abuse, such as mood and behaviour, relate to the child’s disability.
- Children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by bullying and harassment without showing any outward signs.
- Communication barriers.

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

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

8. Support Available if a Child Has Been Harmed, is in Immediate Danger or at Risk of Harm

If a child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children’s Social Care.

Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report includes such an act, the Police will be notified, often as a natural progression of making a referral to Children’s Social Care. The DSL and DDSs are aware of the local process for referrals to both Children’s Services and the Police.

Online concerns can be especially complicated. The school recognises that there is potential for an online incident to extend further than the local community.

Staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child. If they are made aware of such an image, they will contact the DSL or DDSs.

9. Reporting

Our systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children and young people to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. All reports will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively and outcomes shared where appropriate.

We also respond to anonymous reports, or reports made by third parties. This can be done via the online worry box which is on the school website.

10. Managing Disclosures

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic and sexually harmful behaviour. (HSB)

Our response is always based on sound safeguarding principles and follows school safeguarding processes. It is calm, considered and appropriate and puts the child at the centre of all decisions made.

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

If a friend of a victim makes a report, or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will take action – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of Children's Social Care where necessary. If staff are in any doubt, they will speak to the DSL or DDSLs.

Where an alleged incident took place away from the school or online, but involved pupils from the school, the school's duty to safeguard pupils remains the same.

All staff will be trained to handle disclosures. Effective safeguarding practice includes:

- Never promising confidentiality at the initial stage.
- Only sharing the report with those necessary for its progression.
- Explaining to the victim what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- Recognising that the person the child chose to disclose the information to is in a position of trust.
- Being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Not asking leading questions and only prompting the child with open questions.
- Waiting until the end of the disclosure to immediately write a thorough summary. If notes must be taken during the disclosure, it is important to still remain engaged and not appear distracted.
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them – not the opinions of the note taker.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching, screening and confiscation advice and UKCCIS sexting advice.
- Wherever possible, managing disclosures with two staff members present (preferably with the DSL or DDSLs as one of the staff members).
- Informing the DSL or DDSLs as soon as possible after the disclosure if they were not involved in the disclosure.

The school will always adopt a multi-agency approach and seek external support and guidance, in line with school policy, if deemed necessary. This may include: MASH, Early Help, CAMHS, Police etc.

11. Confidentiality

The school will only engage staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school cannot make this promise. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if

it protects children from harm.

The DSL and DDSs will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- a. Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk.
- b. If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care
- c. Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police.

The DSL and DDSs will weigh the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and others. If a referral is made against the victim's wishes, it will be done so extremely carefully and the reasons for referral will be explained to the victim. Appropriate specialist support will always be offered.

12. Anonymity

There are legal requirements for anonymity where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system. The school will do all it can to protect the anonymity of children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. It will carefully consider, based on the nature of the report, which staff will be informed and what support will be in place for the children involved.

When deciding on the steps to take, the school will consider the role of social media in potentially exposing victims' identities and facilitating the spread of rumours.

13. Risk Assessment

The school may deem it necessary to complete a harmful sexual behaviour risk assessment as part of the response to any reported incidents.

Risk assessments will consider:

- The victim.
- The alleged perpetrator.
- Other children at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to protect and support **all those involved** by identifying potential risk, both in and out of school (e.g. including public transport, after school clubs etc) and by clearly describing the strategies put in place to mitigate such risk.

The risk assessment will be completed following a meeting with all professionals working with the pupil, as well as parents or carers. Where appropriate, the pupils involved will also be asked to contribute.

The risk assessment will be shared with all staff who work with the pupil, as well as parents and carers. It will be dynamic and will respond to any changes in behaviour and will be regularly evaluated to assess impact.

Risk assessments will be recorded electronically on the school's CPOMS system.

14. Taking Action Following a Disclosure

The DSL or DDSLs will decide the school's initial response, taking into consideration:

- a. The victim's wishes.
- b. The nature of the incident.
- c. The ages and developmental stages of the children involved.
- d. Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
- e. Any ongoing risks.
- f. Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a child's life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
- g. The best interests of the child.
- h. That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other children involved. For reports of rape and assault by penetration, whilst the school establishes the facts, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes shared with the victim.

The school will consider how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart.

These actions will not be seen as a judgement of guilt on the alleged perpetrator.

For reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and the suitability of shared classes, will be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report will be carefully evaluated and the wishes of the victim, nature of the allegations and requirement to protect all children will be taken into consideration.

15. Managing the Report

There are four likely outcomes when managing reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- a. Managing internally
- b. Providing Early Help
- c. Referring to Children's Social Care
- d. Reporting to the Police

Whatever outcome is chosen, it will be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussion, decisions and reasons behind decisions will be recorded electronically on the school's CPOMS system.

The following situations are statutorily clear and do not allow for contrary decisions:

- e. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity.
- f. The age of consent is 16.
- g. Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.
- h. Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law.
- i. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of children under 18 is illegal – including children making and sending images and videos of themselves.

16. Managing Internally

In some cases, e.g. one-off incidents, the school may decide to handle the incident internally through behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.

17. Providing Early Help

The school may decide that statutory interventions are not required, but that pupils may benefit from Early Help – providing support as soon as a problem emerges. This approach can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

18. Referring to Children's Social Care

If a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care. Parents will be informed, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so (if referral will place the victim at risk). This decision will be made in consultation with Children's Social Care.

The school will not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children.

The DSL or DDSLs will work closely with Children's Social Care to ensure that the school's actions do not jeopardise any investigation. Any related risk assessment will be used to inform all decisions.

If Children's Social Care decide that a statutory investigation is not appropriate, the school will consider referring the incident again if they believe the child to be in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

If the school agrees with the decision made by Children's Social Care, they will consider the use of other support mechanisms such as early help, pastoral support and specialist support.

19. Reporting to Police

Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault will be passed on to the Police – even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10 years of age. Generally, this will be in parallel with referral to Children's Social Care. The DSL or DDSLs will follow the local process for referral.

Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Where parents are not informed, it is essential for the school to support the child with any decision they take, in unison with Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

The DSL, DDSLs and governing board will agree what information will be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

In some cases, it may become clear that the Police will not take further action, for whatever reason. In these circumstances, the school will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

The school will work with Children's Social Care and the police to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children (especially witnesses) during criminal investigations. The school will seek advice from the Police to ensure they meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

20. Ongoing Support for the Victim

Any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- a. The terminology the school uses to describe the victim
- b. The age and developmental stage of the victim
- c. The needs and wishes of the victim
- d. Whether the victim wishes to continue in their normal routine
- e. The victim will not be made to feel ashamed about making a report
- f. What a proportionate response looks like.

Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately and they may be more comfortable talking about the incident on a piecemeal basis; therefore, a dialogue will be kept open and the victim can choose to appoint a designated trusted adult.

Victims may struggle in a normal classroom environment. Whilst it is important not to isolate the victim, the victim may wish to be withdrawn from lessons and activities at times. This will only happen when the victim wants it to and the school will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw to where they feel safe.

Victims may require support for a long period of time and the school will be prepared to offer long-term support in liaison with relevant agencies.

Everything possible will be done to prevent the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.

If the victim is unable to remain in the school, alternative provision or a move to another school will be considered – this will only be considered at the request of the victim and following discussion with their parents.

If the victim does move to another school, the DSL or DDSs will inform the school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

21. Ongoing Support for the Alleged Perpetrator

When considering the support required for an alleged perpetrator, the school will take into account:

- a. The terminology they use to describe the alleged perpetrator or perpetrator.
- b. The balance of safeguarding the victim and providing the alleged perpetrator with education and support.
- c. The reasons why the alleged perpetrator may have abused the victim – and the support necessary.
- d. Their age and developmental stage.
- e. What a proportionate response looks like.
- f. Whether the behaviour is a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and/or materials.

When making a decision, advice will be taken from Children's Social Care, specialist sexual violence services and the Police as appropriate.

If the alleged perpetrator moves to another school (for any reason), the DSL or DDSs will inform the destination school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

The school will work with professionals as required to understand why the abuse took place and provide a high level of support to help the pupil understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of them abusing again.

22. Shared Classes

Once the DSL or DDSLs have decided to progress a report, they will again consider whether the victim and alleged perpetrator will be separated in classes, on school premises and on the journey home – balancing the school's duty to educate against its duty to safeguard. The best interests of the pupil will always come first.

Where there is a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from classes with the victim and potential contact on school premises and the journey home will be prevented.

Where a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, this will constitute a serious breach of discipline and result in the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the school would harm the education or welfare of the victim and potentially other pupils.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school will consider suitable sanctions and permanent exclusion. If the perpetrator will remain at the school, the school will keep the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and manage potential contact on school premises and the journey home. The nature of the conviction or caution, alongside the wishes of the victim, will inform any discussions made.

Where a report of sexual assault does not lead to a police investigation, this does not mean that the offence did not happen or that the victim has lied. Both the victim and alleged perpetrator will be affected and appropriate support will be provided. Considerations regarding sharing classes and potential contact will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In all cases, the school will record its decisions and be able to justify them. The needs and wishes of the victim will always be at the heart of the process.

23. Working with Parents and Carers

In most sexual violence cases, the school will work with the parents of both the victim and alleged perpetrator. For cases of sexual harassment, these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The school will meet the victim's parents with the victim present to discuss the arrangements being put in place to safeguard the victim, and to understand their wishes in terms of support arrangements and the progression of the report.

Schools will also meet with the parents of the alleged perpetrator to discuss arrangements that will impact their child, such as moving them out of classes with the victim. Reasons behind decisions will be explained and the support being made available will be discussed. The DSL or DDSLs will attend such meetings, with agencies invited as necessary.

Clear policies regarding how the school will handle reports of sexual violence and how victims and alleged perpetrators will be supported will be made available to parents.

24. Safeguarding Other Children

Children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration, will be provided with support.

The school will do everything in its power to protect the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses from bullying and harassment.

The school will keep in mind that contact may be made between the victim and alleged perpetrator and that harassment from friends of both parties could take place via social media and do everything in its power to prevent such activity.

As part of the school's risk assessment following a report, transport arrangements will be considered, as it is a potentially vulnerable place for both a victim and alleged perpetrator. Schools will consider any additional support that can be put in place.

25. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the DSL in conjunction with the governing board.

Any changes made to the policy will be amended by Miss Tracy Challenor and will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is date October 2026.

26. Links

Child Exploitation and Online Protection command: [CEOP](#) is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report made to one of its Child Protection Advisors

- Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can be found here: <https://www.brook.org.uk/training/wider-professional-training/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>
- The [NSPCC](#) provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies)
- Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as [Rape Crisis](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#)
- The [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) has developed guidance for schools about Sexual and sexist bullying.
- The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#): If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
- [Childline/IWF Report Remove](#) is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online
- [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice](#): Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).

- [Thinkuknow](#) from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online
- [Lucy Faithful Foundation](#)
- [Marie Collins Foundation](#)
- [NSPCC National Clinical and Assessment Service](#) (NCATS)

[Project deSHAME from Childnet](#) provides useful research, advice and resources regarding online sexual harassment.