PROSPER TOGETHER

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Child on Child Abuse Policy

Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children.

Approved by Full Trust Board – 16/09/2026

Date – September 2026

Reviewed by – N. Reilly, Trust Safeguarding Lead

Review date – September 2027

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children

School: Fordbridge Community Primary School

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction alongside our Staff Code of Conduct.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - Keeping Children Safe in Education - GOV.UK
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges
- Behaviour in Schools
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed in full by Prosper Together Multi Academy Trust Board on an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Trust Board on 16th September 2026 and is due for review on 2nd September 2027.

Signed: Carol Phillips, Safeguarding Trustee, on behalf of Trust Board

Signed: Natalie Reilly, Trust Safeguarding Lead

Signed: Selina Timmins, Chief Executive Officer

School details reviewed:

Signed: Natalie Reilly, Trust Safeguarding Lead

Signed: Chair of Local Advisory Board or Local Advisory Board Safeguarding Link Governor

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Prosper Together Multi Academy Trust (the 'Trust') refers to all the Trust member schools and the central team.

1. Purpose of the Policy

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Prosper Together Multi Academy Trust and the school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity on what is meant by child on child abuse in all its forms.
- Understand the culture within our setting.
- Evidence how ALL staff support the children in our setting.
- Give children confidence that they will be supported and informed.
- Give parents/carers the assurance that staff know how to deal with this abuse.
- Evidence how our safeguarding staff handle reports/concerns/disclosures.
- Inform of the post incident management process/ongoing support/safety planning.

In addition to this policy, the Trust and school has other policies that support this and that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Links to all policies are available on the school website.

2. Our Staff

ALL staff at the school:

- Recognise the increasing national concern regarding this issue as highlighted in KCSIE 2026.
- Are aware of the level and nature of risk that our pupils are or may be exposed to.
- Understand the important role that they play in the culture of vigilance.
- Recognise child on child abuse of all types.
- Are confident and competent in responding promptly and appropriately with timely challenge of the attitudes and behaviours of child-on-child abuse (both inside and outside the classroom).
- Listen to children, capture their voice, and help to create a culture in which our children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment.

- Will not downplay behaviours and dismiss them as ‘just banter’, ‘having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’.
- Understand that by dismissing unacceptable behaviours it can lead to an unsafe environment for children and, in worst case scenarios, a **culture** that **normalises** abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not having the confidence to come forward, speak out and report what has happened to them.
- Report and record their concerns following our safeguarding referral processes.
- Understand that even if there are no reports of this type of abuse that it ‘does happen here’.
- Are committed to a whole setting, whole staff approach, to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our setting and beyond.
- Recognise and understand that children who harm others, may have additional or complex needs of their own, e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse, witnessing/ suffering abuse as well as educational under-achievement and possibly an involvement in criminal activity and therefore they too, will need support.
- Encourage parents to communicate with us so that we can work together to ensure and enable a prompt and appropriate response to any type of child on child abuse.
- Know that putting a stop to child-on-child abuse of any type and ensuring the safety of our children is a priority in our education setting.
- Regard the introduction of this policy as a positive, proactive, and preventative measure.

Within the Trust we work hard to create a culture where child on child abuse does not happen. We strive to create an ethos of mutually respectful behaviour. However, if this type of abuse is seen, heard or reported **ALL** staff are confident in their actions and subsequent support.

Any concerns are shared in person and via the online CPOMS reporting tool.

3. Our Children

ALL children are at risk of child on child abuse, but some groups are more vulnerable than others to abuse and include the following:

- 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 being exploited, criminally/sexually.
- A looked after child.
- A child who goes missing from school/home or is missing education.
- Children who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQI+.

Research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, sexual violence and/or sexual

harassment. They often are exploited into gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in those gangs. However, we are aware that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as anti-social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited/entrapped into gangs and subject to violence because of gang culture.

Prosper Together Multi Academy Trust encourage children to talk to us and tell us when they are worried and what they are worried about, be it about themselves or another child. We are confident that our children know:

- who to speak to and/or where to go for support;
- that they will be listened to, taken seriously and not dismissed;
- that they will receive the right help at the right time;
- that they will receive ongoing support;
- that they will be supported to feel safe in school; and
- that they will be supported to continue to access their education.

We also inform our children that there are other ways to report abuse if they are worried about themselves or other children and for whatever reason don't feel that they can speak to staff in school. For example:

NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

The school has a detailed and structured PSHE curriculum which helps the children to build knowledge about how to keep themselves safe year on year. Dedicated circle time allows discussion to take place in class that reflect our school values and help children to make good choices. School assemblies are themed around our values and how to keep our children happy and safe.

4. Child on Child Abuse – What Is It?

Child on child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse using coercion/power and/or control by an individual child or group of children and is exercised between children and within their relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

All staff in our school recognise that children can abuse their peers and are aware of the different forms that these safeguarding issues take:

- Bullying-emotional/physical so repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically (hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm).
- Online/Cyber bullying.
- Prejudiced relating bullying.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour. **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)** refers to sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful to themselves or others, or may be abusive towards another child. Harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, ranging from inappropriate sexual language and unwanted touching through to sexual assault and rape. The school will consider the age,

developmental stage, context and nature of the behaviour when assessing concerns and determining an appropriate response. [farrer.co.uk], [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk].

    - The school recognises that harmful sexual behaviour can occur both online and offline. It can be an isolated incident or part of a pattern of behaviour. Harmful sexual behaviour may be influenced by a range of factors, including exposure to inappropriate content, trauma, social influences, discriminatory attitudes and unhealthy relationship norms. All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

- Sexting sharing of nude or indecent (youth produced sexual imagery).
- Abuse in intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Hate crime.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Gang association and serious violence - County Lines.
- Radicalisation.

Child-on-child abuse may be motivated by prejudice or discrimination, including racism, faith-based prejudice, disability discrimination, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, misogyny or other forms of discriminatory behaviour.

The school recognises that misogynistic attitudes and behaviours can contribute to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence and will challenge these behaviours through safeguarding procedures, education and the curriculum.

We will record all instances of Child on Child Abuse and inform parents/carers of such incidents.

4.1. Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is **repeated**, or has the potential to be repeated over time. Children and young people who are bullied and/or who bully others may have serious and lasting problems.

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

- An imbalance of power such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. These imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition as these behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- Actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason, e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Any behaviours that may need to be handled with sanctions will be in line with our policies relating to:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Links to all policies are available on our school website.

4.2. Online Bullying

Online bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e- mail, chat rooms, etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It can take many forms and this list is not exhaustive:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails, or messages.
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites.
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else.
- Stealing someone's online identity.
- Spreading rumours online.
- Trolling - sending menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chat rooms or games.
- Developing hate sites about another person.
- Prank calls or messages.
- Group bullying or exclusion online.
- Anonymous messaging.
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm.
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations.

4.3. Prejudice-Based Harm

Prejudice-based harm refers to behaviour, language, attitudes or actions directed towards an individual or group because of an actual or perceived characteristic. This may include racism, faith-based prejudice, disability discrimination, sexism, misogyny, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, or other discriminatory behaviour. Prejudice-based harm can occur online or offline and may constitute child-on-child abuse where it causes physical, emotional or psychological harm. The school will not tolerate prejudice-based behaviour and will respond to all incidents in line with safeguarding, behaviour and equality procedures.

4.4. Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB)

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and SHB can occur between two children of any age and sex or with groups of children by sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any setting where pupils are together and that the impact of this behaviour on children can be extremely distressing, impacting on their emotional health and wellbeing as well as affecting their academic achievement.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment **must** be referred **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DSL): Natalie Reilly (DSL), Linda Lockley (DDSL) and Hayley Berry (DDSL).

4.4.1. Sexual Violence

For this policy we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- 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.

4.4.2. Sexual Harassment

For this policy we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. We refer to this 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 deliberating brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (both often referred to as sexting); sexualised online bullying and inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

4.4.3. Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB)

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

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards. It may include:

- Inappropriate sexual language.
- Inappropriate role play.
- Sexual touching.
- Sexual assault/abuse.

4.4.4. Consent

Consent is when someone **agrees by choice** and has the **freedom** and **capacity** to make that choice. It is important to note that:

- 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.

4.5. Sexting

Sexting is the sharing of nude or indecent imagery (youth produced sexual imagery). The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. These images may have been because of upskirting.

4.6. Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team, etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony 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 members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

4.7. Teenage Relationship Abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is 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. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

4.8. Hate Crime

In this policy, Hate Crime is defined as an incident that is motivated because of a person's actual or perceived race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. They can happen anywhere, home, school and in the community and can be frightening for both victim and witnesses and is an offence. Hate crimes can include:

- Physical attacks - physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson.
- Threat of attack - offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints.

Verbal abuse or insults - harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures, and remarks, bullying and threats.

5. Indicators That a Child May Be Suffering from Child on Child Abuse

Indicators and signs that a child may be suffering from peer-on-peer abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse and can include:

- Failing to attend school, disengaging from classes, or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected.
- Physical injuries.
- Experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing. The school recognises that child-on-child abuse can have significant short and long-term impacts on a child's mental health, emotional wellbeing, attendance and attainment. Appropriate support will be provided for victims and other affected children.
- Becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much.
- Broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse.
- Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age.
- Abusive behaviour towards others.

Abuse affects our children and their presenting behaviours in different ways and the list above is not exhaustive. Children who present with one or more of these signs are not necessarily victims of abuse and their behaviour will depend on their individual circumstances.

ALL staff are alert to behaviour that may cause concern and think about what the behaviour might signify. We actively encourage children to share with us any underlying reasons for their behaviour, and, where appropriate, to engage with their parents/carers so that the

cause(s) of their behaviour can be investigated and understood with the appropriate support in place.

6. Responding to a Concern/Incident/Disclosure of Child on Child Abuse

Child on Child abuse may occur in our education setting, on the way to or from our setting or out in the community. Consideration will be given to many aspects of the abuse and here are a few examples:

- Does it involve a single incident or has occurred over time?
- Is the behaviour problematic and concerning?
- Does it involve any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination, e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability?
- Is there any element of coercion or pre-planning?
- Does it involve a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power?
- Has there been a misuse of power?

It is also important that we:

- Ascertain if there were there any witnesses to the abuse.
- Make notes and record ALL conversations with children spoken to as well as parents/carers/other professionals, including any actions taken.
- Treat all children involved as being at potential risk - while 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 be at risk of harm themselves.
- Ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both victim and alleged perpetrator.

Consideration should also be given to supporting children who have witnessed child on child abuse of any kind. This is likely to be traumatic and support may be required. We will signpost to agencies and support services available where needed.

We will do all that we can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed following this. Social media is likely to play a part in the fall out from any incident and friends from either side could well harass the victim or alleged perpetrator online as well as face to face. Any evidence we have of students using social media or inappropriately will be sanctioned according to our existing policies.

7. Responding to All Reports and Concern of Sexual Violence and/or Sexual Harassment Between Children

We have covered in this section what we do when responding to child on child abuse concerns/disclosures and these **all** apply to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children disclosures; however, we recognise complexity and challenges that we face following the report of this particular type of abuse.

Guidance is clear in that it does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every particular case; it provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process and on a case by case basis.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSLs) will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse using their professional judgement and working together practices. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure and it is important to maintain a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

We understand that it is not easy for children to tell us about this type of abuse and they may struggle to make a direct verbal report. Therefore, observations of changes in presenting behaviours is key. See Point 5 above.

We understand the importance of our initial response to a report and how this can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment. The culture in our setting is key to this.

On occasions the victim may not wish for their identity to be known and there are no easy or definitive answers when this is requested. If the victim does not give consent to share information, we 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.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The victim(s) should 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 - we will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the students involved.
- The developmental stages of the students involved.
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. Is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?).
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature).
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff.
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation.

When we talk about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children, we will refer to ‘victim’ and ‘alleged perpetrator’. This does not mean that we are taking sides nor making any judgement, but for the purpose of this policy we will refer to children involved in this way.

Victim - When we speak to the 'victim' we will:

- Listen and take any disclosure seriously.
- Never make them feel that they are creating a problem or be ashamed.
- Reassure them that they will be kept safe.
- Handle the situation with sensitivity.
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child.
- Ask open questions and not lead the victim.
- Ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight 'hot spots' or vulnerable locations in our setting or within the community which may need to be revisited by either ourselves (in school) or by alerting police/partners if it is in the community.
- Ascertain if other children witnessed this abuse.
- Consider ongoing support within our setting.
- Consider any referrals for external support.

Parents or carers of the victim will be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk). Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes and the DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children within the school setting. If we do decide to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will in most cases be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered. We will also consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- That the victim(s) should 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. (We will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children).
- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the students involved.
- The developmental stages of the students involved.
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?).
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature).
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff?

- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation.

We will give all the necessary support for the victim to remain in school; however, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

Alleged perpetrator - When we speak to the 'alleged perpetrator' we will:

- Listen to what they say and not dismiss their account.
- Handle the situation with sensitivity and a non-judgemental approach.
- Offer ongoing support.
- Record all conversations and all action taken.
- Consider any referrals for external support, e.g. Youth Offending Service/Catch 22.

When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a decision that will be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations.

There are four likely scenarios we will need to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

a) **Manage internally** - In some cases of sexual harassment (for example, one-off incidents), we may take the view that the students concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally using our own sanctions in line with our school behaviour policy and by providing pastoral intervention and support.

b) **Early Help** - We may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help where we are the lead professional. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. This will help to evidence the support that we have given, the work undertaken and if desired outcomes have been achieved.

c) **Referral to the police** - See Section 8 below.

d) **Referral to Solihull Safeguarding** - See Section 9 below.

8. Reporting to the Police

At the school we understand our responsibilities to call the Police and reporting forms of Child on Child abuse. This does not mean that we are looking to criminalise children, and this may not always be necessary.

The guidance that we follow is:

- when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf

- Outcome 21 Sexting Guidance

In any form of Child on Child abuse where it is believed that an offence has been committed, a report may be made to the Police.

Where a report has been made to the police, we will consult with the police and agree what information is appropriate to disclose to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

This may also include the development of a clear and robust safety and support plan as part of this early help process. However, as you will see further on in this policy, risk assessing and safety planning is a key aspect of all child on child abuse (see Post Incident Management - Section 12).

With regard to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, where there is a report of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is that this should be passed to the police who will advise and log according to their own guidelines.

9. Referring to Solihull MASH (Safeguarding)

In all cases of child on child abuse, but in particular with sexual violence and sexual harassment, consideration will be given to the reporting of the matter to Solihull MASH. In making this decision, we must consider whether a child is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide that a statutory intervention is not appropriate and, in these circumstances, we will consider other support mechanisms, such as early help, specialist support/referrals and pastoral support within a formalised plan. We will consider starting an Early Help process where we are the lead professional.

However, if the DSL/DDSL feels that the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm, they may refer again. The threshold document will help and support our decision making:

- sscp-threshold-document-published-03.03.2025-.pdf

At this referral stage, we will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision will be made with the support of children's social care.

If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. This collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children requiring support.

We will not wait for the outcome, or even the start of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for us to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

10. Working with Our Parents and Carers

At the school we will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of child on child abuse including sexual or sexual harassment. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information provided to the respective parents or carers about other children involved and when to do so.

In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view on this aspect, and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

It should be the case that we will meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed (see Post Incident Management - Section 12).

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education.

We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed including any referrals, if appropriate.

We realise that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided on the school website and at the end of the policy.

11. Sanctions

We will decide appropriate sanctions on a case by case basis in line with our Behaviour Policy and any graduated response required. As already mentioned in this Policy, it may be that other children in our setting start to 'take sides' and become involved and may behave in ways that cause upset and distress to other children.

We will take their behaviour seriously and again use a graduated response to this, whilst also educating them the importance of resolving any conflict in a respectful and restorative way.

If there is police involvement, we will work closely with them to ensure that any disciplinary action taken by us, as a result of the incident, does not jeopardise the police investigation.

12. Post Incident Management

It is vital that all children involved in child on child abuse are given appropriate and ongoing support for as long as it is required/needed. This may include referrals to other agencies/professionals outside our setting and this decision will be made in conjunction with the children, their parents/carers, and other professionals.

If there are other professionals involved, then we will liaise with those colleagues to ensure that we are working together and understand one another's role in this support.

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. However, we will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before

protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator, and other children in the school and moving forward with our post incident management.

Support planning is vital, and it is it is imperative that following any incident the children involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they tell us that they are coping and managing. Sometimes feelings of embarrassment, remorse, regret, or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage. We will do our best to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) will happen as part of this plan.

Referrals may have already happened as mentioned previously in this policy, but it is important to establish which professionals continue to work with ALL children involved in this process and this is helped with robust planning.

Safety planning/Risk assessment is integral to post incident management and this is an invaluable and necessary process (see **Annex B**). It is one of our key priorities as part of the post incident management. When looking at this process, consideration should be given to the following:

- If this is an ongoing police investigation, we will ask the police if we have any questions about the progress of the matter for example, are there any bail conditions in place or has there been a charging decision. It is key to have a central point of contact with the police for updates and progress. Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us to manage our safeguarding responsibilities. Where bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, as above, we will work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard our children.
- The importance in ensuring that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education.
- The importance of the alleged perpetrator in continuing to access education and support.
- Do the victim and alleged perpetrator share classes?
- What measures need to be put in place when children move between lessons/classes?
- What measures need to be put in place for unstructured time (break and lunchtimes)?
- What measures need to be put in pace for the arrival at the start of the school day and leaving at the end of the school day?
- Do the victim and alleged perpetrator travel to and from school using the same form of transport?
- Appropriate information sharing with staff in our setting in order that the plan is manageable and as successful as possible.
- If it is the case that the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs.

Following incidents of child-on-child abuse, the school will undertake appropriate safeguarding risk assessments and implement support and protection plans where necessary. In all cases, we will record our decision making together with the rationale behind those decisions. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of all that we do as part of this process (supported by parents and carers as required). Our safety plan/risk assessment will be kept under review.

13. Approval and Version Control Record

Document Revision Date

Version	Date	Revision Reason
1	September 2024	Annual review.
1.1	September 2025	Annual review.
1.2	September 2026	Annual review updated in line with KCSIE 2026, and amendments to formatting (e.g. additional sub-headings) for clarity.

Approval

Date	Approved by
October 2024	Full Trust Board (01/10/2024)
September 2025	Full Trust Board (23/09/2025)
September 2026	Full Trust Board (16/09/2026)

Annex A – Additional Support and Guidance

- Keeping children safe in education: Part one
- Working together to safeguard children 2026
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK
- Children missing education
- CEOP-Safety centre
- Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes
- Preventing and responding to sexual and sexist bullying
- Preventing bullying
- Cyberbullying advice
- Equality & Human Rights Commission
- The NSPCC email help@nspcc.org.uk
- Specialist Sexual Violence Rape Crisis
- The UK safer internet centre email at helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
- Think u know

Annex B – Risk Assessment/Safety Planning Guidance

Basic Information

Referrer name and role	
Referrer contact details (email address and phone number)	
Name of school(s) for victim(s)	
Name of school(s) for child/ren alleged to have caused harm	
Did incident occur on school premises? If now, where did the incident occur?	
Date for risk assessment/safety plan review	

Considerations	Risk (Consider victim, child alleged to have caused harm, other pupils and staff)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low)	Actions to Reduce Risk	Revised Risk Level (High, Medium or Low)
What is the incident?				
Who was involved?				
Where did it happen?				

Does this incident constitute a crime? Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing of indecent images of children, etc. etc. As such has this been referred to the police?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSIE.				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the child alleged to have caused harm to the victim and/or others?				
Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm at risk of physical harm because of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?				
Do they share any classes/lessons?				
Do they share break times?				
Do they share peer/friendship groups?				

Do they share transport to/from school?				
Are they likely to meet each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?				
How can this contact be limited?				
Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

Further action taken by the school: please complete for each child involved.

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services (specify)		
Referral to internal support services (specify)		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services (specify)		
Referral to internal support services (specify)		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		