



Child on Child Abuse Policy

Review Date: September 2025

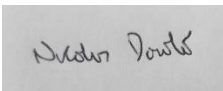
Next review Date: September 2026

Adopted by the Governing Body on: 22nd Sept 2025

Review

The governing body reviews this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

VERIFICATION CERTIFICATE

Document Title:	Child on Child Abuse Policy
Issue:	4 (previous issues not numbered)
Reviewer:	Ceri Baggus
Position:	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Signature:	C. Baggus
Date:	9/9/25
Approver: (on behalf of the Governing Body)	Nicolas Dowler
Position:	Chair of Governors
Signature:	
Date:	22/09/25

DOCUMENT ISSUE/AMENDMENT HISTORY

(previous versions not numbered nor amendments noted)

Issue	Date	Amendment
1	4.10.22	Policy reviewed and updated for full governor ratification
2	10.9.23	Policy reviewed and updated for full governor ratification.
3	10.9.24	Policy reviewed and updated for full governor ratification
4	9.9.25	Policy reviewed and updated for full governor ratification – any updates are highlighted.

Please read this policy alongside our school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, School Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy, Online Safety policy and other relevant policies.

Introduction

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 states that *'All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing children, at any age. All staff should be clear about their school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child on child abuse.'*

The document also states it is most important to ensure opportunities of seeking the voice of the child are heard, *'Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.'*

At Cirencester Primary School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Purpose and Aim

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in several ways which would be classified as child on child abuse. The purpose of this policy is to explore the many forms of child on child abuse and include a planned and supportive response to the issues.

At Cirencester Primary School we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 and 2004 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document that focuses adult thinking towards the views of the child is Working Together, 2023, *'A child-centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. All practitioners should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. These Acts make clear that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.'* (Working Together, 2023:12) This is clearly echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Introduction to abuse and harmful behaviour

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

We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken. Physical abuse may include an online element that facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse or violence.

Sexually violence and sexual harrassment e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

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 well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse. Sexual abuse may include an online element that facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual abuse or violence. Please see Part 5 of KCSiE25 for more examples and explanation.

Bullying (physical or verbal)

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. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

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

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

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Further details on bullying can be found in the CPS policy entitled 'Anti Bullying and Hate Policy'.

Prejudiced and discriminatory Bullying

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

Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.

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

Gender-based violence

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) affects millions of children, families and communities. It involves acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated because of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics.

SRGBV has very real consequences in learners' lives, ranging from low self-esteem and depression, to early and unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. This violence also has a serious impact on educational outcomes, with many students avoiding school, achieving below their potential, or dropping out completely.

Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. 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.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes or semi-nudes images and/or videos (sexting)

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

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

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. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Initiation/Hazing

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

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

Prevention in the curriculum

- The school recognises the importance of developing pupils' awareness of behaviour that is unacceptable towards them and others, and how they can help keep themselves and others safe.
- We use a Life Skills programme *in each key stage* which provides personal development opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, pupils are taught to:
 - Safely explore their own and others' attitudes
 - Treat others with respect and what may constitute not doing this; including anti-bullying, cyberbullying, avoiding prejudices against others for differences in lifestyles and views
 - How to be safe in relationships with others
 - Recognise and manage risks in different situations and how to behave responsibly
 - Judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable
 - Recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being and develop effective ways of resisting pressure; including knowing when and where to get help
 - Use assertiveness techniques to resist unwanted pressure
 - Understand what constitutes a healthy and safe lifestyle, including drugs education
 - Be safe when on the internet
- Pupils' mental health and mindfulness is an ongoing priority for the school to develop further and the curriculum supports this by dedicating Life Skills sessions to it.
- Online Safety is taught throughout the year in all year groups and the progression within this area has been carefully mapped out by the Computing Lead.
- Additional events to promote a Safeguarding culture within school and further improve pupils' knowledge are organised such as NSPCC assemblies and workshops, Safer Internet Day, In the Net drama performances and Online safety assemblies.
- Our School Council members hold a Class Assembly each week to discuss important issues relevant to pupils' lives today. Topics included will be bullying, cyber-bullying and prejudice behaviours. This will further strengthen our pupils' understanding of the importance of reflecting on how someone else's actions may make them feel and therefore how they should treat others.

Reporting abuse

At Cirencester Primary School our aim is to provide pupils with a safe environment where they feel confident to report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Pupils are able to report abuse to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.

Expected action taken from all staff

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

It is important to deal with a situation of child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon after the

child(ren) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example; do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

In all cases of child on child abuse it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to young people and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use **consistent language** and **open questions** for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?)

Ensure that there is an accurate, written record of all of these conversations.

Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess)

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). If this is the case, once social care has been contacted and decided on what will happen next then you will be informed on your next steps.

If social care and the police intend to pursue this further they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case you may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, you may then be left to inform parents.

Informing parents

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care you have agreement to inform parents or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then you need to inform the parents as soon as possible. If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent or even with them (they may be scared to tell parents that they are being harmed in any way). Where school can evidence they are acting in the best interests of the young person they would not be criticised, however this would be the case if they actively breached the rights and choices of the young person.

The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Points to consider:

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, 1-4 year olds who are learning

toileting skills may show an interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked if other issues arise (see following)

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children's Services Social Care.

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case, it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

In this circumstance, it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support, such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an Early Help referral and the

young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment therefore such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important 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). In which case, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.