St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026

Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children

This policy is on our school website and available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy through our school newsletter.

The policy is provided to all staff annually or at induction, alongside our Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. This policy is read alongside the guidance included in:

Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026

Adopted as draft under consultation: 2nd September 2026

Reviewed & agreed by Governing body: 8th October 2026

Review By: October 2027

Signatures of Governors recorded on Governor Hub

St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School
Child on Child Abuse Policy

School Ethos & Vision:

The child's welfare is of paramount importance; we are a child centred school.
We aim to inspire a strong sense of faith and commitment to uphold our core Christian values and British values. We work hard to inspire a love of learning so our pupils can achieve their full potential.

We expect our children to live by our **school motto:**

Everyone is Valued	Everyone is Motivated	Everyone Achieves

In addition, our core values form the bedrock of our work on attitudes and behaviour. Staff and children formulated these and we expect all stakeholders to support/promote them.

Our Core Christian Values:

Respect	Equality	Co-operation
Compassion	Forgiveness	Peace

We aim to achieve excellent behaviour and positive relationships by embedding our values through worship, PSRHE sessions, circle time and across the curriculum. Our staff and children use these values to inform their relationships and to promote high standards of behaviour and attitudes.

Index

Section	Title	Page
1	Purpose of the policy	4
2	Our staff	4-6
3	Our children	6-7
4	Child-on-child abuse - What is it?	7-12
5	Indicators that a child may be suffering from child-on-child abuse	12-13
6	Responding to a concern/incident/disclosure of child-on-child abuse	13-14
7	Action following a report of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence	14-17
8	Reporting to the Police	17
9	Referring to Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support	18
10	Working with our parents/carers	18-19
11	Sanctions	19
12	Post incident management	19-21
Appendices		
Additional support & guidance		21
Appendix A	Risk assessments/safety plans	23-26
Appendix B	Part 5 Child-on-Child Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment Flowchart	27
Appendix C	Hackett's Continuum Model	28
Appendix D	NSPCC	29

1. Purpose of the Policy

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, we have other policies that support this and that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

Anti-Bullying/Safeguarding/Whistleblowing Policy/Behaviour Policy/Health and Safety Policy/Online Safety Policy/PSRHE Policy

2. Our staff

ALL staff at **St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School:**

- recognise the increasing national concern regarding this issue as highlighted in the Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 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, we believe that it 'is happening within our school community'**
- 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

At **St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School,** 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.

Our school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment.

Everyone has a responsibility to **act without delay** to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused or neglected. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The school seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are susceptible or in need. **We have a strong, whole school zero-tolerance approach to abuse.**

St. Margaret's will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise, respond to and understand that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

- At St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School, we have a robust Safeguarding training schedule for all staff, which is monitored by the DSL. All staff receive Level 1 Safeguarding training, as required in KCSIE 2026 and receive regular updates through staff meetings, briefings, emails etc. to develop and support robust safeguarding practices amongst all staff. Key staff undertake further training e.g. DSL Level 4 and Safer Recruitment. The DSL holds weekly staff briefings to keep staff up to date and to deliver training and refreshers on all areas of KCSIE throughout the year.
- The school has **clear induction processes** for all staff, volunteers and Governors, and all required documents and policies are provided both at induction of new staff, and on a yearly refresh basis for current staff.
- Documents for staff and new inductees include Part 1, KCSIE 2026 – staff sign a log, acknowledging that they have read it and understand what this means to them in their daily practice. They also complete LGfl online KCSIE quizzes. This is informed by

weekly staff briefings, staff code of conduct, behaviour policy, responding to children who may be missing from education, the role of the DSL, the Safeguarding Policy as well as child-on-child abuse and child on child sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour.

3. Our children

ALL children are at risk of child-on-child abuse, but some groups are more susceptible 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 who is absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions
- Children who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQI+
  (The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as susceptible as children who identify as LGBT. These risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for these children to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff).

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 know 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.

At **St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School,** we encourage our 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
- that they will be supported to continue to access their education

We reassure all child(ren) who have been harmed that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. Child(ren) who have been harmed will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a child(ren) who have been harmed ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We will ensure that we explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids causing alarm or distress.

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.
Get Support | Childline

Posters are displayed in each classroom in addition to a whole school display signposting children to the NSPCC.

As part of our PSRHE and computing curriculum, alongside our worship, we educate children in an age-appropriate way about child-on-child abuse in all its forms which open up topics such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships, including consent
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong and addressing cultures of sexual harassment

and through assemblies including:

- NSPCC PANTS
- Safer Internet Day
- Anti-Bullying worship and anti-bullying Day & Week
- Mental Health Week/Mental Health Awareness week/#HelloYellow

Pupils are also empowered and have a voice through:

- school council and other pupil representative groups
- well-being ambassadors
- classroom worry pads
- check ins with staff
- well-being clubs
- ELSA

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 setting 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
- Sexually Harmful behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence
- 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

This abuse can be motivated by perceived differences. e.g., on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexualorientation, disability or other differences and result in significant, long lasting, and traumatic isolation, intimidation, and/or violence to thechild(ren) who have been harmed.

We will record all instances of child-on-child abuse and inform parents /carers of such incidents.

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 asphysical 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-

Behaviour Policy/Anti-bullying Policy/Safeguarding Policy/Online Safety Policy

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 socialnetworks, 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.

Prejudiced 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 is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society, e.g. disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life (for example in relation to issues ofcare, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

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

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

The KCSIE 2026 guidance is clear that "children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent." 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 Harassment and Sexual Violence **must** be referred **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) 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

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

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.

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

Sexting - the sharing of nude or indecent imagery (youth produced sexual imagery)

KCSIE 2026 requires schools to take "a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual." Taking and sharing nude photographs including those generated using AI of those aged under 18 is a criminal offence.

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.

Online incidents of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence

Online incidents of HSB, sexual harassment and sexual violence can be complex, often involving widespread abuse or harm on multiple social media platforms and repeated victimisation.

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.

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.

Hate Crime

Hate crimes happen because of race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability. They can happen anywhere, home, school and in the community and can be frightening for both child(ren) who have been harmed 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 child-on-child 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
- 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.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. **This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL/DDSL** if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

6. Responding to a concern/incident/disclosure of child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse may occur in our school, on the way to or from school 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 child(ren) who have been harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed and alleged child(ren) who have harmed

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 child(ren) who have been harmed and alleged child(ren) who have harmed, 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 child(ren) who have been harmed or alleged child(ren) who have harmed 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 harassment and/or between sexual violence children.

We have covered at point 6 what we do when responding to child-on-child abuse concerns/disclosures and these **all** apply to sexual harassment and sexual violence between children's disclosures; however, we recognise the 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 (DDSL) will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse using their professional judgement and working together practices. Reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence 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 are 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 child(ren) who have been harmed by sexual harassment and sexual violence. The culture in our setting is key to this.

On occasions the child(ren) who have been harmed may not wish for their identity to be known and there are no easy or definitive answers when this is requested. If the child(ren) who have been harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed in terms of how they want to proceed
- The child(ren) who have been harmed(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 child(ren) who have harmed significantly older? Does the child(ren) who have been harmed 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 harassment and sexual violence can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- Whether there are ongoing risks to the child(ren) who have been harmed, 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 Harassment and Sexual Violence between children, we will refer to 'child(ren) who have been harmed' and 'alleged child(ren) who have harmed'. 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.

Child(ren) who have been harmed - When we speak to the 'child(ren) who have been harmed' 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 child(ren) who have been harmed
- ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight 'hot spots or susceptible 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 child(ren) who have been harmed will be informed (unless this would put the child(ren) who have been harmed at greater risk). Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes and the DSL will have to balance the child(ren) who have been harmed's wishes against their duty to protect the child(ren) who have been harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will in most cases be explained to the child(ren) who have been harmed and appropriate specialist support offered. We will also consider the following:

- The wishes of the child(ren) who have been harmed in terms of how they want to proceed
- That the child(ren) who have been harmed(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 child(ren) who have harmed significantly older? Does the child(ren) who have been harmed 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 harassment and sexual violence can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- Are there ongoing risks to the child(ren) who have been harmed, 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 child(ren) who have been harmed to remain in school; however, if the trauma results in the child(ren) who have been harmed being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school or college will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the child(ren) who have been harmed (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

Alleged child(ren) who have harmed - When we speak to the 'alleged child(ren) who have harmed' 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 child(ren) who have harmed 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 child(ren) who have harmed will be informed of the allegations.

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

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 behaviour/anti-bullying policies and by providing pastoral intervention and support.
b) Universal services and community based Early Help assessment - 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) Referrals to Family Help - including targeted Early Help and local authority children's social care.' This draws on the new Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide and explains that Family Help encompasses both targeted early help and support delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including parenting support, mental health services, youth offending teams and housing and employment services.
d) Referral to the police - See Section 8 below
e) Referral to the police - See Section 9 below

8. Reporting to the Police

At **St. Margaret's C.E. Junior 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)

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 child(ren) who have harmed and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the child(ren) who have been harmed 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 and needs assessing, and safety planning is a key aspect of all child-on-child abuse (see Post Incident Management section 12).

Regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence 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 Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support

In all cases of child-on-child abuse, but in particular with sexual harassment and sexual violence, consideration will be given to the reporting of the matter to Children's Social Care via Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support service on 0300 111 8007. 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.

Threshold Framework: Accessing the right help at the right time

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 child(ren) who have been harmed

and, where appropriate, the alleged child(ren) who have harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed 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 **St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School,** we will, in most instances, engage with both the child(ren) who have been harmed and the alleged child(ren) who have harmed parents or carers when there has been a report of child-on-child abuse including sexual harassment and/or violence. 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 child(ren) who have been harmed parents or carers with the child(ren) who have been harmed present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the child(ren) who have been harmed and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed. (See Post Incident Management-Point 12)

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged child(ren) who have harmed parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged child(ren) who have harmed, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the child(ren) who have been harmed and what this means for their education.

We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged child(ren) who have harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed 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 previously mentioned, it may be that other children in our setting start to 'take sides' and become involved and may behave in ways that can 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 sanctions taken by us, because 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 child(ren) who have been harmed, alleged child(ren) who have harmed, 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 they 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 and Needs assessment

Integral to post incident management is robust safety planning/risk and needs assessment and this is an invaluable and necessary process. 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 child(ren) who have been harmed can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education
- the importance of the alleged child(ren) who have harmed in continuing to access education/support
- do the child(ren) who have been harmed and alleged child(ren) who have harmed 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 child(ren) who have been harmed and alleged child(ren) who have harmed 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 child(ren) who have harmed 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.

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 child(ren) who have been harmed at the heart of all that we do as part of this process (supported by parents and carers as required). Our safety plan/risk and needs assessment will be kept under review.

Additional support and guidance

- Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026
- Working together to safeguard children 2026
- csa centre of expertise
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Staffsscb-Responding to Sexting Guidance
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units
- Children missing education
- CEOP-Safety centre
- Disrespect NoBody – Safe4Me
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes
- Searching, screening and confiscation
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Preventing sexual bullying
- Preventing bullying
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes
- London Grid for Learning 'Undressed' guidance
- 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

Staffordshire County Council

ST. MARGARET'S C.E. JUNIOR SCHOOL

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Appendix A

Risk and Needs Assessment/Safety planning guidance

Basic information		
Referrer Name and role		
Referrer Contact details (email address and phone number)		
Name of school(s) for child(ren) who have been harmed(s)		
Name of school(s) for child/ren alleged to have caused harm		
Did incident occur on school premises? If not, where did the incident occur?		
Date for risk assessment/safety plan review		

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER CHILD(REN) WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED, 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 and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.				
• Is there an actual or perceived threat from the child alleged to have caused harm to the child(ren) who have been harmed and/or others?				

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER CHILD(REN) WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED, 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)
• Is either the child(ren) who have been harmed 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?				

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER CHILD(REN) WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED, 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)
• Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

Further action taken by the school or college:

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		

Staffordshire County Council

St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Appendix B

*PART FIVE: CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

REPORT RECEIVED
(from the victim or third-party)
[Onsite, offsite or online]

Definitions

Sexual Violence
Rape
Assault by penetration
Sexual assault

Sexual Harassment
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual remarks, sexual taunts, physical behaviour or online sexual harassment

Victim reassured
taken seriously and kept safe; and never be given an impression they are creating a problem
confidentiality not promised
listen to victim, non-judgementally
record the disclosure (facts as reported)
two staff present (one being the DSL, or reported to DSL as soon as possible)
victim sensitively informed about referral to other agencies
even without consent to share, staff may share information if a legal basis under UK GDPR applies, such as the public task basis, which allows sharing to fulfil a legal duty (see 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' paragraph 561)
parents of victim informed, unless this would put victim at greater risk.
Anonymity
Note that in cases of sexual violence there is legal protection of the victim's identity. Remember that this also includes sharing on social media and discussion amongst pupils in the school.

Record-keeping
Remember, to record all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions.

Considerations
(Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviours)
Immediately: Consider how to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator
- wishes of the victim
- nature of the alleged incident
- ages of the children
- development stage of the child
- any power imbalance
- one-off, or part of a pattern of behaviour
- any ongoing risks to victim or others
- other related issues and wider context (eg. CSE)

MANAGE INTERNALLY
One-off incidents which the school believes that the child(ren) are not in need of early help or statutory intervention, which would be appropriate to deal with internally under the school's behaviour policy or anti-bullying policy.

Managing internally and community based Early Help are not mutually exclusive (paragraph 582).

COMMUNITY BASED EARLY HELP
Non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviours
(see Harmful Sexual Behaviours Framework (NSPCC))

REFER TO FAMILY HELP
Targeted Early Help or local authority children's social care
All incidents where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

Family Help staff will decide next steps. Be ready to escalate if necessary.

REFER TO POLICE
All incidents of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault. (incl. if perpetrator is under 10)
Discuss next steps with police, for example, disclosing information to other staff, informing alleged perpetrator and their parents.

RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Immediately

Do not wait for outcome of referral before protecting victim.

Emphasis on victim being able to continue normal routines.

Alleged perpetrator removed from any classes with victim (also consider shared spaces and journey to/from school)
[Not a judgement of guilt]

RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT
For incidents of sexual violence there should always be an immediate risk and needs assessment; for incidents of sexual harassment this will be on a case-by-case basis.
(for further details see 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' paragraphs 568 - 570 (DfE, 2026))

SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
Safeguarding and supporting the victim - paragraph 622
Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s) - paragraph 632)

SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see separate page)

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(see school's Behaviour Policy/Anti-bullying Policy)

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(may be undertaken based on balance of probabilities, unless prejudicial or unreasonable)

Ensure actions do not jeopardise the investigation
School to work closely with police and/or other agencies

CRIMINAL PROCESS ENDS
- **Conviction or Caution:** follow behaviour policy, consider Permanent Exclusion. If pupil remains in school, make clear expectations; keep victim and perpetrator apart. Consider victim's wishes.
- **Not Guilty:** Support victim and alleged perpetrator
- **No Further Action:** Support victim and alleged perpetrator

26 Andrew Hall | www.safeguardingtoschools.co.uk

Appendix C

Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Problematic and concerning behaviours • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May include levels of compulsivity	• Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim • May include elements of expressive violence	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/ or sexually arousing to the perpetrator • Sadism

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf

Staffordshire County Council

ST. MARGARET'S C.E. JUNIOR SCHOOL

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Appendix D

Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

It's important to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviours from those that may be problematic or harmful, and make sure children get appropriate support. Always consider the child's holistic needs and safeguarding concerns alongside any sexualised behaviour and follow due procedures accordingly. This guide is a tool to support objective decision making about a child or young person's sexual behaviour and does not replace professional judgement or policy and legislation. Visit **nspcc.org.uk/hsb** for more information.

Need advice?

Contact our helpline for advice and support:

- Call **0808 800 5000**
- Email **help@nspcc.org.uk**
- Visit **nspcc.org.uk/helpline**

Childline

For children who need further support our free, confidential helpline is available 24/7:

- Call **0800 1111**
- Visit **childline.org.uk**

Developmentally typical	Problematic		Harmful	
Hackett Continuum				
Normal	**Inappropriate**	**Problematic**	**Abusive**	**Violent**
• Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour • Consensual, mutual and reciprocal • Decision making is shared	• Single instances of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour • Behaviour that may be socially acceptable within a peer group but not in wider society • May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal	• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour • May be compulsive • Consent may be unclear and the behaviour may not be reciprocal • May involve an imbalance of power • Doesn't have an overt element of victimisation	• Intrusive behaviour • May involve a misuse of power • May have an element of victimisation • May use coercion and force • May include elements of expressive violence • Informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely)	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator • May involve sadism
How to respond • Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response • Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally • Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours • Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse • Signpost helpful resources like our 'Talk PANTS' activity pack: nspcc.org.uk/pants • Make sure young people know how to behave responsibly and safely	**How to respond** • Amber behaviours should not be ignored • Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally • Consider the child's developmental age as well as their chronological age, alongside wider holistic needs and safeguarding concerns about the problematic sexualised behaviour • Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection • Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who can be notified and will provide support • Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate		**How to respond** • Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action • If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999 • Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection • Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who should be notified and will provide support • Typically referrals to children's social care and the police would be required. Referrals to therapeutic services should only be made once statutory services have been informed and followed due procedures	

NSPCC Learning

In partnership with

Durham University

NHS Supported by Health Education England

© National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 2021. Registered charity England and Wales 216401. Scotland SC037717. Jersey 384