



## Orsett Heath Academy



**SOUTH WEST ESSEX**  
COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRUST

Policy Name	<b>Child-on-Child Abuse Policy</b>
Written by	<b>Ms S Rawson. Head of School</b>
Document Status	Live
Superseded Version	September 2022
Date Approved	September 2023
To be Reviewed by	September 2024 <i>or following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures</i>

## Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Legal framework
3. Aims
4. Definitions
5. Types of child-on-child abuse
6. A whole school approach to tackling child-on-child abuse
7. Protecting pupils with increased vulnerability to child-on-child abuse
8. Channels for pupils to report abuse
9. Responding to alleged incidents
10. Options to manage an allegation
11. Support for those affected
12. Physical abuse
13. Online behavior
14. Prevention
15. Multi-agency working
16. Monitoring and review

## 1) Introduction

Orsett Heath Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil, both inside and outside of the school premises, and is aware that abuse against children can be inflicted by other children. We implement a whole-school preventative approach to managing child-on-child abuse, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

It will be achieved by:

- Creating a culture of mutual respect amongst all pupils.
- Teaching pupils about behaviour that is acceptable and unacceptable.
- Identifying and making provision for any pupil that has been subject to abuse.
- Ensuring that members of the governing board, the headteacher and staff members understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child-on-child abuse, and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear and easy to understand for staff, pupils and parents.

The DSL is Mr L Taylor. In the absence of the DSL, child protection matters will be dealt with by Miss S McGrane, deputy DSL.

## 2) Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2018) 'Information sharing'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- National Police Chief's Council (2020) 'When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

### 3) Aims

The policy will:

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing child on child abuse.
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved -
  - acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community;
  - understanding that Child on Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing. Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

### 4) Definitions

“Child-on-child abuse” is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as any form of abuse inflicted by one child or a group of children, i.e. individuals under the age of 18, against another child or group of children. This policy covers child-on-child abuse both inside and outside of school and both in person and online.

“Harmful sexual behaviour” is defined as any sexual behaviour which:

- Does not observe and respect any individuals on the receiving end of the behaviour, e.g. touching someone without their consent.
- Is inappropriate for the age or stage of development of the pupil.
- Is problematic, abusive or violent.
- May cause developmental damage.

Please note: Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or face-to-face, and can also occur simultaneously between the two.

### 5) Types of child-on-child abuse

Staff will familiarise themselves with the forms that child-on-child abuse can take, including but not limited to:

#### Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, throwing, burning, drowning and poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to another child.

#### Sexual abuse

A form of abuse involving sexual activity between children – sexual abuse, for the purposes of this policy, is divided into two categories: sexual violence and sexual harassment.

**“Sexual violence”** encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, i.e. non-consensual sexual touching, and causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent, e.g. forcing someone to touch themselves sexually.

**“Sexual harassment”** refers to any sexual behaviour that could violate another child’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment, including:

- Sexualised jokes, taunting or comments.
- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone.
- Online sexual harassment, including:
  - Upskirting.
  - Sexualised online bullying.
  - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
  - Sexual threats or coercion.

The **“sharing of sexualised imagery”** can also constitute sexual harassment – this refers to the consensual and non-consensual sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including that which depicts:

- Another child posing nude or semi-nude.
- Another child touching themselves in a sexual way.
- Any sexual activity involving another child.
- Someone hurting another child sexually.

Staff will be aware that children creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of other children is a criminal offence, even where the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed with the permission of the child depicted, or by the child themselves. Incidents of sharing sexualised imagery will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Bullying**

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

Bullying will generally be handled in line with the Anti-bullying Policy; however, particularly severe instances will be handled in line with this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Online abuse**

This involves the use of technology and the internet in order to harass, threaten or intimidate another child. Instances of online abuse will be managed in line with this policy, the Online Safety Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy.

### **Discriminatory behaviour**

Discriminatory behaviour encompasses abuse inflicted on a pupil because of their protected characteristics, e.g. religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or any SEND. Discriminatory behaviour is never acceptable, and all cases will be handled in line with this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, schools will not tolerate unlawful discrimination against pupils because of any protected characteristics they may have.

### **Intimate partner abuse**

This involves a romantic partnership between children in which one or both partners are emotionally, physically or sexually abusive to the other (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'). This could include:

- Repetitive insults.
- Controlling behaviour, e.g. preventing a child from socialising with others or deliberately isolating them from sources of support.
- Sexual harassment.
- Threats of physical or sexual abuse.

The school will manage intimate partner abuse in the same way as a case of abuse between any other children, i.e. via the processes outlined in the responding to alleged incidents section of this policy, and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **6) A whole-school approach to tackling child-on-child abuse**

The school will continue to involve all members of the school community, including the governing board, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse.

The governing board will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including child-on-child abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the school. The school will ensure that procedures for handling child-on-child abuse are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the school community who wishes to access them.

The school will implement a contextual approach to safeguarding pupils against child-on-child abuse, and will ensure that all procedures take into account incidents of child-on-child abuse that occur outside of school or online.

### **School culture**

The school will prioritise cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils, and ensure that all pupils are aware that the school will adopt a **zero-tolerance stance** on child-on-child abuse of any kind.

The school will promote respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff will model appropriate and respectful behaviour. Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as 'boys will be boys' or describing such behaviour as 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up', as these phrases can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and normalised abuse.

The school will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of child-on-child abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more

likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage. The school will have a clear set of values and standards that will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life and will be underpinned by the school's policies, procedures and curriculum.

The school will manage all early help and intervention for pupils that show early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Curriculum**

The school maintains the position that education surrounding respectful and healthy attitudes and behaviour towards others is the best way to combat child-on-child abuse in the school. All staff, not just teaching staff, will be responsible for passing this knowledge on to pupils.

In order to prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. The school will also teach a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE, delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such content will be fully inclusive, age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of pupils with SEND), and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- The concepts of, the laws relating to, and how to access support for the following:
  - Sexual consent
  - Sexual exploitation
  - Abuse
  - Grooming
  - Coercion
  - Harassment
  - Rape
  - Domestic abuse
  - So called honour-based violence, e.g. forced marriage or FGM
- What constitutes as sexual violence and sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable

Pupils will be allowed an open forum to talk about concerns and sexual behaviour. They will be taught how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

The curriculum will ensure that pupils of all ages are taught about and understand the concept of consent

and its importance in an age-appropriate way.

### **7) Protecting pupils with increased vulnerability to child-on-child abuse**

We recognise that all children can be at risk. However, we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This group can include those who: have experience of abuse within their family; have been living with domestic violence; are young people in care; are children who go missing; are children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); are children who identify or are perceived as LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010. What research tells us is that girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers, and girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools, but this is not confined to girls. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child on child abuse, but they may do so in gendered ways.

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that pupils are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These indicators may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that pupils have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

### **8) Channels for pupils to report abuse**

Pupils will be able to report incidents of child-on-child abuse or concerns about the behaviour of their peers through the following channels:

- Sending a message to the confidential TooToot system monitored by the DSL and DDSL
- Disclosing to the DSL or DDSL in person
- Reporting concerns to their tutor during the two tutor periods a day

All channels for reporting abuse will be promoted and publicised throughout the school, and all pupils will be made aware of how, and to whom, to report incidents of abuse. The school will also ensure pupils are aware of the type of behaviour that should be reported, ranging from criminal behaviour, e.g. rape or sexual assault, to everyday harassment, e.g. sexualised jokes or inappropriate comments, to ensure that victims do not view their experience as 'not serious enough' to report.

The school will maintain a culture that promotes reporting abuse, whether the individual reporting is the victim, a bystander, or a friend or relative of the victim. Staff will address any incidents of pupils equating reporting abuse to 'snitching' or being a 'tattle-tale', and will convey to these pupils how important it is to report abuse to help tackle the wider problem of child-on-child abuse in schools.

### **9) Responding to Alleged Incidents**

All reports of child on child abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required.

#### The immediate response to an allegation

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.



- Staff will use the TED model for listening to and recording a disclosure.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead and possibly external agencies). Staff will only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it, using CPOMs and reporting directly to the DSL/DDSL in person as soon as possible (and always before the end of the school day).
- Where the alleged incident includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation (DfE Advice for Schools, July 2022). The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.

### Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs' assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;
- The alleged perpetrator; and
- All the other pupils (and, if appropriate, staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them. Risk assessments will be recorded (and stored on CPOMs) and they will be kept under review. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will engage with MASH concerning any allegations.

### Action following a disclosure

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

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

Immediate consideration will be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other pupils involved.

### Follow up actions for pupils sharing a classroom:

Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with MASH / appropriate agencies the perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim. We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport to and from the school. These actions are in the best interests of both pupils

and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

## 10) Options to manage an allegation

The decision of when to inform the alleged perpetrator of a report will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a report is being referred to children's social care or the police, the school will speak to the relevant agency to discuss informing the alleged perpetrator.

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

- Managing internally
- Providing early help
- Referring to children's social care
- Reporting to the police

Whatever outcome is chosen, it will be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons behind decisions will be recorded either on paper or electronically.

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

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

### Manage internally

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

### Providing early help

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

All staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

### Referral to children's social care

If a pupil has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to children's social care. Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, e.g. if the referral will place the victim at risk. This decision will be made in consultation with children's social care.

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

The DSL will work closely with children's social care to ensure that the school's actions do not jeopardise any investigation. Any related risk assessment will be used to inform all decisions. If children's social care decides that a statutory investigation is not appropriate, the school will consider referring the incident again if they believe the pupil to be in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If the school agrees with the decision made by children's social care, they will consider the use of other support mechanisms such as early help, pastoral support and specialist support.

### Reporting to the police

Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault will be passed on to the police – even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10 years of age. Generally, this will be in parallel with referral to children's social care. The DSL and deputies will follow the local process for referral.

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

The DSL and Headteacher will agree what information will be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. The DSL will be aware of local arrangements and specialist units that investigate child abuse.

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

### **Bail conditions**

Pupils against whom further action is taken by the police may be released under bail conditions or 'released under investigation' (RUI) in circumstances that do not warrant the application of bail. Where this occurs and the perpetrator returns to school, the school's primary focus will be conducting an assessment of the risk the perpetrator poses to the victim or other pupils and staff at the school, both physically and in terms of trauma or emotional stress, and implementing any mitigating measures necessary to reduce the harm caused.

The school will work with children's social care and the police to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other pupils, especially witnesses, during criminal investigations. The school will seek advice from the police to ensure they meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

The school will liaise with police investigators to develop a balanced set of arrangements whereby both the alleged perpetrator and the victim can continue to receive a suitable education without compromising any ongoing investigations or the emotional state of the victim.

### **Managing delays in the criminal justice system**

The school will not wait for the outcome, or even the start, of criminal proceedings before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children. The associated risk assessment will be used to inform any decisions made. The DSL will work closely with the police to ensure the school does not jeopardise any criminal proceedings, and to obtain help and support as necessary.

### **The end of the criminal process**

Risk assessments will be updated if the alleged perpetrator receives a caution or is convicted. If the perpetrator remains in the same school as the victim, the school will set out clear expectations regarding the perpetrator, including their behaviour and any restrictions deemed reasonable and proportionate

with regards to the perpetrator's timetable. The school will ensure that the victim and perpetrator remain protected from bullying and harassment (including online).

Where an alleged perpetrator is found not guilty or a case is classed as requiring 'no further action', the school will offer support to the victim and alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. Staff will be aware that the victim is likely to be traumatised and the fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The school will discuss decisions with the victim and offer support. The alleged perpetrator will also be offered ongoing support if needed, as they have also been through a difficult and upsetting experience.

The headteacher will carefully consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether allowing the victim and the alleged perpetrator to share classes or attend the same activities is conducive to either party's effective education, and will implement alternative arrangements, in consultation with the DSL (and SENCO where the victim or alleged perpetrator has SEND), where necessary.

## **11) Support for those affected**

### **Ongoing support for the victim**

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

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

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

Staff will be aware that victims may struggle in a normal classroom environment. Whilst the school will understand that it is important not to isolate the victim, the victim may wish to be withdrawn from lessons and activities at times. The school will ensure that this will only happen when the victim wants it to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. The school will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw to.

The school will be aware that victims may require support for a long period of time and will be prepared to offer long-term support in liaison with relevant agencies. The school will ensure that everything possible will be done to prevent the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made. If the victim is unable to remain in the school, alternative provision or a move to another school will be considered – this will only be considered at the request of the victim and following discussion with their parents. If the victim does move to another school, the DSL will inform the school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

### **Ongoing support for the alleged perpetrator**

Any decisions made regarding the support required for an alleged perpetrator will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- The terminology the school uses to describe the alleged perpetrator

- The balance of safeguarding the victim and providing the alleged perpetrator with education and support
- The reasons why the alleged perpetrator may have abused the victim – and the support necessary
- Their age and developmental stage
- What a proportionate response looks like
- Whether the behaviour is a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and/or materials
- What the outcome of the investigation was

When making a decision, advice will be taken from children’s social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police as appropriate. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another school, for any reason, the DSL will inform the destination school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

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

#### **Safeguarding other pupils**

Pupils who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration, will be provided with support. It is likely that pupils will “take sides” following a report, and the school will do everything in its power to protect the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses from bullying and harassment. The school will keep in mind that contact may be made between the victim and alleged perpetrator, and that harassment from friends of both parties could take place via social media, and will do everything in its power to prevent such activity.

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

#### **Working with parents**

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

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

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

## **12) Physical Abuse**

While a clear focus of child on child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to MASH. The

principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any Police investigation will need to take priority. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum (Appendix 1) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable;
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time;
- is socially acceptable within the peer group;
- is problematic and concerning;
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability;
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning;
- involves a power imbalance between the pupil/pupil(s) allegedly responsible for the behaviour;
- involves a misuse of power.

### **13) Online Behaviour**

Many forms of child on child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as cyberbullying and sexting. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found in the anti-bullying policy, online safety policy, and safeguarding policy.

### **14) Prevention**

Our school actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

- Educating all Trust members, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils, and parents about this issue. This will include training all Trust members, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes :
  - (a) Contextual Safeguarding – an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their communities, schools and online can feature violence and abuse;
  - (b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours;
  - (c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as playfulness or teasing.
- Educating pupils about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via PSHE/RSHE and the wider curriculum.
- Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse. The TooToot app is in place for pupils to be able to seek support at any time;
- Pupils are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero tolerance policy towards all forms of child-on-child abuse;
- Ensuring that parents have access to information about child on child abuse, and the

- school's commitment to any cases effectively;
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back through CPOMs to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support;
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- Working with Trust members, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community;
- Creating conditions, through the RSHE and PSHE curriculum, and other mechanisms, in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to;
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately.

### **15) Multi-agency working**

The School actively engages with its local partners in relation to child-on-child abuse, and works closely with, Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP), Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), children's social care, St Giles' Trust and/or other relevant agencies, and other schools. The relationships the School has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the School is able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of child-on-child abuse. They help the School :

- (a) To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist;
- (b) To ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly;
- (c) To support and help inform our local community's response to child-on-child abuse;
- (d) To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils. The School actively refers concerns/allegations of child-on-child abuse where necessary to Thurrock MASH. In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm and abuse and who have LAC status, the children's social worker will be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns adopted.

### **16) Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024