

Child on Child Abuse Policy (Part 1)

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Please note that a record of the changes made to the original issue of this document can be found at Schedule 1 after any Appendices to the Policy/Procedure.

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1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil, or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age.

Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carers, legal guardians etc.

Wherever the term 'Headteacher' is used this also refers to any Manager with the equivalent responsibility for children.

The proprietor is Cumbria Education Trust.

We use the term 'alleged perpetrator(s)' and 'perpetrator(s)' throughout the Policy and procedures but staff and others will be mindful about this terminology, especially when speaking in front of children not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. Language and terminology will be determined as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

Child on child abuse may also be referred to as peer on peer abuse or child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and should be taken to mean child on child abuse of any description.

2. INTRODUCTION

Child on child abuse left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals and their families. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Such abuse which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where our pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive, and those that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement. In the main, therefore, this document refers to child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as 'abuse.' Bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues and would normally be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and procedures which includes anti-bullying procedures. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as 'abusive' if:

- there is a significant difference in power (e.g. age, size, ability, development etc.) between the young people concerned;
- the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children;
- there are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

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Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive, and/or violent behaviour in the future.

The DfE statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' is our first point of reference for child protection and child welfare issues in the school.

3. ETHOS

At Cumbria Education Trust (hereinafter referred to as 'the Trust') the health, safety, and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work or volunteer here. All our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy race, religious belief, ethnicity, or sexual orientation/identity. They have a right to be safe in our school; this is enhanced by the adoption of a robust Child Protection Policy and procedures, the Behaviour Policy and Procedures which includes our procedures for preventing and dealing with cases of bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and an Online Safety Policy and procedures.

We have adopted a whole Trust approach to safeguarding and child protection. This means involving everyone, including the Local Advisory Board, the staff and other adults working (paid or unpaid) in our academies, the pupils, and their parents. All staff have been advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and we will respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment both online and offline.

We wish to make it clear to parents, pupils, and staff that we have effective prevention measures in place to tackle child on child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment and all other forms of abuse between children both within and outside our schools. Our approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment is reflected in, and is part of, our wider approach to safeguarding.

If an incident arises, we will deal with it robustly, quickly, and appropriately. We will not tolerate any form of child on child abuse within our school or by association.

4. AIMS

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that "Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child on child abuse and sets out how allegations will be dealt with along with clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by such abuse will be supported".

Whilst it is recommended that child on child abuse is dealt with as part of the Child Protection Policy and procedures, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved particularly with child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, this Policy has been formulated and is designed to be read in conjunction with the overarching principles of our Trust Child Protection Policy and procedures.

The aim of this Policy and each Academy's Part 2 is therefore to ensure that any form of child on child abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently. Consequently, when allegations are made and appropriate responses put in place, this will reduce the extent of harm to those involved and minimise the potential impact on emotional and mental health and well-being.

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5. ENTITLEMENT

[Human Rights Act 1998](#) (HRA) which sets out the fundamental right and freedoms that everyone is entitled to. Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature may breach any or all of the rights made under the HRA depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

We also have obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#). We will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). Each child in our school, regardless of their background or home circumstances could be the victim of child on child abuse. They are therefore all entitled to the same degree of protection and support. Each child in our Academies will also develop the skills appropriate to their age and understanding which could enable prevention of abuse by learning about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy and supporting procedures applies to all who come into contact with children in our schools, including: teachers, supply teachers, learning support staff, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, admin staff, meals supervisors, caretaker, cleaners, visiting students, parent helpers/volunteers, LAB Members and other visitors including contractors.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related Trust/Academy Policies and procedures (and Covid-19 related addendums) including:

- Overarching Safeguarding Statement
- Child on Child Abuse Policy (Part 2)
- Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Online Safety Policy and procedures
- Behaviour Policy and Procedures for preventing and dealing with bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, and the potential for radicalisation) and racism, drug misuse, positive handling, support, and physical intervention etc.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy
- Equality Policy/Objectives
- Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions Policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs Policy/Information Report
- Attendance Policy and procedures
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and procedures
- Missing Child procedures

7. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually and more often should legislation or statutory guidance change and to keep up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews both locally and nationally.

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SCHEDULE 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL – RECORD OF CHANGES

Version Number:	Publication Date:	Nature of, and Reason for, Change(s)
001	September 2020	Original - to take account of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. The phrase peer on peer abuse is also known as child on child abuse.
002	April 2021	Updated to take account of new and emerging information and advice around child on child abuse (previously peer on peer abuse) and reporting mechanisms. Includes reference to newly created NSPCC helpline.
003	September 2021	Updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) and revised DfE Advice 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' (September 2021).
004	September 2022	Updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022). The DfE advice 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' has now been withdrawn and the information is incorporated into KCSiE 2022.
005	September 2023	Reviewed – links to KAHub and external websites/guidance updated.
006	September 2024	Amended to take account of 'Working together to safeguard children' and KCSiE 2024.
007	September 2025	Minor changes to links and to reflect changes in KCSiE

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