

## Policy document for: **Child on child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Updated: Autumn 2025

*This policy forms part of the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and gives specific school actions in relation to their context.*

### **Linked guidance**

- Part 5 KCSIE – child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Non maintained special schools (England) regulations 2015
- Additional source of guidance [addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf \(farrer.co.uk\)](#)

### **Staff must remember contextual safeguarding**

When considering safeguarding incident or behaviour concerns, all assessments must consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is an approach to understanding and responding to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. This includes online abuse.

All members of staff at BA MAT schools recognise that children can abuse other children; this is known as child-on-child abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school/college and online.

All schools recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Online abuse including cyber bullying, online hate content/hate speech, radicalisation, harmful online challenges, "patterning" (shared video content of a child being attacked by others which is intended to cause further harm and humiliation). This is not an exhaustive list
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery). Sharing images is illegal and abusive even when it is consensual
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This can be directed towards all genders
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals to initiate a child into a group which could also be online. These are activities which involve harassment, abuse or humiliation.

Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with the **child protection** policy and [KCSIE](#) (in particular, part two and five).

All our schools adopt a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. We believe that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”; this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and can create an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abuse, which can prevent children from coming forward to report it.

All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. Staff recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved. For example, for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.

BA MAT schools recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place, and it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important that staff speak to the DSL (or deputy) about any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.

All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. Staff recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be disproportionately affected

- By gender (girls are more likely to become victims)
- Children with SEND (are 3 times more likely to become victims)
- Children are or perceived by their peers to be LGBTQ+

### Mainstream schools

In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, each school will:

- Challenge direct/indirect comments, behaviours and actions
- Educate our pupils using the RSE Curriculum, Discovery and Computing curricula to enable them to stay safe, aware of their roles and responsibilities to themselves and each other.
- Enhance our curriculum with local and national initiatives to educate our pupils i.e. Clever Never Goes, NSPCC Speak Out! Stay Safe! Pantasaurus
- Ensure that Talk Time boxes are located in all communities, allowing opportunities for pupils to request 1:1 time with trained counsellors
- Provide each community has a Community Lead with a responsibility for pastoral support
- Provide child friendly information posters located around the school
- Lead assemblies linked to school values and British Values, including our work on No Outsiders to increase a sense of belonging and acceptance

### Aspire school

In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, the school will:

- Educate our pupils using the RSE Curriculum, Discovery and Computing curricula to enable them to stay safe, aware of their roles and responsibilities to themselves and each other.
- Enhance our curriculum with local and national initiatives to educate our pupils i.e. Clever Never Goes, NSPCC Speak Out! Stay Safe! Pantasaurus

### Heightened risks for pupils with SEND

See the children at **greater risk of harm** policy in the safeguarding library which sets out factors including SEND which put some children at greater risk of harm

### Reporting and acting on reports

Each school wants children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated policies, including **child protection, anti-bullying, cyber bullying and behaviour/Wellbeing Around the Child**. Pupils who experience abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

Concerns about learner's behaviour, including child on child abuse taking place offsite will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with pupils and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example **anti-bullying, acceptable use, online safety, racist, derogatory & discrimination, behaviour and child protection** policies. *Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers a statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises e.g. when children are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, to such extent as is reasonable.*

Staff responding to an initial concern from a child

- Reassure the child that they are being taken seriously and will be supported
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Report the concern to a DSL immediately
- Log the concern and the child's words on CPOMS under the relevant category/ies

We understand that a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. If we receive a report of Child on Child abuse, we will follow the principles set out in Part 5 of KCSIE and those outlined in the safeguarding and child protection policy. The Trust will listen to and work with the pupil, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner needed to ensure the safety and security of that child. This maybe conducted via virtual meetings where necessary. All concerns will be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by Child on Child abuse will be supported by the School. Where necessary DSL will contact the Police and Social Care via the Front Door

All our schools take the report of Child on Child abuse very seriously and will listen carefully to all those involved while avoiding victim blaming. Each case will be treated sensitively and the support given may vary but could include:

- Pastoral Support such as check ins with a trusted school adult
- Working with parents
- Wellbeing support – such as Play Therapy
- School Counselling
- Blue Sky Counselling
- Direct education with those involved and/or reviewing, adapting and develop our educational approaches
- Class based/school based education through PSHE/circle time and assemblies
- Working with other agencies
- Support from our Trauma Teacher
- Writing a Risk Assessment and/or a wellbeing plan

All children at Aspire have a risk assessment in place, so this may then be accompanied by a Behaviour Support Plan.

The child who is perpetrating the abuse may also be at risk of harm and so must also be treated as a victim and an assessment of the risk and their needs undertaken

### **Child on Child Sexual Violence or Harassment**

When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, all schools will follow the guidance outlined in **Part five of KCSIE**

Each of our schools recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can happen anywhere, and all staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. We recognise sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur

online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is **never** acceptable.

All victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured 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. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, or ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Abuse that occurs online or outside of the schools will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated equally seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures, including **child protection, anti-bullying, cyberbullying, online safety, behaviour/wellbeing around the child** policies.

All schools recognise 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 to pupils that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Each school recognises that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse. All staff will be aware certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone, for example because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response.

- The DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with part five of KCSIE 2023 and relevant local/national guidance and support, for example [KSCMP](#) procedures.
- The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
- Any concerns involving an online element will take place in accordance with relevant local/national guidance and advice.

Reports will initially be managed internally by the school and where necessary will be referred to [Integrated Children's Services](#) (Early Help and/or Children's Social Work Service) and/or the police.

Important considerations which may influence this decision include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour has been displayed.
- The ages of the children involved.
- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse - sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- Whether there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or school staff.
- Any other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

Each school will in most instances engage with both the victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of sexual violence; this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and will depend on a case-by-case basis. The exception to this is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent/carer will put a child at additional risk. Any information shared with parents/carers will be in line with information sharing expectations, our confidentiality policy, and any data protection requirements, and where they are involved, will be subject to discussion with other agencies (for example Children's Social Work Service and/or the police) to ensure a consistent approach is taken.

If at any stage the DSL is unsure if a request for support is appropriate, advice may be sought from the Front Door Service.

The Trust recognises that some groups may be vulnerable to sexual violence or harassment which includes girls, those with SEND, those who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be by their peers.

- The RSE curriculum (main stream schools) gives focus to positive relationships, as well as discussing sexuality and gender.
- The RSE curriculum at Aspire also gives focus to positive relationships, gender and sexuality at a developmentally appropriate level for each child

Any incident of sexual violence and/or harassment must be reported on CPOMS so it can be investigated appropriately. As with all safeguarding concerns the incident, actions and reviews will be held on CPOMS.