

KINGSMEAD SCHOOL



Child on Child Abuse Guidance Document

Please Note: This Guidance document remains current and in line with the statutory guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)

Implementation Date: October 2021

Review Date: April 2023

Next Review Date: September 2024

Introduction

Kingsmead School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Child on child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of “banter” or “growing up”.

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond. In cases where

child on child abuse is identified we will follow our child protection and safeguarding procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other procedures in school such as the behaviour procedure, Our SAS guidance (**Shield and Shelter**) child Safeguarding and child procedure and online safety procedure.

This procedure concentrates on child-on-child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) and should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

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 Child on Child abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and gender 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 occur online and offline.

The Context

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

We use the following definition of HSB as: - "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult."

Vulnerable groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Whilst research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and, girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools 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.

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These 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 children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Responding to Alleged Incidents

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment 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 a report

- Kingsmead School will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe
- All staff are trained to manage how and when to report using 'My Concern'
- Progress Leaders will know to report all incidents of child-on-child abuse as a **SAS** category on My Concern.
- Safeguarding staff will use the Hackett communication tool to determine appropriate action

- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible on 'My Concern' recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school or college will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation following advice from SCAS or ESAS. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL/DDSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible

Risk Assessment

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

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic say where these are filed) and be kept under review

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

We always take on board the views of the child in conjunction with the Hackett tool. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment;

- If appropriate, a safety plan will be completed in conjunction with the risk assessment
- The schools' **Shield and Shelter** programme will be initiated in all cases (if appropriate), always working alongside the victim and perpetrator, separately or together depending upon the incident and advice from social care if appropriate
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour, The DSL will always consider the involvement of the police if the belief is that a crime has been committed
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse, advice will always be sought in these instances
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and other related issues and wider context?

Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom: Whilst Kingsmead School establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

- Risk assessment will state either a removal from shared classes, or seating plan stipulation. This will be decided in conjunction with the DSL, Victim and Social Care (if appropriate).
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the school. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator

Options to manage the report

Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, In these instances we will action the school's **Shield and Shelter** procedures (SAS) and monitor the interventions appropriately. Please refer to the shield and Shelter guidance in Kingsmead's Behaviour policy

This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored by the **SAS** coordinator **Mr Michael Stephens** using My Concern to record all details.

In line with above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from **Early Help**. 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. At Kingsmead, in these cases an Early Help referral will be sought.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be made through the MASH or by contacting the police via 101. The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police.

Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, Kingsmead will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses).

Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies. We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family. If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need.

The DSL will support this move. Where there is a criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings.

We will work closely with the police. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police, although advice will be sought in all cases to verify. In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator.

Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. Kingsmead will ensure that all individuals concerned will be given the appropriate support via our Mental Health and Well-being programme. We will consider outside agency referrals to support the victim and perpetrator.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

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 the police.

The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

Staff will always report such incidents onto 'My Concern' and Progress Leaders will categorise the incident as a **SAS** concern

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse staff are expected to report in exactly the same way. Staff should be made aware of behaviour and how to assess it, and question if the behaviour is:

- 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 child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour
- involves a misuse of power

All such incidents would be referred to '**Shield and Shelter**'

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 school's online safety policy and the Safeguarding and Child protection policy.

Prevention

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

- Educating all Students, Teachers, Leaders, Parents and Governors about this issue. This will be through Safeguarding training for all. This will include knowledge on the effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.
- Enforcing 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 horseplay or teasing.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via our strong Personal Development programme and within our wider curriculum.
- Having high expectations of good behaviour in school and within the wider community.

- Actively enforcing our 'Value' of **Mindfulness** through activities such as: kind corridors, ARK (Act of random kindness weeks) Daily well-being tutor sessions where strong relationships are built, establishing a Kingsmead Farm, to support well-being and the wider curriculum.
- Our students are frequently told what to do (via assemblies, tutor sessions and Personal Development) 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.
- All students have access to a grievance form where they can indicate a complaint if they don't feel comfortable verbally reporting.
- All students have access to the **SAS** contact number and email if they feel the need to talk or share information
- Parents are contacted regularly via parent pay and social media about on-going and prevalent safeguarding issues. They have access to the Personal Development programme and can track what and when is being taught and shared with their children
- Parent voice is sought regularly and always listened to
- Encourage parents to report all incidents of child-on-child abuse to the school
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the School's safeguarding team/DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify students who maybe in need of additional support. This is done by way of a weekly **STRAT** meeting at which all concerns about students (including child on child abuse issues) are discussed.
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom)
- Working with Governors, MAT, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, students, Student Leadership 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 in which students can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships.
- Creating a culture in which our students 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

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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Developmentally typical	Problematic		Harmful	
Hackett Continuum				
Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour Consensual, mutual and reciprocal Decision making is shared <p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) <p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically violent sexual abuse Highly intrusive May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator May involve sadism



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