

Child on Child Abuse Guidance and Procedure

September 2024

This guidance must be used in conjunction with the academy Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the Anti-Bullying policy.

What is child on child abuse?

Child on child abuse (also known as peer on peer abuse) is behaviour by an individual or group of individuals which can be a one-off incident or repeated over time. Child on child abuse is behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

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 academy'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.

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.

Child on child abuse can take many forms including serious bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); physical harm; abuse within intimate partner relationships; domestic abuse; child sexual exploitation; youth and serious youth violence; financial abuse; initiation/hazing type violence and rituals; harmful sexual behaviour (sexual violence and sexual harassment - Part five of Keeping Children Safe in Education) and Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges; upskirting; sharing nude and semi-nude images and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups steered by a dislike for a person's:

- race
- religion
- gender
- sexual orientation
- special educational needs or disabilities;

or where a child:

- is adopted or in care;
- has caring responsibilities;
- is suffering from a health problem;
- is frequently on the move (e.g. those from military families or the travelling community);
- is experiencing a personal or family crisis;
- has actual or perceived differences, (e.g. physical or cultural differences).

Incident Response Flowchart for Sexual Abuse, Harassment or Sexual Violence

How staff respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

*It is vital when considering the following procedure, that the team clarify if the behaviour is sexualised behaviour or sexual abuse, harassment or sexual violence. Please use the Hackett Tool or Brooke's Traffic Light system to analyse.

It is vital that a chronology of this procedure is reflected on CPOMS for all pupils involved

Procedure:

Report any concerns about a child's welfare immediately to the DSL rather than waiting to be told. The DSL will support the staff member to report the information to report the incident to other agencies as appropriate e.g., the local authority, Children's Service and the police.

Be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. All staff will be trained to manage a report.

Explain, in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing children, that the law is in place to protect them rather than criminalise them. (older pupils - we do not criminalise children)

Listen, ask open questions and write down as much as possible. Language must be used that is not victim-blaming, they must be non-judgemental and reassure the child that they have not caused a problem by disclosing.

Not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the DSL or social care). Staff will only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it. Information can be legally shared even if the pupil states they do not want it to be.

```
graph TD; A[Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL 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.] --> B[Understand that victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, the victim should be asked if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victims, as far as reasonably possible. Schools and colleges should respect and support this choice.]; B --> C[Produce a written report as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later at Children's Services.]; C --> D[Ensure that the DSL has the full information uploaded to CPOMS or written report immediately. DSL to reflect on the incident and make decision to refer with Children's Services and Police . Where a crime has been committed the DSL must immediately contact 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. They will advise you of the next steps if they feel it necessary. If reporting to the Police, parents must be informed.]; D --> E[DSL to carefully consider if the disclosure is sexualised behaviour or sexualised behaviour that causes / indicates harm ( Sexual Violence , Sexual Harassment and abuse) DSL to use Hackett Tool or Brookes Traffic Lights Tool to analyse the incident. Professional challenge discussion within SLT o ensure suitable outcome.]; E --> F[If the matter is considered as harmful or harassing then a referral to children's services can be made - be prepared to share what measures you have in place for all children involved];
```

Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL 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.

Understand that victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, the victim should be asked if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victims, as far as reasonably possible. Schools and colleges should respect and support this choice.

Produce a written report as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later at Children's Services.

Ensure that the DSL has the full information uploaded to CPOMS or written report immediately. DSL to reflect on the incident and make decision to refer with Children's Services and Police . Where a crime has been committed the DSL must immediately contact 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. They will advise you of the next steps if they feel it necessary. If reporting to the Police, parents must be informed.

DSL to carefully consider if the disclosure is sexualised behaviour or sexualised behaviour that causes / indicates harm (Sexual Violence , Sexual Harassment and abuse)

DSL to use Hackett Tool or Brookes Traffic Lights Tool to analyse the incident. Professional challenge discussion within SLT o ensure suitable outcome.

If the matter is considered as harmful or harassing then a referral to children's services can be made - be prepared to share what measures you have in place for all children involved

```
graph TD; A[DSL to create a child on child risk assessment for pupil and share with parents.] --> B[Adhere to all risk assessment measures to protect all children that are involved. Review this risk assessment regularly and share with parents.]; B --> C[Further monitor the behaviours of the pupil/s and report any further concerns with Children's Services if necessary. If sexual abuse, violence to harassment continue discuss with police.];
```

DSL to create a child on child risk assessment for pupil and share with parents.

Adhere to all risk assessment measures to protect all children that are involved. Review this risk assessment regularly and share with parents.

Further monitor the behaviours of the pupil/s and report any further concerns with Children's Services if necessary. If sexual abuse, violence to harassment continue discuss with police.