	Child on Child Abuse Policy	Resilience Respect Responsibility
This policy was reviewed by the Governing Body: January 2025	**Next review: January 2026**	
Head Governor responsible for Safeguarding: Andrew Jackson **Head Teacher:** Ilona Sanderson	**Lead:** Ilona Sanderson	

Introduction

At North Clifton Primary School, we have a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).

We will **respond to all signs, reports, and concerns** of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises, and/or online. We recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers, we take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult.

We recognise that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening. It may be the case that it is just not being reported.

We acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable.

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 suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures, taking a contextual, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation including the victim and **alleged** perpetrator.

Definition, Keeping Children safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024

North Clifton Primary School has adopted the definition of child-on-child abuse as stated in KCSIE 2024, which identifies that:

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- *Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)*
- *Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element, which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)*
- *Abuse in intimate relationships between peers (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')*
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment*
- *Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent*
- *Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm*
- *Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery)*
- *Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, which could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group, and may also include an online element*

This is explained in paragraph 33 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE 2024)

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1st September 2024) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from: staff and governors.

This policy is available:

- Online on the school website
- In the school prospectus
- From the school office in the staffroom on the server

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with children maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here,'** and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The Head teacher Ilona Sanderson has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents and carers, LA (Local Authority), and outside agencies.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all. However, all staff, parents and carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and their Deputy (DDSL) in our school are Ilona Sanderson and Emma Hyde.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is Andrew Jackson.

Staff are trained to challenge inappropriate behaviours by:

- Making it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'

Staff understand that dismissing inappropriate behaviour risks leading to:
- A culture of unacceptable behaviours
- An unsafe environment for children
- A culture that normalises abuse, leading to pupils accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it

This is outlined in paragraphs 32 and 454 of KCSIE, linked above.

All staff should be aware of:
- The possibility of child-on-child abuse, both inside and outside of school, and online
- The schools policy and procedures on child-on-child abuse
- The important role they play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk
- The fact that even if there are no reports, it doesn't mean it's not happening
- The need to report **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse
- The importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours and not downplaying them

This is explained in paragraphs 30 to 32 of KCSIE, linked above.

Reporting and Responding

At North Clifton Primary School, we want children, parents, carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We recognise that our school's initial response to a report of child-on-child abuse is incredibly important - how we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims to report or come forward. As a school we will also respond to reports of alleged child-on-child abuse that have occurred online or outside of school. These reports will be treated seriously, and the school remains committed to supporting and safeguarding all parties including the victim, alleged perpetrator, and any other child(ren) who may be affected.

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking the leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as the Local Authority, Children's Social Care, and the Police as appropriate. We will ensure that we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community, the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Children (including bystanders)

It is important to understand that a victim may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. We recognise that in some instances another child may report on another child's behalf. All children will know how to report concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse.

We ask that all children report any concerning behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the child and make an initial note of their concerns. They will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe 2024, we will never promise a child that we

will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child. The member of staff will make a formal record of the concern and hand it to the DSL or Deputy and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has a worry box in each classroom where the child can put their name/a brief note about their concerns/draw a picture of their concern – these worry boxes are introduced to the children at the start of the year and children are reminded of them regularly.

Parents/carers

We understand that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with making or receiving a report that their child has been the victim of or is an alleged perpetrator of child-on-child abuse.

In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, we will seek advice and support from other services as decided on a case-by-case basis. All decisions and actions taken by the school will consider the needs of the individual children involved, and the wider school community.

We ask that if parents and carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on-child abuse, that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (in person/via telephone call/via email) to explain their concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will make a formal record of the report and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of child-on-child abuse. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and ongoing investigations by statutory services. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Staff

Our staff work closely with our children and therefore may notice a change in a child's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a child or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or are concerned that a child is displaying behaviours that may show they have been the victim of or that they are perpetrating child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead/directly to the Head teacher. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the report on the school's recording system and other relevant staff

members will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors
We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.). We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about child-on-child abuse that they have witnessed, or have been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/the Head teacher/a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the concerns and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

Recording and evaluating
We will ensure a written report is made as soon after the disclosure as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. This will be logged on our electronic system, CPOMs. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated. We will ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will be informed as soon as possible. We will ensure that details of decisions made and reasons for decisions are recorded as well as any outcomes.
We will ensure that any 'safety plans' are recorded on CPOMs and kept under review.

Strategies for Prevention
Our school, North Clifton Primary School, actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:
- **Staff training** – including for supply staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors:
    - Contextual safeguarding
    - Identification and classification of specific behaviours – SVSH, HSB etc
    - Making it clear there is a **zero-tolerance approach** to child-on-child abuse (especially in relation to SVSH) that it is **never** acceptable and will not be tolerated. Ensuring it is **never** passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys."
    - Recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
    - Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts
    - Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
    - Responsibilities of the Governing body – they must be aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities (effective child protection policy – child-on-child abuse policy)
    - Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding lead/team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify those children who may need additional support

- **Information for children** (pupils):
  - Creating an ethos and culture in which all children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment, and have them listened to
  - All children are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience any form of child-on-child abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it
  - They are regularly informed about the school's approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including the school's zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of child-on-child abuse, the process for reporting their concerns of child-on-child abuse and where to go for further help, support, and advice
  - Educating all children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via a well embedded RHE/RSHE curriculum, PSHE curriculum or wider curriculum
  - Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- **Information for parents/carers** - give specific details on engagement with parents/carers
  - Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue
  - Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks
  - Challenging the attitudes that underlie child-on-child abuse – in school and/or the wider community
  - Ensuring parents /carers are aware of the ethos and culture of the school
- **RHE (Relationships and Health Education) / RSHE curriculum**

Create a preventative curriculum programme

We have a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain and a culture of zero tolerance to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/ harassment. This will be underpinned by:
- The Behaviour Policy
- A pastoral support system
- A planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and developed to be appropriate for the age and stage of development, and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
  - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and how to access support
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why they're always unacceptable

(This is based on paragraph 130 of KCSIE).

Breaches / Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent or carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

Links with other policies

You may find it helpful to read this child-on-child abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Safeguarding Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Behaviour Policy	Includes details about the school's behaviour system including potential sanctions for pupils
Anti-Bullying policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and vulnerable groups
Online Safety / E-Safety / Acceptable Use Policies	Includes information about children's online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Equalities Policy	Includes information about our school's approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
RSHE / Policy	Includes information about our school's RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

Further information and support can be found through the following links:
- Part 5: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment (page 111) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) [Keeping children safe in education 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)](#)
- Definitions - Keeping children safe in education 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours -
  - [Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
  - [NSPCC Learning](#) [Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Date approved by the Governing Body: January 2025

Date to be reviewed: January2026