GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Policy Name	Child on Child Abuse Policy
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
Owner	Vice Principal
Statutory	Advisory
Authorisation	Principal to ratify, S&C Trustees to note

Date Ratified	Review Date
June 2023	June 2024

Contents

1. Context and Definition

Child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

All staff should recognise that young people are capable of abusing their peers.

All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from child abuse including:
- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This abuse can:
- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:
- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse - witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

2. Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), September 2022 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 of child on child abuse will be investigated and dealt with* '.

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard:

'Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback.
Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.'

***'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. **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.'*

Child on child abuse is referenced in the Academy's Safeguarding Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with child on child necessitate separate policy guidance.

At our Academy we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to the impact on that individual young person's emotional and mental health and well-being.

3. Purpose of the Policy
The purpose of this policy is to explore some of the forms of child-on-child abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to the issues.

At Guilsborough Academy we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

Anti-Bullying Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Sexual Violence and Harassment policy

4. Framework and Legislation
This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, *'must be informed by the views of the child'.* This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

5. Abuse and harmful behaviour
It is necessary to consider
- what abuse is and what it looks like
- how it can be managed
- what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. being sexually touched/assaulted and being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2022). It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.
- Young people are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same young person protection procedures.
- Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of young people and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker young people.

The alleged perpetrator may have unmet needs and pose a significant risk of harm to other young people. Evidence suggests that such young people may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

6. Types of abuse
There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list covers some of them. It is not exhaustive.

6.1. Physical abuse
This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or
otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a young person harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

6.2. Sexual violence and sexual harassment
This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two young people of any age and gender. It can also occur through a group of young people sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single young person or group of young people.
Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may include
- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:
- making 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"; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing
- bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or
- tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

6.2.1 Upskirting
"Upskirting" became a specific criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019. It typically involves taking a photograph under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or causing humiliation, distress or alarm. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) lists upskirting as one example of child-on-child abuse of which school staff should be aware.

6.3. Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

Young people who bully use their power or perceived power —such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, race or beliefs, physical or mental health issues, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

6.4. Online Bullying / Cyber bullying

Online Bullying / Cyberbullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social
- networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring young people to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

6.5. Sexting

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written
messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.
This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The DSL will follow the Gov.uk Guidance and other supporting documentation and guidance.
Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Schools, colleges and children's services : Safeguarding children - detailed information - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes | NSPCC

6.6. Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an
organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have

something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

6.7. Prejudiced Behaviour
The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

6.8. Teenage relationship abuse
Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

7. Expected staff action
If a member of staff recognises that child on child abuse has occurred they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-school actions including making a report on the Academy reporting system MyConcern.

8. Recognising child abuse
An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:
- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the young people and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a young person labelled.

Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

8.1. Taking Action

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies will:
- Always take reports of abuse seriously
- Take statements from the student(s) and witnesses
- Assess the needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider whether a referral to Police and/or Social Care is necessary
- Record all incidents and all action taken

8.2. Recording sexualised behaviour

This should:
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, avoiding vague statements or euphemisms
- Be recorded as soon as possible
- Include exactly any language or vocabulary used by the young person. The DSL should clarify which body part is being referred to by the young person and include this in the statement as well
- Include statements from all the young people involved separately

8.4. Consider the Intent
Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

8.5. Decide on the next course of action
If it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately

8.6. Informing parents/carers
If possible, the best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their young person is the young person who was harmed or who harmed another.

Is the pupil 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the young person is evident, then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

9. Points to consider

9.1. What is the age of the young people involved?
How old are the young people involved in the incident? What is the any age difference between those involved?

9.2. Where did the incident or incidents take place?
Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed?

9.3. What was the explanation by all young people involved of what occurred?
Compare accounts from each of the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

9.4. What is each of the young people's own understanding of what occurred?
Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have
knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

10. Next Steps
Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

10.1. For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

10.2. For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour
The Academy's response should be appropriate and reflect the Positive Behaviour policy. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way.

Appropriate supportive intervention should be arranged. If a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service. In the case of sexually harmful behaviour, it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one-to-one work with a particular service or agency. If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and educated education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

10.3. After care
It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm).

11. Preventative Strategies
Child on child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. It is important to develop appropriate strategies which proactively prevent child on child abuse. These issues are covered in age-appropriate assemblies and the Life Skills curriculum.

This school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.

We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

12. Where to go for further information

12.1. DfE: Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children 2018

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

12.2. DfE: Statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education 2022
Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

12.3. DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2018
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges

12.4. DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation at school
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation

12.5. GOV.UK Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

12.6. DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

12.7. DfE: Statutory guidance School exclusion
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

12.8. DfE: Relationship and Sex Education Current guidance
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sex-and-relationship-education

12.9. DfE: Behaviour and discipline in schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools

12.10. DfE: Children Missing Education
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education

12.11. DfE: Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

12.12. DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

12.13. UKCCIS: Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/660675/Tackling_race_and_faith_targeted_bullying_face_to_face_and_online_-_a_guide.pdf

12.14. Brook Traffic Light Tool
https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool

12.15. Gov.uk: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools
Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

12.16 Public Sector Equality Duty: Guidance for Schools | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)

12.17. Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour (PDF)

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12.18. NSPCC: Harmful sexual behaviour framework
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2016/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework

Guilsborough Academy – Policy Name