



**Ratified by the Governing Body on 26 January 2021**

**Reviewed September 2022 in line with KCSIE 2022.**

## **Addendum to Western Community Primary School Child Protection Policy - Child on Child Abuse**

**The DfE's advice on Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021) has been merged into Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022. As part of this merger, the term "child-on-child abuse" rather than "peer-on-peer abuse" is used throughout the updated guidance and WCPS have updated all relevant policies accordingly.**

**Western Community Primary School has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.**

**At Western Community Primary School 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 child's emotional and mental health and well-being.**

We will make sure our children know and understand that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them.

We will also make sure all staff know the importance of understanding intra-familial harms, and any necessary support for siblings following incidents in line with KCSIE, 2022 guidance related to advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Child On Child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online.

Child On Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers

- 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)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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
  - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, 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
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this 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)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about peer-on-peer abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in this policy, as appropriate. This addendum sets out more detail about our school's approach to this type of abuse.

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

Between 2 children of any age and sex

Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children

Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, 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 children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

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

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

KCSIE makes it clear that 'being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse may breach children's rights as set out in the HRA' . Part 2 paragraph 82 of KCSIE

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

Challenging inappropriate behaviours

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

Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in this policy, as appropriate

Peer-on-peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, 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
  - 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 49 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE).

## **Staff Training**

Staff will be provided with regularly updated and appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- Their role in preventing peer-on-peer abuse
- How to identify the indicators of abuse
- What to do if they have a concern about a child
- How to respond to a report of abuse
- How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
- Where to go if they need support
- That children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:
  - Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
  - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
  - Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- That they need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- That even if there are no reports in our school, it doesn't mean it's not happening
- The importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour
- That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators

At Western, staff challenge inappropriate behaviours by:

- 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'

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

**The school has a preventative curriculum:**

## **Addressing issues associated with peer-on-peer abuse**

Our curriculum makes sure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online. Our curriculum also tackles (in an age-appropriate and inclusive way) issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Consent
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment

## **Responding to incidents**

School has the following procedures in place to respond effectively to incidents:

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence  
Could put pupils in the school at risk  
Is violent  
Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol  
Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

## **Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of peer-on-peer abuse**

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images

Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys

Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent

Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in page 7 below)

Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously

Ensure staff are trained to understand:

- How to recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
- That even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
- That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
  - § Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
  - § A friend may make a report
  - § A member of staff may overhear a conversation
  - § A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing peer-on-peer

abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it

- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns

## **Procedures for dealing with allegations of peer-on-peer abuse**

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it

The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence

The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed

The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

## **Expected staff action**

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-school actions.

## **Recognising peer 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 child or 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 peer abuse immediately and sensitively.
- It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true



facts.

- It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved.
- Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner.
- Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

### **Taking Action**

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

### **Recording sexualised behaviour**

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child.
- Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

### **Gather the Facts**

- Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account.
- Ask the child(ren) to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

### **Consider the Intent**

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

## **Decide on your next course of action**

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If MASH and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

## **Informing parents/carers**

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 child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

## **Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting')**

### **Staff responsibilities when responding to an incident**

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL or DDSL immediately.

You must **not**:

View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)

Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it

Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)

Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers

Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

## **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with

appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)

If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care

If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)

What further information is required to decide on the best response

Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)

Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services

Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk

assessment If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual

Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

The incident involves an adult

There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)

What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent

The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13

The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded

in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

### **Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

### **Informing parents/carers**

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through school's designated local neighbourhood police officer(s) or by dialling 101.

### **Recording incidents**

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships and sex education (RSE) and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

What it is

How it is most likely to be encountered

The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment

Issues of legality

The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images

The receipt of such images

Age-appropriate details from this addendum on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

## **Local Partners**

Peer-on-peer abuse incidents and/or inappropriate behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school. Staff should consider the context when preventing and dealing with such incidents.

For example, when tackling violence it's important to:

Understand the problems that young people are facing both in school and in their local community

Consider possible avenues of support

Work with local partners (who may have valuable information, resources or expertise) such as the police and youth offending teams. School safeguarding partners may also be able to provide support e.g. MASH, Front Door, Children's Social Services.

In some situations it may be necessary to seek external support.

## **Seek specialist support**

School will consider carefully on a case-by-case basis if external input is needed, particularly when approaching sexual violence and sexual harassment as part of preventing peer-on-peer abuse. Specialist organisations can support by training staff, teaching children and/or providing them with support.

Organisations could include:

- [NSPCC](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Brook](#)
- [The Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

## **Links**

**Statutory Guidance: Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022 (KCSIE)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

**Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

**Policies linked to this addendum:**

Child on Child Abuse Policy (Children's Version)

Anti-Bullying including Online Bullying Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Managing Allegations / Whistleblowing Policy

Behaviour Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Online Safety Policy