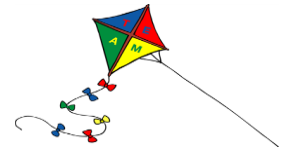


Twyford St Mary's C of E Primary School
Child on Child Abuse Policy 23-24



Context

This policy is about how staff should respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and or online. All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of “It could happen here”.

Schools not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse, and /or downplaying some behaviours relating to abuse can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in a worst-case scenario a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

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. Schools should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it
- 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 behaviour (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

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, may 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.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Ultimately, it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Policy

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and by other children.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2023).

This policy is underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

We will minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by: -

Prevention:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding and child protection
- Providing training to staff
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe, and be supported.
- We understand that our initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important and can encourage or undermine the confidence of victims of sexual violence and harassment to report or to come forward in the future.
- If the report includes an online element, staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2018) guidance.
- Staff taking the report will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy as soon as practicably possible but at least within 24 hours.
- Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care (01329 235379).

Risk Assessment:

Following a report, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs, and any disciplinary action.
- All other children at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

Action: The DSL will consider: -

- The wishes of the victim.
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
- Ages of the children/young people involved.
- Developmental stages of the children/young people.
- Any power imbalance between the children/young people.
- Any previous incidents.
- On-going risks.
- Other related issues or wider context.

Options: The DSL will manage the report with the following options: -

- Manage internally
- Refer to Early Help
- Refer to Children's Social Care
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care)

Ongoing Response:

Responses For all:

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.
- The DSL will keep the risk assessment under review.
- The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- When ongoing support is required by the victim, the victim will be asked whether they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult to talk about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be made by the victims (as far as reasonably possible) and this choice should be supported.

Responses when the alleged perpetrator is internal to the school:

- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim during that investigation.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator apart on school premises and transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the behaviour leading to the conviction or caution is likely to 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 and students).

- Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle of keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes where possible will be maintained and continued. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school 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.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator, and other witnesses (children and adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.
- The school will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in line with behaviour and discipline in the school.
- The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

Responses when the alleged perpetrator is external to the school:

- Where the alleged perpetrator is not a pupil of the school, Twyford St Marys will accurately and securely share information with the DSL of the alleged perpetrators education setting as per GDPR guidance.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious reports

- The designated safeguarding lead will always seek evidence to support the allegation but recognises that sometimes evidence is hard to provide. If no evidence can be found the designated safeguarding lead will continue to support the child and/or person who has made the allegation. If a report is determined through evidence gathering to be unfounded, false, or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will seek to discover if there is another reason behind the allegation, and whether the child and/or person making the allegation is in need of help and support in any other area.
- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per their own behaviour policy.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is linked to 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.

Approved by governing body: Autumn 2023

Reviewed by governing body: Autumn 2024

This policy aligns with:

Safeguarding Policy
Child Protection Policy

References:

KCSiE (DfE 2023)

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE 2021)

Table of Changes		
2023 Policy Review	Original	New ratified by FGB November 2023
Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious reports	If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and whether this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.	The designated safeguarding lead will always seek evidence to support the allegation but recognises that sometimes evidence is hard to provide. If no evidence can be found the designated safeguarding lead will continue to support the child and/or person who has made the allegation. If a report is determined through evidence gathering to be unfounded, false, or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead will seek to discover if there is another reason behind the allegation, and whether the child and/or person making the allegation is in need of help and support in any other area.

Annex 1- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children Risk and Needs Assessment Template

(This template is offered as a framework and should be seen as a starting point for development to fit your school's individual context. Each reported incident should be managed on a case-by-case basis)

EXAMPLE assessment

Presenting behaviours	What are the risks? Who might be harmed & how?	Action	Action by Who?	Action by when?	Action status or Date Completed & Outcome including further actions
<p>Behaviour: Forcing other children to engage in sexual activity. Subject is a male child. A female child has been taken into the boys' toilets. Subject has exposed himself, grabbed the girl by the wrist and forced her to touch his genitals.</p> <p>Subject is under the age of criminal responsibility. Subject has no known CP history There have been no previous concerns about the Subject.</p>	All pupils in the class may be forced or coerced into sexual activity. Early indication is that female pupils may be more at risk.	Key members of staff with supervisory responsibility have been briefed by the DSL and will increase monitoring at break times. Subject will be escorted to the toilet.	DSL Staff AB, CD & EF ELSA	From Immediate effect	✓01/02/2023. Increased monitoring & toilet supervision in place
	Other children within the community	Subject's parents Informed re: Incident & behaviour and the risk plan put in place. Made aware of referral to CSD. Agreement for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to CAMHS Increased monitoring & toilet supervisor Keep safe work. 	DSL	01/02/23	✓01/02/23 Contract of agreement has been signed by the parents to include increased. monitoring, toilet supervision and keep safe work.
		Referral to Children's social care	DSL	01/02/23	✓01/02/23 Children & Family Assessment to be completed by CAST
		Victims parents informed, and child's views gained. Child offered keep safe work.	DSL	01/02/23	✓Parents are satisfied with the school's actions & safeguarding measures so far. Child & family want child to remain in the same class. Keep safe work accepted.
		Referral to CAMHS	DSL	02/02/23	Referral made. ACTION – follow up with CAMHS as to the status

					of referral after 10 working days if not heard before
		Safeguarding measures to be reviewed.	DSL & Key Staff members	09/02/23	No additional concerns raised. ACTION - Review plan again in one weeks time
		Keep safe work to be completed. Combination of whole class and targeted work to be carried out	ELSA	23/02/2023	OUTSTANDING Work planned and due to be delivered w/c 16/02
	Community Impact Assessment LOW The parents of the Subject and the victim are satisfied that the school is taking all necessary safeguarding measures to manage the risk. There are no indications at this stage for community unrest. This will be kept under review.	DSL and SLT to be aware of any community noises about the incidents.	DSL and SLT	05/04/2023	
	Media Media and communication team to be informed if community impact assessment risk increases	SLT to contact HCC communication team if required. Monitor during term	SLT	05/04/2023	
	Information Sharing. All information sharing has been completed in line with the school's CP and GDPR policies.	Relevant information to be recorded on each child's CP file as required.			
	Social Media There are no currents risks from community use of social media. This will be kept under review.	Monitoring of social media during the term	Key staff	05/04/2023	

Presenting Behaviour	What are the risks? Who might be harmed & how?	Action	Action by Who?	Action by when?	Action status or Date Completed & Outcome including further actions