



CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

FLIXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aims

Flixton Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other young people. This is known as 'child on child abuse'. The school is committed to preventing child on child abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse and this should not be tolerated or 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. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times. We acknowledge that, as recognised in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Definitions

The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- **Staff' or 'members of staff'** refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors and volunteers working in or on behalf of the school.
- **Child/children** refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- **Child on child abuse** refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim.

Child on child abuse (or child on child abuse) could include (but is not limited to):

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children;
- 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 nude and semi-nude 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).

If one child causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as peer-on-peer abuse: bullying, and physical and/or verbal aggression between children does not generally require multi-agency intervention and would be dealt with using the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. However, it may be appropriate to regard a child's behaviour as abusive if:

- there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the children concerned; or
- the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- there are concerns about the intention of the alleged child. If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim or to exploit them, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Purpose

This policy has been written to:

- ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how Flixton Primary School works to prevent child on child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how Flixton Primary School responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to child-on-child abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how Springfield Primary School continues to support victims of child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

Legalisation and relevant documentation

This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and statutory guidance in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns. This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2025
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)

Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) in this policy, it should be understood that Flixton Primary School will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

Scope

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors and volunteers working in or on behalf of Springfield Primary School. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Governors The governors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and any other relevant statutory guidance or legislation.
- Ensure that the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child-on-child abuse.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with the Teachers' Standards 2021 update).

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child-on-child abuse.
- Make referrals to Trafford Children's First Response and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession

Role of all staff

All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in instances where they suspect cases of child-on-child abuse or become aware of cases of child-on-child abuse.

- Be aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on child-on-child abuse.
- Be aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or that 'boys will be boys'.
- Report any low-level concerns relating to child relationships to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as these could lead to child-on-child abuse if not addressed.
- Where incidents involve youth produced sexual imagery or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.

Training

The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to child-on-child abuse.

This will be included in the annual safeguarding training for all staff, or as part of the induction training for new staff.

We recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all staff will be trained to understand that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

Procedures to minimise child on child abuse

The school have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for child-on-child abuse. We do this by using a range of strategies which can include, but is not limited to:

- Early identification of concerning behaviours
- Use of restorative approach from an early stage
- Opportunities for children to share how they are feeling e.g. worry monsters, Zones of Regulation
- Open and honest communication with parents and carers
- Risk assessments of specific child relationships
- Clear and consistent routines
- A strong curriculum offer e.g. SCARF, RSHE
- Practical measures to optimise supervision in key areas e.g., toilets
- Interventions for (potential) perpetrators and victims
- Early Help

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face child on child abuse than other children. We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by using a range of strategies (in addition to the above) which can include, but is not limited to:

- Identification of a key adult to share worries and concerns
- Adjusting methods for children to share they are worried about something e.g. non-verbal visual aids
- Discussion of concerns at regular Leadership Meeting and a strategic approach to supporting the child
- Recognition of vulnerabilities on IEPs, EHCPs and PEPs

- Proactive education of all children to celebrate difference and diversity to encourage healthy relationships
- Close monitoring of children who have previously suffered abuse or have been living in care

Responding to concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse

The school takes child on child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse immediately.

If a member of staff has a concern about child-on-child abuse, or if a child discloses child on child abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident(s) disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership Team will always take the following into account:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- Information shared by parents and carers;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- Both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
- The impact on the victim;
- Any initial evidence to support the victim's claims,
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school staff or other adults.

Depending on the nature of the incident(s), the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership and Management Team may:

- Investigate the claims further, including gathering evidence and information from those involved and witnesses and record these accordingly;
- Communicate with parents and carers of both the victim and alleged perpetrator;
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children;
- Share relevant information with staff within the school;
- Work collaboratively with families and staff to design a Pastoral Support Plan;
- Consider whether the concern can be managed internally or if further referrals are necessary;
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan;
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help;
- Refer the case to Trafford Children's First Response via the online referral process.

Supporting the victim

Flixton Primary School recognises that child on child abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.

Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly as part of a Pastoral Support Plan to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.

Appropriate support may include, but is not limited to:

- 1:1 work with a trusted member of staff
- Enhanced supervision
- Opportunities to hear the child's voice
- Adaptations to class routines
- Specific pieces of work based on the child's needs

The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.

The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.

The school is committed to restorative practice and will work alongside the victim to incorporate this approach, wherever possible, when responding to concerns of child or child abuse.

If a victim of child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

Following a conviction of the perpetrator, school will support the victim to protect them from any harassment and bullying, including online. If the case was classified as 'No Further Action' by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a 'Not Guilty' verdict, the school will continue to support the victim as long as necessary.

Supporting the alleged perpetrator

The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision. Options may include:

- Working with class teacher, parents and the child
- Creating a positive Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) for an initial period of 2, 4 or 6 weeks
- Putting in place a home school contact book if necessary
- Offering specialist provision as required
- Providing an in-school behaviour mentor; an impartial member of staff who they can seek out to discuss their behaviour with;
- Seeking the advice of outside professionals where appropriate, such as the school's Educational Psychologist or other professionals e.g. Longford Park School, Thrive Education. Such referrals will involve parents;
- Establishing a Team Around the Child/Family where needed, involving all professionals supporting a family;

- Seeking 'Early Help' where parents need support in managing their children's behaviour and there may be other factors involved in family life which are impacting the child;
- Sharing children's individual needs and the strategies being tried with the whole school staff team to ensure a consistent approach;
- Pastoral Support Plan and adaptations to school timetable; Step out placement in a local behaviour school; and Alternative provision e.g. a tutor.

We recognise that children who perpetrate child on child abuse may be being abused themselves and that behaviour is a form of communication. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with appropriate support.

Appropriate support may include, but is not limited to:

- 1:1 work with a trusted member of staff;
- Enhanced supervision;
- Opportunities to hear the child's voice;
- Adaptations to class routines and timetables;
- Specific pieces of work based on the child's needs;
- Provide targeted interventions e.g. There's a Volcano in My Tummy, Social Emotional Toolkit; and
- Assessments to identify any undiagnosed or unmet needs.

A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from Trafford Children's First Response, specialist services and the police as necessary.

The school may choose to impose a sanction or consequence on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of child-on-child abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy and Exclusions Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.

Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will consider the following options:

- Updating the risk assessment;
- Ensuring relevant protections are in place for keeping all parties safe and meeting their needs;
- Clarifying expectations of the perpetrator and considering any changes or restrictions to their timetable;
- Supporting the perpetrator following any conviction to protect them from any harassment and bullying, including online.

If the case was classified as 'No Further Action' by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a 'Not Guilty' verdict, the school will continue to support the perpetrator as long as necessary.

Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by the Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership. For further details of how the school works with partner agencies in responding to safeguarding incidents (including incidents of child-on-child abuse), please see the Flixton Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Record-keeping

CPOMS is used to record incidents of negative behaviour in school. When recording negative behaviour incidents, staff should add an additional note to indicate who was involved in the incident. Teachers monitoring these incidents should actively look for patterns of behaviour that could indicate the early stages of child-on-child abuse. Once the potential for child-on-child abuse has been agreed, records should be maintained on CPOMS.

All current safeguarding information, including concerns about child-on-child abuse, is logged through the schools CPOMS system with the relevant category tagged. This notifies relevant members of staff (including the DSL and the headteacher). Where CPOMS cannot be accessed, concern forms are located in the school office area. They can also be accessed through the school's shared drive. Any concern forms must be handed in person to a DSL or member of SLT at the earliest possible time. Any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse will be assessed by the DSL and they will decide the next necessary actions to be taken.

The headteacher will share if there are any child-on-child abuse cases at termly governor meetings.

Risk assessments should be written as soon as the risk or potential for child-on-child abuse has been identified. These should be reviewed whenever new information comes to light, there is a change in the behaviour or risk level, or every 4 weeks (whichever comes first).

Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Appendix A: Further Resources

The school use a range of resources (in addition to those referenced in the main body of the policy) to support in minimising child on child abuse, training staff and responding to concerns or disclosures. This appendix details this additional documentation.

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55>

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069688/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people', UKCCIS (2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

School Exclusion Statutory Guidance (including changes to the exclusion process during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Behaviour and discipline in schools (2024), Department for Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>