CROW ORCHARD

Primary School and Nursery

Child-on-Child Abuse and Physical Harm Policy

Policy Lead	Miss J Hollings Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approval date	October 2026
Review	Annually, and sooner following significant incidents or guidance changes
Applies to	All staff, volunteers and pupils, including Nursery

'We learn with love, grow with purpose and stand strong through every challenge'. At Crow Orchard, we want *every* child to feel known, safe, valued and inspired. We are a *family* that supports and nurtures each other, celebrates learning and believes that every child can thrive.

This policy is underpinned by our core values of **Love, Growth, and Strength**, which guide every aspect of our practice:

1. Purpose and boundaries

We protect children from harm by other children, from Nursery to Year 6, in school, beyond school and online. This policy forms part of our child protection arrangements and is read alongside our behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND and online safety policies.

Abuse is unacceptable. Staff challenge harmful behaviour, listen to children and act promptly. No reports does not mean no abuse. We never dismiss concerns as banter or blame a child for what happened.

2. What staff must recognise

Child-on-child abuse includes physical harm; bullying and cyberbullying; racism, faith-targeted and other discriminatory abuse; sexual harassment and violence; coercion in relationships; forced sexual activity; sharing sexual images, including AI-generated images; upskirting; and abusive initiation activities.

Possible warning signs include fear of particular children or places, unexplained injuries, withdrawal, changes in attendance or behaviour, sexualised behaviour, threats and online targeting. A single serious incident can be abuse; repetition is not required.

Girls may be disproportionately affected by some forms of sexual abuse, but any child can experience or cause harm. Children with SEND or communication difficulties may need additional ways to disclose and extra protection.

3. Immediate staff response

- Make children safe. Stop the incident safely, separate where needed, obtain first aid and call 999 for immediate danger or a medical emergency. Use physical intervention only in line with law, training and school procedures.
- Listen calmly. Reassure the child that telling was right, that they are being taken seriously and that abuse is not their fault. Explain that information must be shared with people who can help. Do not promise secrecy.
- Ask only necessary, open questions to establish immediate safety. Record the child's words. Do not investigate, ask leading questions, arrange confrontation or require an apology.
- Tell the DSL or deputy immediately and record on CPOMS as soon as safe, before leaving school that day. A CPOMS entry does not replace an urgent conversation. If neither is available, contact senior leadership and make any necessary referral directly; do not delay protection.
- If CPOMS is unavailable, make a secure dated record, pass it to the DSL and upload it when available. Follow up if action is unclear or the concern remains.

4. CPOMS staff recording guide

The labels below are proposed school categories, not statutory or CPOMS-mandated definitions. The DSL will map them to our system before implementation. Record reported or suspected harm without waiting for proof or agreement about intent.

Situation	Record and action
Physical violence	Use Child-on-child Violence → Physical violence for reported or observed hitting, kicking, biting, punching, hair pulling, strangulation, deliberate pushing or use of an object against another child; attempts and credible threats of physical harm are included. Alert the DSL.
Wider abuse	Use Child-on-child abuse plus the relevant subtype: bullying, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse or coercion. Add Physical violence where physical harm is also involved. Do not hide sexual abuse under a general behaviour label.
Accident or ordinary disagreement	A genuine accidental collision or an isolated disagreement without abusive behaviour is normally recorded through accident or behaviour procedures. Add a safeguarding record if there is concern about harm, coercion, targeting or a pattern.
Unclear or disputed account	Record the concern and exact accounts, marking it reported or suspected. Select the closest category and alert the DSL to review. Do not omit the record because adults did not witness it.

Violence does not require a visible injury, repetition or a power imbalance. If both children used force, record each child's actions separately, including any defensive response. Do not assume equal responsibility.

For younger children or children who are dysregulated, have SEND or have experienced trauma, record the physical act and its impact accurately. Context informs the DSL's assessment and support; it does not remove another child's need for protection. An isolated developmentally typical incident is not automatically a finding of abuse.

5. Every CPOMS entry must include

- Date, time, place, children and witnesses; what was seen or reported and by whom; precise actions and words, including the child's own account.
- Injuries, pain, distress and immediate risk; first aid and protective action; known context and previous linked incidents. Separate fact, allegation and professional judgement.
- Who was told and when; category selected; parent contact or why delayed; DSL decisions and reasons; referrals, safety plan, named action owner and review date.

Link relevant children using approved CPOMS functions and permissions, with each child's role clear. Restrict access to those who need it. Add dated updates and outcomes; do not overwrite the original account or copy confidential information unnecessarily.

Suggested factual wording: "At 12.20 in the playground I saw A kick B twice on the leg. B cried and said, 'I am scared he will do it again.' First aid provided. DSL informed at 12.25."

6. DSL decisions and support

The DSL checks immediate and continuing safety, hears children separately and reviews context, age, development, SEND, power differences, patterns and the needs of every affected child. The record must show the decision, reasons, action, owner and review date.

The DSL decides whether school support, family help, children's social care and/or police involvement is needed, using Lancashire's Continuum of Need and current safeguarding procedures. Suspected significant harm requires an immediate children's social care referral. Concerns are escalated if the response does not protect the child.

For immediate danger call 999, then Lancashire Children's Services on 0300 123 6720; out of hours 0300 123 6722. Follow urgent telephone referrals with the formal request for support. Other requests use Lancashire's current professional referral route. Check contacts at each review.

For sexual concerns, follow KCSIE Part five. Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault should be referred to police, including where the child alleged to have caused harm is under 10. Do not delay safety measures while enquiries take place.

For nude or semi-nude images, staff must not ask to see, copy, forward, print or save them, or ask children to delete them. Report immediately to the DSL, who follows UKCIS guidance and police advice, including for AI-generated images.

Parents are normally informed promptly and separately. The DSL seeks agency advice first where contact may increase risk or compromise enquiries. Share information about their own child and protective arrangements without disclosing another child's confidential details.

7. Safety plans and follow up

Where risk continues, the DSL records a proportionate safety assessment and plan covering supervision, safe spaces, transitions, lessons, playtimes, online contact and any risk beyond school. Sexual violence requires an immediate risk and needs assessment. Review after further incidents and at the recorded review date.

Every plan names a trusted adult, gives accessible ways to report further concerns and supports affected children and witnesses. Check whether the child feels safe and whether attendance, learning or wellbeing is affected. Do not require mediation or restorative meetings; any later restorative work must be safe, appropriate and freely agreed.

Support the child who caused or is alleged to have caused harm, including assessing whether they are also experiencing abuse. The SENCO helps plan reasonable adjustments and specialist support. Behaviour consequences follow school policy and individual circumstances alongside safeguarding action.

8. Prevention and oversight

Staff teach boundaries, respectful relationships, equality, online safety and how to seek help through age-appropriate teaching and daily practice. Offer communication aids, visuals and a trusted adult so all children can report concerns.

The DSL briefs all staff, including lunchtime staff, on this policy and CPOMS categories. Each half term, leaders review incident patterns, locations, repeat concerns and the impact of action. Governors receive anonymised safeguarding oversight and check that children are safe, feel safe and can report concerns.

9. Guidance used and implementation

Before adoption: confirm DSL and deputy details in the safeguarding policy, map CPOMS categories, brief staff and obtain governing body approval. Review annually, after serious incidents and when guidance changes.

DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026 Parts one two and five — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Ofsted State funded school inspection toolkit June 2026 for September 2026 — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information

Lancashire Children's Services referral guidance and Continuum of Need — https://lancashire.gov.uk/professionals/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/

Lancashire safeguarding procedures and contextual safeguarding guidance — https://lancashiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/p/safeguarding-children/childrens-policies-and-procedures

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