



# Child on Child Abuse Policy

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## Contents

1. Aims
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Definition
4. How to respond to incidents of child-on-child harm or abuse
5. How we respond and manage concerns
6. Actions to take in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment
7. Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child harm

Appendix 1: Flow Chart of reporting a concern

**This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.**

## **1. Aims:**

This policy has been written in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to support our staff with their duty to safeguard all students at our school and understand the school's policy and procedures for responding to incidents of child-on-child (previously known as peer on peer) abuse. The school is aware that specific circumstances can increase the risk of both online and offline abuse and is mindful of the increased risks relating to students who have a SEND diagnosis.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

The DSL and the Deputy DSLs will:

- Act as sources of information, advice, support and guidance for staff
- Deliver training to enable all staff to fulfil their safeguarding duties
- Liaise with the local authority and other external agencies in carrying out their duties and follow the [Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#) procedures
- Promote a safe, nurturing environment where all students feel supported and safe and have access to trusted adults if they need to report a concern

Staff will:

- Follow the policy and procedures of the school in line with KCSiE 2023
- Report and respond to all incidences of child-on-child abuse seen or reported to them and respond in line with this guidance
- Promote a safe, nurturing environment where all students feel supported and safe and be or be able to signpost students to their trusted adults if they need help to report a concern
- Work proactively to operate within the school's processes to manage internet access in a safe way for the students. Staff will be proactive in reporting breaches in filtering and monitoring and work collaboratively to maintain a safe online experience.
- Undertake online safety training

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure there is online safety training for staff and it is included in the safeguarding and child protection training

The School Board will make sure that:

- All board members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction.
- There is a senior board level lead who takes responsibility for the setting's safeguarding responsibility to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practice, process, and policy (including online safety) is effective and is compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. The School Board, via the specified member, will challenge the school's leaders on effective safeguarding procedures, including the content of this policy. The School Board will use external specialists to support in this process.
- The DSL is an appropriate senior member of the leadership team and will have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.

### **3. Definition:**

Child on child abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences. It can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim. Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, educational under-achievement, being involved in crime. It should be recognised that child on child abuse is harmful to both the perpetrator and the victim.

It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys will be perpetrators, children with SEND are three times more likely to be abused by their peers ([KCSIE paragraph 449](#)).

This form of abuse is when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children/young people both on and offline. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children/young people. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"; or not recognising that emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children/young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Stopping harm and ensuring immediate safety is an education setting's first priority. (Source: [Safeguarding Network](#))

Examples of child on child abuse can include: bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, and abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.

Transphobia is also a form of child on child abuse. The school has zero tolerance for transphobia.

### **4. How to respond to incidents of child-on-child harm or abuse:**

(There is a flow diagram in **Appendix 1** that illustrates this section)

At The Lion Works School, we understand and recognise that incidents of child-on-child harm or abuse can happen within and outside of our school, as well as online. Incidents of abuse and harm are treated under this policy and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in conjunction with the Positive Behaviour Support policy.

All concerns must be recorded on 'Safeguard my School' and include factual and pertinent information. Any opinions must be logged as such.

At The Lion Works School:

- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to abuse.
- Incidents are taken very seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter,' 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up.' Banter and teasing can and should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- Even with a zero-tolerance approach, we take steps to educate, act and ensure we mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, or a culture that normalises abuse through our actions, words and curriculum
- It is understood that child-on-child harm may reflect equality issues in terms of those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics
- Early identification of vulnerability to child-on-child harm is made by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis and through our Vulnerability Risk Index completed on admission to the school

Clear systems are in place that are well promoted on site that are easily understood and easily accessible. These ensure both students and staff can confidently report abuse knowing that their concerns will be listened and responded to easily.

## **5. How we respond and manage concerns:**

If a disclosure or concern is reported to a member of staff, they will handle the initial reports of harm by:

- Securing the immediate safety of any student/s involved and will source support for any other person affected
- Listening carefully to the student, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc
- Using the TED approach when gathering the facts: tell me, explain, describe
- Ensuring that victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting **any** form of abuse or neglect, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report

- Not promising confidentiality, as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with other professionals
- Ensuring the student's wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and action that is taken to ensure the safety of the victim and other members of the child's cohort or within the school community
- Taking every opportunity to learn and educate staff and students from incidents
- Sharing and reviewing information with relevant parties
- Seeking external advice and guidance when and where necessary

It is important that our staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with our students so that it will facilitate open and honest communication and a strong culture of safeguarding.

We recognise that a student may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or that they may not recognise their experiences as being harmful. All our staff are trained and briefed in being vigilant and responsive at all times, exercising a professional curiosity and demonstrating an understanding that "it could happen here".

## 6. Actions to take in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

We will always reference Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023, Part 5) in relation to taking protective action.

We will take the following actions when responding to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Incidents will be reported immediately to the DSL/Deputy DSL who will undertake further assessment of what action should be taken that are proportional to the factors that have been identified. The DDSL has completed the necessary training to use The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Assessment Tool and this will be utilised to inform assessment of the risk and the appropriate subsequent actions to take. This may include seeking specialist advice and guidance from 'Be Safe': <https://www.awp.nhs.uk/camhs/camhs-services/HSB-services/be-safe>
- Our DSL/DDSL will take proportionate action and consider whether the case can be managed internally, through Early Help, or should involve other agencies (as required in line within 'Multi-Agency Working' section above)
- When an incident involves an act of sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this **must** be reported to the police immediately **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. This is on the understanding that the police will take an approach linked to the welfare of the child/children, rather than a criminal justice one. A concurrent referral to social care will also be made for **all children directly involved**. A strategy meeting may be requested where we can explicitly voice any concerns we may have of criminalisation in a multi-agency context in line with Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance: <https://pdscp.co.uk/>
- When the children involved require a statutory assessment either under s.17 or s.47 of the

Children Act 1989, a referral to social care should be undertaken

- Where the report includes an online element, the DSL/DDSL will follow the guidance as set out in [Searching, screening and confiscation at school 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612522/Searching_screening_and_confiscation_at_school_2022.pdf) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612522/Searching_screening_and_confiscation_at_school_2022.pdf). The headteacher may also seek advice from the local Safer Schools Community Team (SSCT)
- Our staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child
- Risk assessments and/or safety plans will be developed for individual children who have been involved in an incident. These will be reviewed at least every 3 months, or every time there is an occurrence of an incident. We will involve the student and their parents/carers and will aim to address contextual risks

## **7. Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child harm:**

The Lion Works School will minimise the risk of child-on-child harm, by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding. We will work hard to improve the safety of our environment and will always remain vigilant to spot the signs and contexts in which harm can occur – amongst social and peer groups and from within the locality and neighbourhood.

Following any incident of child-on-child harm, the DSL/Deputy DSL will take appropriate action and will also review and consider what lessons can be learned, considering for example, whether any practice or environmental changes must be made. Depending on the circumstances of the incident, this could include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and/or reviewing, utilising and including the delivery of specific safeguarding topics on the curriculum.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Flow Chart of reporting a concern

