



Child on Child Abuse Policy and Procedural Guidance

Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children

(Whole School Including EYFS)

First Issued:	September 2021	Next Review:	SpringTerm 2026
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Responsible:	Designated Safeguarding Lead		

1. Safeguarding Statement

At Orley Farm School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at, Orley Farm School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and to promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

2. Introduction

The different forms child-on-child abuse can take are listed in the definitions section of this policy.

Orley Farm School acknowledges that children can abuse their peers, including doing so online. We take all reports of child-on-child abuse seriously and will respond appropriately to incidents occurring both inside and outside school.

This policy sets out:

- Measures to minimise child-on-child abuse.
- Clear reporting systems for children to report abuse confidently.
- Procedures for recording, investigating, and addressing allegations.
- Support for victims, perpetrators, and affected children.
- Recognition that abuse may still occur even if no reports are made.
- A zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, rejecting dismissals such as "banter" or "part of growing up."
- An acknowledgment that while girls are statistically more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and taken seriously. It is also crucial to recognise that this is not always the case—girls can also be perpetrators, and boys can be victims

3. Policy Aims

We uphold a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, harassment, and harmful sexual behaviour. We respond to all concerns, recognising that children may not always report abuse directly.

We actively challenge inappropriate physical behaviour, recognising the risk of this becoming normalised if it goes unchallenged. If abuse is suspected, we follow Child Protection procedures, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all children.

4. Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community.

This policy is available on Firefly under the policies section.

This policy is reviewed and evaluated annually.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff maintain an 'it could happen here' approach.

- Head: Oversees policy implementation and liaises with stakeholders.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Matthew King (DSL), Rebecca Gascoigne (DDSL), Melanie Gentles (DDSL), and Henk Richards (DDSL) manage concerns and ensure proper safeguarding.

- Governor for child-on-child abuse: Kate Gater oversees safeguarding procedures.
- All staff, parents, and pupils must know how and where to report concerns.

6. Definitions of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying (cyber, prejudice-based, discriminatory).
- Abuse in relationships (e.g., teenage relationship abuse).
- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, hair-pulling, etc.).
- Sexual violence and harassment (including online).
- Forcing sexual activity without consent (e.g., coercion, grooming).
- Sharing of explicit images (sexting).
- Upskirting (taking inappropriate photos under clothing).
- Initiation/hazing rituals, which may involve harm or humiliation.

7. Non-Sexual Child-on-Child Abuse

Non-sexualised bullying is managed under our Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy. All incidents are recorded, analysed, and reported to senior leaders and governors.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is Kate Gater.

Non-sexualised bullying is managed under our Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy. All incidents are recorded, analysed, and reported to senior leaders and governors.

This information is reviewed at Pastoral Care Team meetings (PCT) which take place once a half term.

8. Recognising

Behaviours exist on a spectrum which means that they require careful consideration. We recognise that all children grow and develop at their own pace. We will use our professional judgement and knowledge of child development when responding to alleged child-on-child abuse.

The DSL (or DDSL) assesses:

- The victim's wishes regarding action.
- Nature, frequency, and severity of the abuse.
- Power imbalances (e.g., age, social status, disabilities).
- Context (e.g., online involvement, family circumstances).

We act in the child's best interests, following safeguarding principles.

In all cases, the staff will follow general safeguarding principles mandated throughout KSCIE. Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s), and any other children involved/impacted.

9. Reporting and Responding

Children, staff, parents, and visitors are encouraged to report concerns confidently. We treat all reports seriously, regardless of when they occur or where (in school, online, or outside school).

- Children: Report concerns verbally, via a trusted adult, or through written statements using the [Witness Statement Template](#).
- Staff: Record all concerns immediately and alert the DSL/DDSL.
- Visitors: Must report concerns before leaving school premises by using the school's Safeguarding protocols.

Response:

- Reports managed by two staff members where possible, including the DSL/DDSL.
- Confidentiality is not promised, but reports are only shared as necessary.
- Recognising the impact of the trauma: children may not recall events fully at first disclosure.
- Written records are factual and may contribute to statutory assessments.

These reports will be treated seriously, and the school remains committed to supporting and safeguarding all parties, including the victim, alleged perpetrator, and any other child(ren) who may be affected.

It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a DDSL) taking the leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as the Local Authority, Children's Social Care, and the Police, as appropriate. We will ensure we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community; the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

10. The Management of Reports

All staff are trained to manage reports following KSCIE Part 5 guidelines:

- Two Staff Members: Preferably, reports should be managed with two staff members present, including the DSL (or DDSL).
- Online Elements: Handle reports with online elements carefully, avoiding viewing or forwarding illegal images. Confiscate devices if necessary and hand them to the police.
- Confidentiality: Do not promise confidentiality initially, as concerns may need to be shared with the DSL (or DDSL) or local authority. Share reports only with those necessary to progress them.
- Trust and Support: Recognise that children may disclose to trusted staff members. Be supportive and respectful.
- Multiple Disclosures: Understand that initial disclosures may not be the only incidents reported. Trauma can affect memory.
- Barriers to Disclosure: Be aware of additional barriers for vulnerable children, including SEND needs, disabilities, sex, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
- Listening and Recording: Listen carefully, use the child's language; be non-judgmental; and avoid leading questions. Record the report thoroughly after the discussion, focusing on facts.
- Informing the DSL: Notify the DSL (or DDSL) as soon as possible if they are not involved in the initial report.

11. Risk Assessment

For reports of sexual violence, an 'immediate risk and needs assessment' is conducted by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), considering:

- Protection and support for the victim.
- Possible risk to others.
- Time, location, and potential patterns of behaviour.

Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and involve external agencies as necessary.

The DSL(or DDSL) should ensure they engage with the local authority children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk

assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required.

12. Four Management Options

Each report is considered case-by-case, with four possible outcomes:

- i. Internal Management (Handled within the school).
- ii. Early Help (Multi-agency support for early intervention).
- iii. Referral to Children's Social Care.
- iv. Police Referral (Criminal process and school management).

Unsubstantiated or false reports are reviewed for possible safeguarding concerns, ensuring fairness for all involved.

13. Unsubstantiated, Unfounded, False or Malicious Reports

All concerns, discussions, decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation need help or may have been abused by someone else, and this was a cry for help. A referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate in such circumstances.

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 our Behaviour Policy.

14. Ongoing Response

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

a. Ongoing Support

- Open Dialogue: Victims may disclose information gradually. Keeping dialogue open and encouraging is essential. A designated trusted adult (chosen by the victim) will be available for support.
- Behavioural Monitoring: The school will stay alert to changes in behaviour, signs of trauma, and emotional responses, showing sensitivity to the child's needs.
- Reasonable Adjustments: Adjustments to timetables and providing a physical space for withdrawal will be made to avoid isolation.
- Protection from Bullying: Efforts will be made to protect the victim from bullying and harassment following any report.
- Alternative Provision: Consideration of alternative provision will be given if requested by the victim and their parents/carers.

b. For Victims

- Prioritising their wishes and wellbeing. The victim will never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Keeping routines as normal as possible.
- Tailored support, including external agencies (e.g., CAMHS, Childline, NSPCC).
- Monitoring emotional and behavioural changes.

c. For Perpetrators

- Providing education and safeguarding support.
- Addressing underlying issues through intervention.

- Proportional disciplinary actions alongside ongoing monitoring.

d. For Other Pupils

- Preventing harassment or bullying related to the incident.
- Addressing social media misuse.
- Supporting bystanders who may have been impacted.

e. Parents/Carers

In line with the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 5, we will seek advice and support from other services on a case-by-case basis, considering the needs of individual children and the wider school community.

Parents/carers with concerns about child-on-child abuse should contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Leads. Initial concerns will be noted, and a meeting may be scheduled for a detailed discussion. Reports will be formally recorded, and relevant staff will be alerted. Urgent cases or those involving at-risk pupils will be referred to Statutory Services.

Parents/carers are encouraged to bring concerns directly to the school rather than discussing them with others in person or online.

The school is committed to supporting pupils and families in all instances of child-on-child abuse, keeping all parties informed while adhering to GDPR and statutory service investigations. There may be times when information cannot be shared.

If unsatisfied with the school's actions, parents/carers should follow the school's Complaints Policy and Procedures, available online or from the school office.

f. Preventative Strategies

We raise awareness and prevent child-on-child abuse through:

- Staff Training: identifying and responding to concerns, contextual safeguarding.
- RHE/RSHE Curriculum: Teaching healthy relationships, consent, and boundaries.
- Clear Reporting Pathways: empowering children to report safely.
- Parent Engagement: providing education and open communication channels.
- Whole-School Culture: challenging inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.

g. Breaches and Complaints

- Breaches of this policy are handled under school disciplinary procedures.
- Complaints follow our Complaints Policy, available online or from the school office.

15. Sanctions and the Alleged Perpetrator(s)

Teachers can sanction pupils whose conduct falls below expected standards, even while police or local authority investigations are ongoing. Schools can reach their conclusions and impose penalties based on the balance of probabilities, independent of other investigations.

The DSL (or DDSL) will lead the process. The school must consider whether any action would prejudice ongoing investigations or prosecutions, liaising carefully with the police and local authority. It is also crucial to determine if it is reasonable for the school to form its view while an independent investigation is underway.

16. Strategies for Prevention

- a. Our school aims to prevent child-on-child abuse through:

- Staff Training: including all staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors.
- Contextual Safeguarding: identifying and classifying specific behaviours.
- Zero-Tolerance Approach: making it clear that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable.
- Awareness and Reporting: recognising the scale of harassment and abuse, even if unreported.
- Challenging Behaviours: addressing physical behaviours and underlying attitudes.
- Governing Body Responsibilities: ensuring statutory safeguarding responsibilities are met.
- Feedback and Support: reporting issues to the safeguarding team to address trends and support children.

b. Information for Children

- Creating a supportive, non-judgmental environment.
- Educating about the effects and reasons for abuse.
- Informing about the school's zero-tolerance approach and reporting process.
- Embedding education on abuse in the RHE/RSHE curriculum.

c. Information for Parents/Carers

- Engaging in discussions and encouraging accountability.
- Addressing perceived risks and attitudes.
- Ensuring awareness of the school's ethos and culture.

d. RHE/RSHE Curriculum

- Promoting healthy relationships, boundaries, consent, equality, body confidence, and self-esteem.
- Educating on recognising abusive relationships and accessing support.
- Emphasising that sexual harassment and violence are always unacceptable.

17. Breaches / Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is unsatisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's Complaints Policy and Procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

18. Links with Other Policies

a. Linked Policies

This policy aligns with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Strategy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- RSE/PSHE Policy
- Complaints Policy

b. Further Guidance & Support

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) (UK Government guidance)
- Childline (childline.org.uk)
- NSPCC (nspcc.org.uk)
- Internet Watch Foundation (iwf.org.uk)
- Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs)
- Child and young people's mental health services (CAMHS)
- The NHS Help after a sexual assault - NHS NHS website for England - NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/>)

19. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year and is updated annually.