

St. George's Church of England Primary School



Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy

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This policy is embedded in our school's mission statement:

At St George's Church of England Primary School, we offer an exceptional educational experience founded on Christian values. We welcome children from all faiths and no faith and seek to inspire in them a love of learning, a passion to fulfil their potential and a commitment to serve the community.'

Policy	Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy
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Table of Contents

1. Purpose of Policy.....	4
2. Context and Definition.....	4
3. All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.	5
4. Responsibility	5
5. Framework and Legislation.....	6
6. Abuse and harmful behaviour.....	6
7. Types of abuse.....	7
8. Bullying.....	8
9. Online Bullying	9
10. Sexting / Sharing nude or indecent imagery	9
11. Prejudiced Behaviour.....	9
12. Recognising peer abuse	10
13. Taking Action	10
14. Informing parents/carers	10
15. Preventative Strategies.....	11



1. Purpose of Policy

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to explore some forms of child-on-child abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to the issues. At St. George's Church of England School, we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Learning Culture Policy

2. Context and Definition

2.1. Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It could be perpetrated by 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; it can occur online or face to face (both physically and verbally) and it is never acceptable.

2.2. At St. George's Church of England Primary School, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

2.3. Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware that it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely that it will be perpetrated by boys. But it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. In order for all pupils to experience life in all its fullness, reports of Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will investigate and deal with it with the utmost importance. Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment will be categorised as a bullying incident.

2.4. If needed, advice will be sought from the Children's Advice and Support Service and, on advice, be escalated to Birmingham Children's Trust and the Police to investigate further

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3. Staff Awareness

3.1. All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.

3.2. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from child-on-child abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

3.3. This abuse can:

- be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- result in significant, long lasting, and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim

3.4. Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs, for example:

- significant disruption in their own lives
- exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse

3.5. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is a priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead (s) must make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

4. Responsibility

4.1. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2022 states that ***‘Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of Child-on-child abuse and sets out how allegations of Child-on-child abuse will be investigated and dealt with’.***

4.2. It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard ***‘Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child’s wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give***

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feedback. Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.'

- 4.3. Child-on-child abuse is referenced in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with Child-on-child necessitate separate policy guidance. At St. George's Church of England School, we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

5. Framework and Legislation

- 5.1. This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, '**must be informed by the views of the child**'. (Working Together, 2018:21) This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

6. Abuse and harmful behaviour

- 6.1. It is necessary to consider:
- what abuse is and what it looks like
 - how it can be managed
 - what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
 - what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm
- 6.2. **Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.**
- 6.3. Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures

Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise

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causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2020)

- 6.4. Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- 6.5. Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.
- 6.6. Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime, including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.
- 6.7. The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

7. Types of abuse

- 7.1. There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.
- 7.2. Physical abuse
 - 7.2.1. This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.
- 7.3. Sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - 7.3.1. This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). The DSL will follow the [DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (May 2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 5 (2022).

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7.3.2. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

7.3.3. Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards.

7.3.4. Sexually harmful behaviour may include

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse.

7.4. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”.
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- upskirting: where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

8. Bullying

8.1. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

8.2. In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- an Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people



- repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

8.3. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

9. Online Bullying

9.1. Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. Online bullying can take many forms:

- abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- posting abusive comments on social media sites
- sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- stealing someone's online identity
- spreading rumours online
- trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chat rooms or games
- developing hate sites about another person
- prank calls or messages
- group bullying or exclusion online
- anonymous messaging
- encouraging a young person to self-harm
- pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

10. Sexting / Sharing nude or indecent imagery

10.1. The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.

10.2. Up skirting: typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

10.3. This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s).

11. Prejudiced Behaviour

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11.1. The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

12. Recognising peer abuse

12.1. An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- all alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- what was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- the effect on the victim
- any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- the child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

13. Taking Action

- always take complaints seriously
- gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- report immediately to Mr. Rogers/Mrs. Roberts or a Deputy DSLs if he/she is unavailable
- record any incident and action(s) on CPOMS
- consider contacting CASS for advice and/or referral to Police or Social Care
- contribute to multi-agency assessments

14. Informing parents/carers

14.1. The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. This will be done by Mr. Rogers/Mrs. Roberts or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse

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a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

15.Preventative Strategies

- 15.1. Child-on-child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. It is important to develop appropriate strategies to proactively prevent Child-on-child abuse.
- 15.2. St. George's Church of England school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive PSHE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.
- 15.3. Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Young people are part of changing their circumstances and, through school council and pupil voice for example, we encourage young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'.
- 15.4. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.