Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026–2027

Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children

Holly Grove Primary Academy

Statement of Commitment

Holly Grove Primary Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside of school, online and offline, and that all children are capable of abusing their peers.

We maintain a culture of vigilance, openness and respect in which children feel safe to speak, are listened to and know that concerns will be acted upon promptly and appropriately.

We are committed to ensuring that:

- all allegations and concerns are taken seriously;
- abuse is never dismissed as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys will be boys";
- victims are supported and protected;
- children who display harmful behaviour receive appropriate safeguarding support;
- all decisions are child-centred and made in the best interests of children.

Definition of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is any form of abuse between children.

Abuse may occur:

- in school;
- on school transport;
- during extra-curricular activities;
- in the community;
- online;
- through social media;
- through mobile phones and gaming platforms.

Child-on-child abuse can occur between children of:

- any age;
- any gender;
- any ability level;
- any background.

Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

Bullying

Including:

- physical bullying
- verbal bullying
- emotional bullying
- relational bullying

- cyberbullying
- discriminatory bullying
- prejudice-based bullying

Physical Abuse

Including:

- hitting
- kicking
- biting
- tripping
- spitting
- pushing
- hair pulling
- assault

Sexual Violence

Including:

- rape
- assault by penetration
- sexual assault
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Sexual Harassment

Including:

- sexual comments
- sexual name-calling
- sexual jokes
- sexualised behaviour
- unwanted touching
- online sexual harassment
- sexist comments
- misogynistic behaviour

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Including:

- developmentally inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- coercive behaviour;
- problematic sexual behaviour;
- sexually abusive behaviour.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Including:

- creating images;
- possessing images;
- sharing images;
- forwarding images;
- storing images.

Image-Based Abuse

Including:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images;
- AI-generated sexual imagery;
- manipulated images;
- deepfakes.

Upskirting

A criminal offence.

Abuse in Intimate Relationships

Including coercive and controlling behaviours.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Including:

- county lines;
- gang-associated behaviour;
- criminal exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE),Serious Violence, Prejudice-Based Abuse

Including abuse relating to:

- race;
- religion;
- disability;
- SEND;
- sexuality;
- gender reassignment;
- protected characteristics.

Initiation or Hazing Behaviours

Vulnerable Groups

While all children can experience child-on-child abuse, some groups are particularly vulnerable. These may include:

- children with SEND;
- children with communication difficulties;
- children with medical needs;
- children known to Children's Social Care;
- children in care;
- previously looked-after children;
- children with mental health needs;
- young carers;
- children experiencing domestic abuse;
- children who are persistently absent;
- children at risk of exploitation;

- children who are LGBTQ+;
- children perceived by others to be LGBTQ+.

The fact that a child is LGBTQ+ is not in itself a risk factor for harm. However, some children may be targeted because of their actual or perceived identity.

Safeguarding Culture

At Holly Grove Primary Academy we:

- maintain a culture of zero tolerance to abuse;
- promote respectful relationships;
- teach safeguarding through our curriculum;
- listen to children's views and lived experiences;
- encourage reporting;
- promote equality and inclusion;
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviours;
- maintain robust safeguarding recording systems;
- provide safe adults for children to talk to.

Children are taught about:

- respectful relationships;
- consent;
- boundaries;
- online safety;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- stereotyping;
- equality;
- discrimination;
- healthy friendships;
- reporting concerns.

Online Safety

We recognise that technology plays a significant role in safeguarding.

Child-on-child abuse can occur through:

- social media;
- live streaming;
- gaming platforms;
- messaging applications;
- group chats;
- AI-generated content;
- image manipulation;
- deepfakes.

The school maintains:

- filtering systems;
- monitoring systems;
- cyber-security measures;
- acceptable use procedures.

Concerns involving online abuse will be addressed with the same seriousness as offline abuse.

Reporting Concerns

Children can report concerns:

- to any member of staff;
- to the DSL or Deputy DSL;
- through safeguarding and wellbeing systems in school;
- via trusted adults;
- through worry boxes and reporting opportunities.

All staff must:

- maintain an attitude of "it could happen here";
- listen carefully;
- remain calm;
- avoid leading questions;
- avoid promising confidentiality;
- record accurately;
- report immediately to the DSL.

All concerns must be recorded on CPOMS.

Responding to Disclosures

Staff must:

Do

- listen carefully;
- reassure the child;
- take concerns seriously;
- record the child's exact words where possible;
- report immediately.

Do Not

- investigate;
- ask leading questions;
- promise confidentiality;
- confront other children;
- delay reporting.

Victims will always be:

- believed;
- taken seriously;
- protected;
- supported.

Initial Response by the DSL

The DSL will consider:

- the wishes of the child;
- the nature of the concern;
- whether a crime may have occurred;
- power imbalances;
- vulnerability factors;
- contextual safeguarding risks;
- online elements;
- ongoing risk.

The DSL may:

- manage internally;
- initiate Early Help;

- refer to Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service;
- make a police referral;
- seek specialist advice.

All decisions and rationale will be documented on CPOMS.

Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

Where required a written risk assessment and safety plan will be developed.
Consideration will include:

- victim safety;
- educational access;
- transport arrangements;
- break and lunchtime arrangements;
- friendship groups;
- online risks;
- social media activity;
- supervision arrangements;
- staff knowledge and information sharing.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly.

Support for Victims

Victims will be offered:

- a trusted adult;
- pastoral support;
- emotional wellbeing support;
- access to ELSA;
- nurture provision;
- play therapy;
- mental health support;
- external agency referrals where appropriate.

The needs and wishes of the victim will remain central throughout.

Support for Children Displaying Harmful Behaviour

We recognise that children who harm others may themselves have unmet safeguarding needs.
Support may include:

- Early Help;
- pastoral support;
- behaviour interventions;
- family support;
- CAMHS referral;
- safeguarding assessments;
- external agency involvement.

Support does not replace appropriate sanctions.

Recording and Information Sharing

All safeguarding concerns will be:

- recorded on CPOMS;
- stored securely;

- shared on a need-to-know basis;
- handled in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Records will include:

- concern raised;
- actions taken;
- rationale;
- outcomes;
- further monitoring.

Information sharing will never be prevented by fears around GDPR when safeguarding concerns exist.

Working with Parents and Carers

The school will usually inform parents and carers where concerns arise unless doing so would:

- place a child at risk;
- compromise a police investigation;
- compromise Children's Social Care involvement.

The school will work openly and professionally with families wherever possible.

Sanctions

Where behaviour breaches school expectations, sanctions may be applied in line with the Behaviour Policy.
Responses may include:

- restorative approaches;
- loss of privileges;
- behaviour support plans;
- suspension;
- permanent exclusion where appropriate.

Sanctions will be proportionate and consider safeguarding needs.

Staff Training

All staff receive:

- safeguarding training at induction;
- annual safeguarding updates;
- child-on-child abuse training;
- online safety training;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment training;
- CPOMS recording training.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs receive training every two years and continuous professional updates.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy

- Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Complaints Policy

Legislative Framework

This policy complies with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations

The school follows Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) procedures and local safeguarding arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees and Local Governing Board will monitor implementation of this policy through:

- safeguarding reports;
- CPOMS audits;
- behaviour analysis;
- attendance monitoring;
- pupil voice;
- safeguarding audits;
- policy reviews.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- legislation changes;
- KCSIE is updated;
- safeguarding reviews identify required amendments;
- local safeguarding arrangements change.

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Susan Barnes
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:
As published in the annual safeguarding arrangements.
Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service (SCAS):
0300 111 8007
Emergency:
999

NSPCC Helpline:
0808 800 5000
Childline:
0800 1111
This policy should be read in conjunction with the Holly Grove Primary Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and all safeguarding-related procedures.