

KINGSFLEET PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Be the best you can be!'



Child on Child Abuse

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<i>Date Approved</i>	
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Child on Child Abuse Policy

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1 Introduction

Kingsfleet Primary School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse.

2 Purpose of Policy

Is the School's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute child on child abuse. It relates to, and should be read alongside, the School's child protection policy and any other relevant policies including, but not limited to, behaviour, online safety, IT use, data protection and retention of records, children missing in education and exclusions

- Sets out our strategy for improving prevention, and identifying and appropriately managing child on child abuse. It is the product of a comprehensive consultation – which has involved students, staff and parents, and a risk assessment.
- Applies to all governors, the senior leadership team, and staff. It is reviewed annually, and updated in the interim, as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which students are/or may be exposed. A number of staff and students are involved in each annual review which involves, and is informed by, an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of this policy over the previous years.

3 What is child on child abuse?

Child on child abuse is sexual, emotional or physical abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children, and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE), 2021).

It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it. Children can experience child on child abuse in a wide range of settings, including: at school at home or in someone else's home in public spaces online (NSPCC, 2018).

It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, child on child abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground, corridors and when children are walking home (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020).

As children develop healthily, it's normal for them to display certain types of behaviour. It's important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if any behaviour has become harmful or abusive, and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe.

We recognise that child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation • Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships

- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy. This policy concentrates on child on child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence, physical abuse and emotional abuse. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child on child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Partnership policy and procedures.

In regard to Harmful Sexual behaviour we are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as: "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult." We will also use Simon Hackett's continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours and the Brook Traffic Lights (Appendix 3).

4 Responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

At Kingsfleet Primary 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.

The governors, senior leadership team, and all staff at Kingsfleet are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child on child abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the School.

In particular, we:

- Believe that in order to protect children, all schools should (a) be aware of the nature and level of risk to which their students are or may be exposed, and put in place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to their specific safeguarding context; and (b) take a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach to preventing and responding to child on child abuse,
- Regard the introduction of this policy as a preventative measure. We (a) do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to child on child abuse in response to alleged incidents of it; and (b) believe that in order to tackle child on child abuse proactively, it is necessary to focus on all four of the following areas: (i) systems and structures; (ii) prevention; (iii) identification; and (iv) response/intervention
- Recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and child on child abuse in the school setting, and
- Encourage parents to hold us to account on this issue, so that if their child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the School so that it can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response.

5 Identifying child on child abuse

When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child. Child on child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

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

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; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

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
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of all staff at Kingsfleet Primary School.

However, emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. All school staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help. If in any doubt, all staff should report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6. Expected staff action

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-school actions. If in any doubt, staff are to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Context Child on child abuse takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. It is essential that responses to incidents are proportionate and contextual.

Cases of child on child abuse are often complex, may involve multiple young people, and consent may be unclear. This is especially difficult when young people may be victims but also involved in the harm of others. In some instances it may be most appropriate to respond internally. However,

in other instances, cases may require a referral to the police and/or social care. We understand that this is not always clear. We refer to the flow chart (Appendix 1) and consider the following when deciding if an incident requires referral.

The Education MASH team are available via phone and email to offer support in order to ensure the appropriate risk assessments/referrals/ support is in place for the victim and child alleged to have caused harm.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant. (Appendix 2)

Recording and Reporting

All incidents/causes for concern are to be recorded on CPOMs as soon as practically possible, this includes all actions taken.

All paper notes of assessments and consideration made during the steps outlined below, need to be scanned and added to CPOMs.

The following is a guide to the steps to be taken;

a. Assessment

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

b. Taking Action

It is important to deal with a situation of child on child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

Additional considerations when recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the Intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, if you have not already done so; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If MASH and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

Informing parents/carers

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse 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.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident, then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

7. Points to consider

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however, should not be overlooked.

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more, supervision required within this particular area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred? Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

8. Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required. Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class

or year group for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases, support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required (Appendix 2). This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour. The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

9. Preventative Strategies

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.

Kingsfleet 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/RSHE 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. The school makes sure that 'support and report' signposting is available to young people.

Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

Young people are part of changing their circumstances and we involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

See also the Behaviour Policy for strategies and approaches used to encourage and support positive behaviour choices.

10. Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000549/The_Children_Act_1989_guidance_and_regulations_Volume_2_care_planning_placement_and_case_review.pdf

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)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fd0a8e78fa8f54d5d6555f9/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

At Kingsfleet we adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which is found in the Equality Act 2010 s.149

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e3237ed915d74e33f0ac9/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Human Rights Act 1998

11. Further information

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework (NSPCC)

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation at School (Jan 2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbe55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

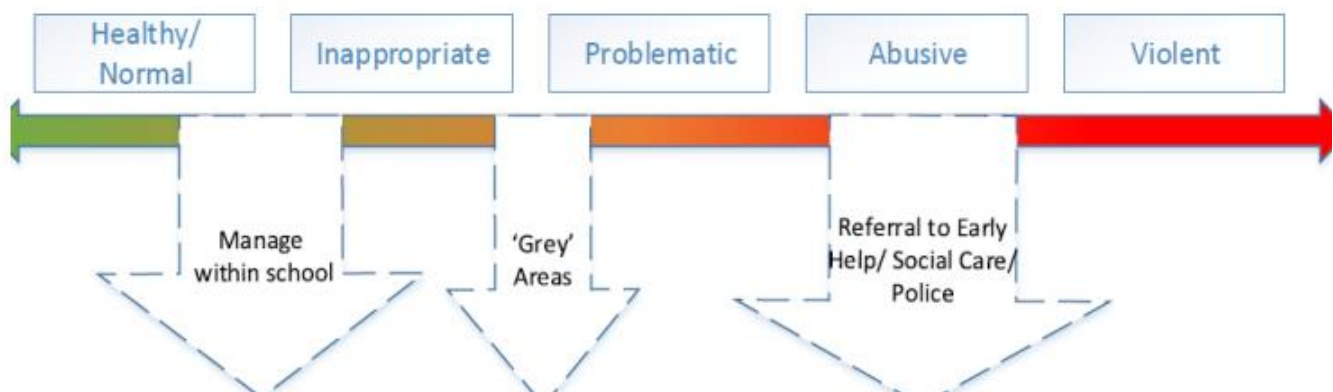
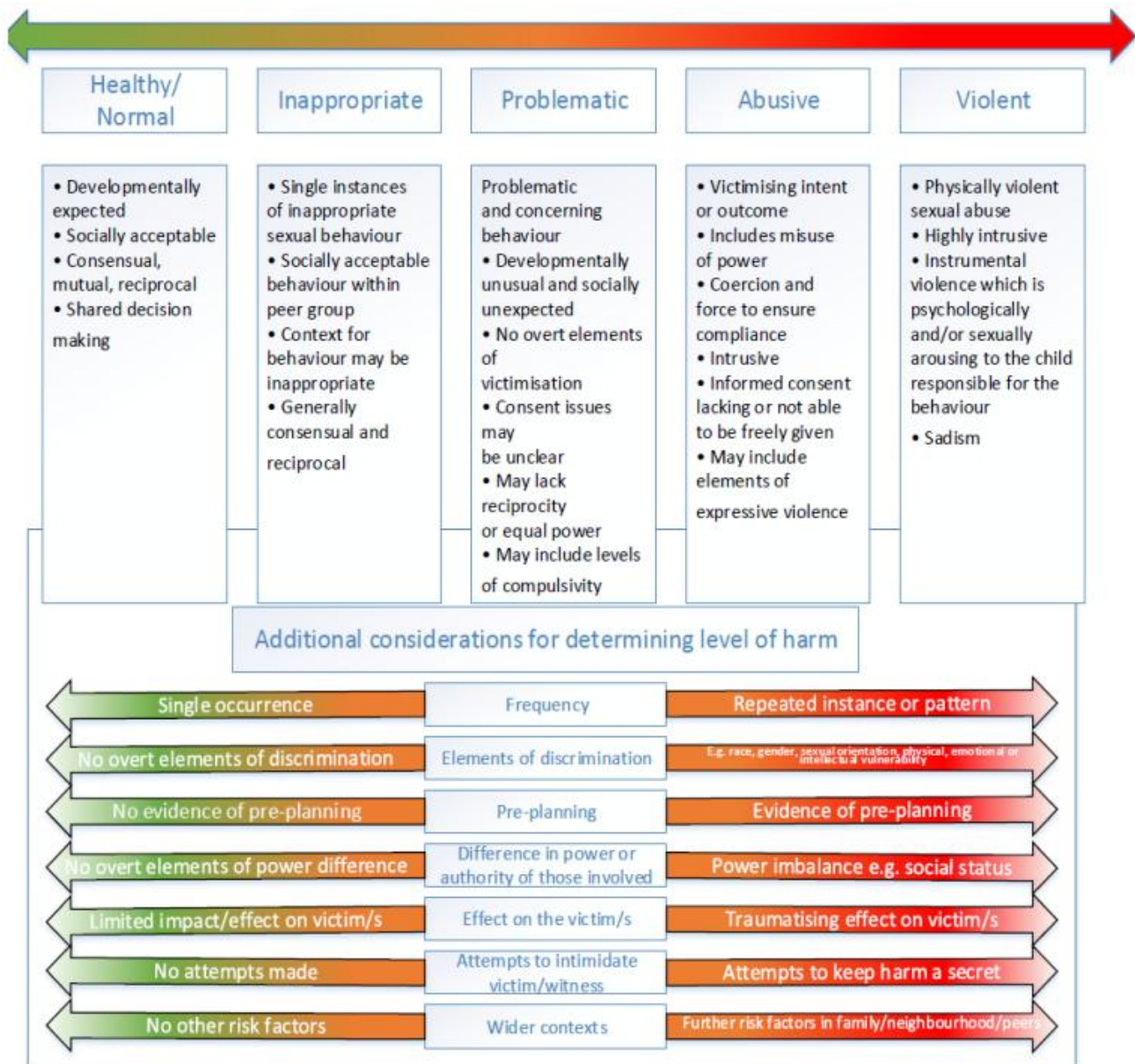
DfE: Mental Health and behaviour in schools (Nov 2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee6148fa8f54a8bb65ba9/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf

UKCIS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety>

Procedures for Child on Child abuse *Simon Hackett (2010)*



Grey Areas

Complete a risk assessment

Contact the MASH Consultation line for advice

Simon Hackett's continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours and the Brook Traffic Lights

Appendix 2

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<p>Developmentally expected</p> <p>Socially acceptable</p> <p>Consensual, mutual, reciprocal</p> <p>Shared decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic and concerning behaviours • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May include levels of compulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim • May include elements of expressive violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator • Sadism

This Risk assessment is intended to be used whereby an incident(s) of child on child abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

The Risk assessment will show considerations made for both/all pupils involved and will highlight the plan in place to keep all pupils safe. This will also take into consideration the rights, wishes and feelings of all children involved.

Each section/question will be considered from the perspective of all pupils involved. Considerations will also be given for the impact on, and needs of, the wider school community. All concerns and proposed actions will be recorded. The school will work with the local multi-agency safeguarding hub and other agencies as necessary when completing this risk assessment.

This document should be reviewed frequently to ensure it is fit for purpose. The terms victim and child alleged to have caused harm are used to identify the children involved. NB: there should be no assumption of guilt on the part of the child alleged to have caused harm, pending investigation.

Human Rights Act & The Equalities Act 2010.

When completing this risk assessment, safeguarding staff must have absolute consideration for the HRA and Equalities Act. The victim and child alleged to have caused harm (including parents) must be made aware of these rights. These rights include:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right);
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity;
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination;
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education. Being subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances. Equality Duty Education settings are required to comply with relevant requirements as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act):
 - According to the Equality Act, education settings must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of this guidance education settings should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to their sex and sexuality. Provisions within the Equality Act allow education settings to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

A risk assessment should be completed for all cases relating to sexual violence or alleged sexual violence.

Sexual violence is defined by the sexual offences act 2002 as "criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault". This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges and the local West Midlands policy (2.24)

Risk Assessment for Child on child Abuse/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Basic Information	
Referrer Name	
Referrer Role	
Referrer Contact Details	email: Phone:
Did incident occur on school premises?	
If not, where did the incident occur?	

Considerations	Risk Consider victim, child alleged to have caused harm, other pupils and staff	Risk Level High, medium or low	Actions to reduce risk	Revised risk level
What is the incident?				
Who was involved				
Where did it happen?				
Does this incident constitute a crime? <i>Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing of indecent images of children, etc.</i> If 'yes' has this been referred to the police?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? <i>Refer to KCSiE and DfE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.</i>				

Considerations	Risk Consider victim, child alleged to have caused harm, other pupils and staff	Risk Level High, medium or low	Actions to reduce risk	Revised risk level
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the child alleged to have caused harm to the victim and/or others?				
Is either victim or the child alleged to have caused harm to the victim and/or others?				
Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident? <i>Eg bullying or 'retribution' by peers</i>				
Do they share classes?				
Do they share break times?				
Do they share peer/ friendship groups?				
Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?				
Is there a risk of harm from social media (or gossip)?				

Further Action (complete for each child involved)

Name:		
Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Name:		
Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Name:		
Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

