

Child on Child (including harassment and violence) Abuse Policy

Version	6.1
Approving Body	Trust Board
Date ratified	24 September 2026
Date issued	25 September 2026
Review date	July 2027
Owner	Trust CEO
Applies to	All Trust Schools, all Trust staff

Version	Date	Reason
1.0	September 2021	To establish a trust-wide policy
2.0	September 2022	Terminology changes following update to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
3.0	July 2023	Reviewed as part of the review cycle
4.0	July 2024	Reviewed as part of the review cycle
5.0	July 2025	Reviewed as part of the review cycle
6.0	July 2026	Reviewed as part of the review cycle and updates from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
6.1	September 2026	Reviewed following updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

The Child on Child (including harassment and violence) Abuse Policy for Initio Learning Trust is based on a template provided by the Farrer & Co; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026.

In drawing up the Trust's Child on Child Abuse (including harassment and violence) Policy, the Trust has considered the range of people who will refer to the Policy i.e. trustees, leaders, teaching staff, support and lunch staff, parent helpers, volunteers, supply staff etc, as well as students and parents. The Trust will monitor the implementation of the Policy as part of its annual monitoring cycle and will consider such issues as:

- How does the Trust and its schools demonstrate that staff have read and applied this Policy?
- The implications of the policy on training for staff, trustees, leaders, DSLs etc.
- The ongoing involvement of the school's Children's Safeguarding Board in implementation of the Policy

Contents

- 1.** Introduction
- 2.** Understanding Child on Child Abuse
- 3.** Responding to concerns and allegations
- 4.** References

Appendix 1 – Responding to disclosures flow chart

Appendix 2 – Safety Plan

1. Introduction

Initio Learning Trust and its schools are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of Child on Child abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond our Trust Schools.

In particular, we:

- believe that in order to protect children, all staff should 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 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 do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to Child on Child abuse in response to alleged incidents of it;
- recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and ensure that our students are safe; 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 other children, they should inform the School so that it can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response.

This policy:

- is the Trust's policy for any issue that could constitute Child on Child abuse. It relates to, and should be read alongside:

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Exclusions Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Online Safety Policy

Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy

- applies to all staff, including Local School Committee members, Trustees, volunteers, trainee teachers, apprentices, anyone working in or on behalf of the Trust and its schools. 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.
- recognises that abuse is abuse, and should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up',
- is compliant with the statutory guidance on Child-on-Child abuse as set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2026),

- does not use the term ‘victim’ and/or ‘perpetrator’. This is because our Trust takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in concerns or allegations about Child on Child abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused, and those who are alleged to have abused another child (ren), in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required for the latter. Research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of Child on Child abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by another child, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of other children.
- uses the terms ‘child’ and ‘children’, which is defined for the purposes of this policy as a person aged under 18. We have nonetheless chosen not to restrict our approach to Child on Child abuse under this policy to children but instead to adopt a wider interpretation of our safeguarding responsibilities so that they apply to all students, regardless of age. The Trust’s response to incidents involving the exchange of Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy
- will need to differ depending on the age of the students involved [see the Trust’s Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy for further information]. There is also likely to be a more significant criminal justice response in relation to any student responsible for abuse who is aged 18 or over.
- should, if relevant, according to the concern(s) or allegation(s) raised, be read in conjunction with the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, part 5, and any other advice and guidance referred to within it, as appropriate, and
- should be read in conjunction with the Dorset Children's Safeguarding partnership and BCP Children's Safeguarding Partnership Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

2. Understanding Child on Child abuse

What is Child on Child abuse?

Child on Child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial abuse and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non- intimate), friendships and wider peer associations.

Child on Child abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):

- bullying (including cyberbullying),
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (teenage relationship abuse) domestic violence,
- child sexual exploitation,
- sexual violence and sexual harassment (sexual comments, jokes and remarks), upskirting and harmful sexual behaviour,
- gender based violence and serious youth violence,

- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling, shaking or otherwise causing physical harm,
- consensual and non consensual making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy, and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith targeted abuse and other prejudice based incidents.

These types of abuse do not always take place in isolation and can indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

What is Contextual Safeguarding?

This policy encapsulates a contextual safeguarding approach:

- which is about changing the way that professionals approach child protection when risks occur outside of the family, thereby requiring all those within a Local Safeguarding Partnership to consider how they work alongside, rather than just refer into, Local Authority Children's Social Care, to create safe spaces in which children may have encountered Child on Child abuse.
- being aware of and seeking to understand the impact that these wider social contexts may be having on the students in our schools'
- creating a safe culture in the Trust and its schools by, for example, implementing policies and procedures that address Child on Child abuse and harmful attitudes; promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender/ sexuality; hotspot mapping to identify risky areas in the School; training on potential bias and stereotyped assumptions,
- being alert to and monitoring changes in students' behaviour and/or attendance, and
- contributing to local child protection agendas by, for example, challenging poor threshold decisions and referring concerns about contexts to relevant local agencies (see section entitled 'multi-agency working').

When does behaviour become problematic or abusive?

All behaviour 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.

Sexual behaviours

Simon Hackett has proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a student's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it.

Sexual behaviours continuum model

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Problematic and concerning behaviour • 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	• Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given • May include elements of expressive violence	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for the behaviour • Sadism

Hackett's continuum relates exclusively to sexual behaviours and is not exhaustive. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can be helpful in identifying sexual behaviours in children. Staff should use their professional judgement and discuss concerns with the DSL. Where an (alleged) incident involves sexually harmful behaviour, staff should consult the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 part 5.

Other behaviour

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable,
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time,
- is socially acceptable within the peer group,
- is problematic and concerning,
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability,
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning,
- involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power, and
- involves a misuse of power.

The importance of intervening early and addressing any inappropriate behaviour does not just apply on an individual student basis, but could also apply across the student body.

Behaviour generally considered inappropriate may in fact indicate emerging concerning behaviour in which the school needs to take a whole-school approach in order to prevent escalation.

How can a child who is being abused by another child be identified?

All staff should be alert to the well-being of students and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by Child on Child abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way in which children will disclose or present with behaviour as a result of their experiences will differ.

Signs that a child may be suffering from child on child abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse (please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for indicators of abuse) and can include:

- Failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard originally expected
- Physical injuries
- Experiencing difficulties with mental health and emotional well being
- Becoming withdrawn, shy, experiencing headaches, stomach ache, anxiety, panic attacks, nightmares and sleeping too much or not enough.
- Broader changes in behaviour including substance and alcohol misuse
- Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way not appropriate for the child's age
- Abusing behaviour towards others

Abuse affects children differently, the above list is not exhaustive and a sign of one or more of these does not indicate abuse, the behaviour children present with will depend on the context of their circumstances.

The Trust and its school should regularly review behaviour incident logs which can help to identify any changes in behaviour and/or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage. Where the child exhibits behaviour which is out of character or abnormal for their age the Trust and its school should consider whether an underlying concern is contributing to their behaviour including, whether the child is being harmed or abused by other children.

Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by other children?

Any child can be vulnerable to Child on Child abuse due to the strength of peer influence during adolescence and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst **all** children. Evidence shows that children with SEND and LGBTQ+ are at greater risk of child on child abuse and can face additional unique barriers to disclosure. In addition children with disabilities are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by other children. For example, an image of a child could be shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to Child on Child abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any

characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family. Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others and/or who are socially isolated from other children may be more vulnerable to Child on Child abuse. Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by other children.

Research suggests that Child on Child abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different. As a result, the Trust and its schools will need to explore the gender dynamics of Child on Child abuse within their settings, and recognise that these will play out differently in single sex, mixed or gender- imbalanced environments:

How can the Trust and its schools raise awareness and prevent Child on Child abuse?

The Trust and its schools actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child on child abuse by:

Educating all trust staff, students and parents about these issues, this includes:

- Training all trust staff on the nature, prevalence and effect of child on child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This involves the identification and classification of specific behaviours, including digital behaviours, the importance of taking seriously all forms of child on child abuse (no matter how 'low level' they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on- child abuse is ever dismissed as 'banter' or 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny creates a culture that normalises abuse.
- educating children about the nature and prevalence of Child on Child abuse via Relationship and sex education, PSHE, the wider curriculum and ensuring that children understand the law on child on child abuse and that it is there to protect them rather than criminalise them. They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of Child on Child abuse.
- engaging parents on these issues by communicating with parents about this, both in groups and, as appropriate, on a one to one basis and seeking their views about the perceived risks and areas of improvement.
- creating conditions in which our students can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture:
- which is founded on the idea that every member of our Trust community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships, and helping to create a safe environment in which violence and abuse are never acceptable.

- in which students are able to develop trusting relationships with staff, and in which staff understand, through regular discussion and training, the importance of these relationships in providing students with a sense of belonging.
- in which students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to,
- responding to cases of Child on Child abuse promptly and appropriately, and
- ensuring that all Child on Child abuse issues are fed back to the DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify students who may need additional support.

Serious violence and Preventative Actions

Staff must remain highly vigilant to signs of serious physical violence and peer conflict. The Trust and its schools recognises that violence often peaks in the hours immediately before and after the school day, particularly during student travel. Schools must work with local partners to identify and map risk areas around the school day to coordinate a collective protective response.

-

Multi-agency working

The Trust and its schools will engage with its local partners in relation to child on child abuse and will work closely with Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and other relevant agencies (and other Schools) as appropriate.

The relationships with these partners are essential to ensuring that the Trust is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of Child on Child abuse. They help the Trust to develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in the local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist and ensure that its students are able to access the range of services and support they need quickly.

In addition, increase the Trust and its school's awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in its local area to enable it to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by its students.

The Trust and its schools actively refer concerns and allegations of Child on Child abuse where necessary to Local Authority Children's Social Care, the police, CHAD and/or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. This is particularly important because Child on Child abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the alleged incident cannot appropriately be managed internally by the School itself) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

3. Responding to concerns or allegations of Child on Child abuse

General principles

It is essential that all concerns and allegations of Child on Child abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly. The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on our school environment.

Any response should:

- include a thorough investigation of the concern(s) or allegation(s), and the wider context in which they may have occurred (as appropriate) – depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident(s), it may be appropriate for the police and/or Local Authority Children’s Social Care to carry out this investigation,
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk - while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. The School should ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it, and additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter,
- take into account:
 - that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, consider and address the effect of wider sociocultural contexts – such as the child’s/ children’s peer group (both within and outside the School); family; the School environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children’s online presence. Consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the child/ children’s needs and to mitigate risk, and
 - the potential complexity of Child on Child abuse and of children’s experiences, and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited they are not consenting,
 - the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL should discuss the proposed action with the child/ children and their parents, and obtain consent to any referral before it is made. The School should manage the child/children’s expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so. It is particularly important to consider the wishes of any child who has allegedly been abused, and to give that child as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and how they will be supported.

What should you do if you suspect either that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by another child(ren), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing another child (ren)?

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by another child (ren), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing another child (ren), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay (in accordance with the Safeguarding and child protection policy) so that a course of action can be agreed.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.

If a child speaks to a member of staff about child on child abuse that they have witnessed or are a part of, the member of staff should listen to the child and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement. For further details please see the procedures set out in section [12] of the Safeguarding and child protection policy.

How will the School respond to concerns or allegations of Child on Child abuse?

The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the member of staff who has reported it/them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/children affected.

Where any concern(s) or allegation(s) indicate(s) that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL should consider what urgent action can be taken in addition to the actions and referral duties set out in this policy, and in the Trust's, Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy, to seek specialist help in preventing the images spreading further and removing the images from the internet.

DSLs should always use their professional judgement to assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour and determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required.

In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with CHAD or other relevant agencies in accordance with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

Where the DSL considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL should contact CHAD or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of the alleged behaviour. The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:

A Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible. Where the alleged behaviour between children is abusive or violent (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic – unless as stated above), scenarios B, C or D should ordinarily apply. However, where support from local agencies is not available, the Trust and its School may need to handle concerns or allegations internally. In these cases, the Trust and its School will engage and seek advice from external specialists.

B Undertake/contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of the child/children and their family. These services may, for example, include family and parenting programmes, responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra familial contexts, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team, CAMHS and/or youth offending services.

C Refer the child/children to Local Authority Children's Social Care for a section 17/47 statutory assessment. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care (and, if appropriate, a report to the police) is made immediately. This referral will be made to Local Authority Children's Social Care in the area where the/each child lives. Depending on the safeguarding procedures issued by the Local Safeguarding Partnership in that area, there will normally be an initial review and assessment of the referral, in accordance with that area's assessment framework. As a matter of best practice, if an incident of Child on Child abuse requires referral to and action by Local Authority Children's Social Care and a strategy meeting is convened, then the School will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it, and the contexts to which the abuse was associated.

D Report alleged criminal behaviour to the police. Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the police. However, there are some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the police. For example, where the exchange of Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI does not involve any aggravating factors [see the Trust's Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI policy for further information]. All concerns or allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis, and in light of the wider context.

Safety plans

The Trust and its schools will always carry out a safety plan in respect of:

- any child who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent,
- any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child, or
- any child who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

Where it is alleged that a child has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL will use their professional judgement – based on the particular concern(s) and/or allegation(s) raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question – to determine whether it would be appropriate to contact Local Authority Children's Social Care, and to carry out a safety plan.

Careful judgement and consideration are required as to whether alleged behaviour which might be judged to be inappropriate by an adult might actually be harmful to another child. Consultation is recommended with Local Authority Children's Social Care if there is any

doubt about this. Careful consideration should also be given to a range of factors including the context, severity of the alleged behaviour, impact of the alleged behaviour on others, risk to others, and whether there are any patterns of behaviour occurring.

Where other children have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration should also be given by the DSL to whether there might be any risks to those children, and whether a safety plan would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

Information sharing, data protection and record keeping

When responding to concern(s) or allegation(s) of Child on Child abuse, the Trust and its schools will:

- always consider carefully, in consultation with Local Authority Children’s Social Care, the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), how to share information about the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the student(s) affected, their parents, staff, and other students and individuals,
- record the information that is necessary for the School and other relevant agencies (where they are involved) to respond to the concern(s) or allegation(s) and safeguard everyone involved,
- keep a record of the legal purpose for sharing the information with any third party, including relevant authorities, and ensure that the third party has agreed to handle the information securely and to only use it for the agreed legal purpose, and
- be mindful of and act in accordance with its safeguarding and data protection duties, including those set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and the HM Government advice on Information Sharing) and Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Disciplinary action

The Trust and its schools may wish to consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any child/children involved. However, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that the Trust and its School works in partnership with the police and/or Local Authority Children’s Social Care.

Where a matter is not of interest to the police and/ or Local Authority Children’s Social Care, the Trust and its Schools may still need to consider what is the most appropriate action to

take to ensure positive behaviour management. Disciplinary action may sometimes be appropriate, including to:

- ensure that the child/children take responsibility for and realise the seriousness of their behaviour;
- demonstrate to the child/children and others that Child on Child abuse can never be tolerated; and
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children.

However, these considerations must be balanced against any police investigations, the child's/children's own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns. Before deciding on appropriate action the Trust and its Schools will always consider its duty to safeguard all children in its care from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the Child on Child abuse and the causes of it.

The Trust and its Schools will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. For example, action may still need to be taken by the School in relation to other students who have been involved with and/or affected by Child on Child abuse. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other children in the School. In the event of any managed move, consideration must be given to sharing information with the receiving school regarding the child-on-child abuse in order to allow best protection of children in the new school.

Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of Child on Child abuse and the Trust and its School will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above and below.

On-going proactive work for a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach

The Trust and its school's response to concerns or allegations of Child on Child abuse should be part of ongoing proactive work to embed best practice and in taking a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach to such abuse. As such the Trust and its School's response can become part of its wider prevention work.

The response will include the School asking itself a series of questions about the context in which an incident of Child on Child abuse occurred in the School, the local community in which the School is based, and the wider physical and online environment – such as:

1. What protective factors and influences exist within the School (such as positive peer influences, examples where Child on Child abuse has been challenged, etc.) and how can the School bolster these?

2. How (if at all) did the School's physical environment or the students' routes to and from the School contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by improving the School's safety, security and supervision, or by working with local safeguarding partners to mitigate the risks to students' safety whilst travelling to and from the School?
3. How (if at all) did the online environment contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by strengthening the way in which the School encourages positive and safe use of the internet by students?
4. Did wider gender norms, equality issues, and/or societal attitudes contribute to the abuse?
5. What was the relationship between the abuse and the cultural norms between staff and students, and how can these be addressed going forward?
6. Does the abuse indicate a need for staff training on, for example, underlying attitudes, a particular issue or the handling of particular types of abuse, or to address any victim-blaming narratives from staff?
7. How have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had?
8. Does the case or any identified trends highlight areas for development in the way in which the Trust and its Schools works with children to raise their awareness of and/or prevent Child on Child abuse, including by way of the PSHE curriculum and lessons that address underlying attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work, respect, boundaries, consent, children's rights and critical thinking and/or avoiding victim-blaming narratives?
9. Are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the School engages with parents to address Child on Child abuse issues?
10. Are there underlying issues that affect other schools in the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?
11. Does this case highlight a need to work with certain children to build their confidence, and teach them how to identify and manage abusive behaviour?
12. Were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the School?

Answers to these questions will be used to develop an action plan that is reviewed on a regular basis by the Trust, School's leadership and the DSL. The School will, where possible and appropriate, work with the local authority and wider partners to deliver on this plan.

Appendix 1 – Responding to disclosures flow chart

Definitions

Sexual Violence

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual remarks, sexual taunts, physical behaviour or online sexual harassment

Record Keeping

Remember, to record all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions on MyConcern

REPORT RECEIVED
(from the victim or third party)
(Onsite, offsite or online)

Victim reassured

- Taken seriously and kept safe
- Confidentiality not promised
- Listen to victim, non-judgmentally
- Record the disclosure (facts as reported)
- Two staff present (one being DSL or reports to DSL as soon as possible)
- Victim sensitivity informed about referral to other agencies
- If victim does not give consent to share, staff may lawfully share in order to protect child from harm and to promote the welfare of children
- Parents of victim informed

Anonymity

Note that in cases of sexual violence there is legal protection of the victim's identity. Remember that this also includes sharing on social media and discussion amongst pupils in the school

Considerations

(Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviours)

Immediately: Consider how to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator

- Wishes of the victim
- Nature of the alleged incident
- Ages of the young people
- Development stage of the child
- any power imbalance
- one off or pattern
- any ongoing risks
- other related issues

Manage Internally

One off incidents which the school believes are not in need of early help or statutory intervention, which would be appropriate to deal with internally under the school's behaviour policy

Early Help

Non violent Harmful sexual behaviour (use Harmful sexual Behaviours Framework (NSPCC and the Sexual behaviours Continuum model)

Refer to CHAD/MASH

All incidents where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger
Social Care Staff will decide the next steps. Be ready to escalate if necessary

Refer to Police

All incidents of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault

Discuss the next steps with the police including disclosing information to staff, informing the alleged perpetrator and their parents

Risk Assessment Case by case basis

Risk Assessment Immediately using RAMP Model

Do not wait for the outcome of referral before protecting the victim
Emphasis on victim being able to continue normal routines
Alleged perpetrator removed from any classes with victim (also consider shared spaces and journey to/from school) (Not a judgement of guilt)

Safeguarding and support Victim and (alleged) Perpetrator

Safeguarding and support victim and (alleged) perpetrator (see page 2)

Disciplinary Measures Taken (See school behaviour Policy)

Disciplinary Measures Taken
(may be undertaken based on balance of probabilities, unless prejudicial or unreasonable)

Criminal Process Ends

Conviction or Caution: follow behaviour policy, consider Permanent Exclusions. If pupil remains in school, make clear expectations, keep victim and perpetrator apart. Consider victim's wishes

Not Guilty: Support victim and alleged perpetrator

No further action: Support victim and alleged perpetrator

Ensure actions do not jeopardize the investigations
School to work closely with the police and other agencies

Risk Assessment for Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour Process and Safety Plan

The terms victim and child alleged are used to identify the children involved. NB: there should be no assumption of guilt on the part of the alleged perpetrator, pending investigation.

Each section/question will be considered from the perspective of both pupils. Considerations will be given for the impact on, and needs of, the wider school community. All concerns and proposed actions will be recorded.

The Trust will work with the local multi-agency safeguarding teams in each local authority and other agencies as necessary when completing this risk assessment. This document should be reviewed frequently to ensure it is fit for purpose.

***A safety plan 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 safety plan should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges and the local policies on the intranet and publish on our websites.**

Basic information	Details
Referrer Name and role	
Referrer Contact details (email address and phone number)	
Name of school(s) for victim(s)	
Name of school(s) for child/ren alleged to have caused harm	
Did the 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 (high, medium or low)
What is the nature of the incident?				
Does this incident constitute a crime? Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing indecent images of children etc. As such has this been referred to the police?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from 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 (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?				
Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm at risk of emotional and mental health wellbeing?				
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 (high, medium or low)
Do they share a class?				

Do they share break times?				
Do they share transport to/from school?				
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 and gossip?				

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to CHAD/MASH		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to STARS		
Safer Schools involvement		

Safety Plan Outcome

Person 1	Risk from person 1 to others, individual or community (high, medium, low)	Risk to person 1 from other (high, medium, low)	Level of possible future harm to others, individuals or community from person 1 (high, medium, low)	Level of possible future harm to person 1 from others (high, medium, low)

Person 2	Risk from person 2 to others, individual or community (high, medium, low)	Risk to person 2 from other (high, medium, low)	Level of possible future harm to others, individuals or community from person 2 (high, medium, low)	Level of possible future harm to person 2 from others (high, medium, low)

Guide for table decisions

Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning

RISK High – repeat incident likelihood is strongly present, or other incidents likely either by knowledge of previous incidents or issues within current incident present, report to police made for current incident

RISK Medium – risk of repeat incident is possible, or further incident linked to issue, may have some context increasing risk from low, may have sought advice or guidance from safeguarding partner – police/health

RISK Low – risk of repeat incident is unlikely, no or limited context to indicate future linked behaviours

Safety Plan for Child-on-Child harmful sexual behaviours including sexual abuse and harassment

Action required from RA outcome	When and by whom?	How is this planned to reduce risk?	Decision by whom and when?	Review Date

Assessment of the School/College Environment

(This section is taken from Hertfordshire Children's Services can be used to support the completion of the safety plan)

Teaching and Learning

- What is the current level of supervision and is this appropriate?
- Are all relevant staff aware of the level of supervision required?
- Who is responsible for discussing the child/ young person's risk and needs with other staff?
- Has the child/ young person engaged in any worrying sexual behaviours within the classroom setting now or previously?
- Are there particular times when the child/ young person seems more relaxed and content?
- Are there particular times or circumstances where the child/ young person seems unhappier/upset/ distracted/ irritable/ distressed?
- Can extra support/ supervision be put in place during difficult times?
- Are the seating arrangements satisfactory?
- Are there times when the child/ young person is allowed to leave the class during class times?
- How is sex and relationships education managed and does the child/ young person need further information?
- Are there particular areas of risk in the class e.g. when the teacher is occupied with other students/ students and how can this be managed?
- How will risk be managed during off site activities – school trips, work experience etc.?

Unstructured Times

- Have there been concerns about the child/young person's sexual behaviours in school when out of the classroom? If so, who were the behaviours directed to and in what circumstances? What children may be particularly vulnerable and how can this be managed?
- Does the location of the toilets cause a problem? Does more than one class share them? Are particular rules required for going to the toilet?
- Are there rules about showering, dressing and undressing for PE that need to be considered? Are staff able to supervise changing appropriately and according to needs and age of the child/ young person concerned?
- Are there rules about physical contact during play that need to be considered?
- Does the child/ young person have a history of absconding?
- Does consideration need to be given to the use of school/ college technology? Is school technology (computers, laptops, tablets, iPads etc.) monitored to ensure that children and staff are following the School/ College's Acceptable Use Policy?
- What are the arrangements for the child/ young person to get safely to and from school/college?

Outside Area

- Are there areas within the school and grounds that are unsupervised?
- Are there any other building issues that may increase risk? e.g. building works, co-located school, communal playground?
- Is there a need to make certain areas 'out of bounds' either for the time being or permanently?

- Can you involve more staff to engage children in constructive play/ conversation to encourage them to be more interactive and therefore less open to inappropriate play?

Children / Young persons

- Have all children/young persons been taught about keeping safe? Is any additional input needed due to the current concerns (either individual/group work or as a whole class?) Who will take responsibility for coordination?
- Are all children/young persons aware of who to go to if they have a worry?
- Do all children/young persons feel that they are listened to and are confident that appropriate action will be taken?
- If primary, have all children completed a Safety Circle (Foundation/ KS1) or a Network of Support (KS2)
- If secondary/college, are young persons aware of who they can speak to/who their support networks are in school (including school nurse etc.)?
- Are children/ young people's parents/carers informed of personal safety curriculum units of work covered, including Online-Safety?

Individual Work

- Who will talk to the child/ young person about their sexual behaviours if the need arises? Will this staff member require any support?
- What are the arrangements for reporting, recording and monitoring the child/ young person's behaviour? Who will be responsible for monitoring and updating the chronology?
- Are there clear boundaries and expectations of acceptable behaviours?
- What work is being undertaken to address the child/ young person's unmet needs in relation to the sexual behaviour?
- What support has the child/ young person been offered to be safe in school?
- What support is in place to reduce the risk of isolation and to encourage the child/young person to enjoy and achieve?
- Are there any additional factors to consider in relation to the child/ young person's age, sex, race, religion, disability, mental/physical health or other?
- Who will communicate with parents/carers? What support do the parents/carers have? What do parents/carers need to do to support their child/ young person?