Child on Child, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy

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Courage to Flourish in the Love of God

'I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10)

[Therefore],

'Be strong and courageous… the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' (Joshua 1:9)

These biblical texts underpin our vision summary, 'Courage to flourish in the love of God'. Jesus' words from the New Testament describe his desire for everyone to be a full and flourishing version of their created selves, experiencing life in all its vibrant fullness, individually and in community. Our ambition is for everyone to encounter this fullness through the life and work of the school, whatever their background, beliefs or circumstances. God's words to Joshua from the Old Testament illustrate how life, and learning, can be challenging, bringing setbacks and discouragement. These words inspire us to keep on going in those circumstances, confident that God watches over us and walks beside us.

The joining of these biblical texts is meaningful for the particular circumstances of our school community. It gives coherence to our aspirational vision that will grow courage and resilience as enablers of 'life in all its fullness' for everyone. To support our vision, we have seven overarching Christian values.

Our Core Christian Values

Value	Biblical texts that underpin our values
COURAGE	Philippians 4:13 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'
HOPE	John 1:5 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'
LOVE FORGIVENESS	1 Corinthians 13:4-8 'Love is patient and kind… it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.' 1 John 1:9 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will

	forgive us'
TRUST	Proverbs 3:5-6 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'
COMMUNITY	Hebrews 10:24 'Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good.'
THANKFULNESS	1 Thessalonians 5:18 'Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you'

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. Michael's Church of England School, we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Child Protection and Safeguarding 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. Michael'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. 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

3. **Staff Awareness**

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

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

- up skirting

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 e.g.:

- 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 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. Michael's Church of England 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 child, 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 other children. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures

6.4 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 causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2022)

6.5 Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting.

6.6 Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

6.7 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.

6.8 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.

6   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 child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently 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(s) will follow the DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges May 2018

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassmentbetween-children-in-schools-and-colleges

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 child engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the child who instigates it as to the child it is intended towards.

7.3.4. Sexually harmful behaviour may include

- inappropriate sexual language

- inappropriate role play

- sexual touching

- sexual assault/abuse.

7.3.5 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 person's 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.

7   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/children 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.

8   Online Bullying

9.1 • 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 child to self-harm

• pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

9   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).

10 Prejudiced Behaviour

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.

11 Recognising Child-on-child Abuse

12.1 An assessment of an incident between young children 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 child's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred

- whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

12 Take Action

- always take complaints seriously

- gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)

- assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator

- report immediately to Mrs Roberts or Deputy DSLs if 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

13 Informing Parents/Carers

14.1 The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. This will be done by the Headteacher 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 a child may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Points to consider:

14.2 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? However, any incident must be investigated and followed up.

14.3 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 area?

14.4 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 what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying? Is the version of one child different from another and why?

14.5 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 child'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 child understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

14.6 Repetition: Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion?

14 Next Steps

15.1 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.

15.2 For the child who has been harmed the support they require depends on the individual child and their age. 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 child continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

15.3 Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group. It may be that through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education (from 2020), PSHE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently. If the child feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

15 For the child who has displayed harmful behaviour

16.1 It is important to find out why the child has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases, support for them may also be necessary.

16.2 Support from identified services may be necessary through an Early Help Assessment and the child may require additional support from family members.

16.3 Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the child has been met, it is important that the child receives a consequence for their behaviour. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour, it may be a requirement for the child 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). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this child cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the child will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

16.4 It may be that the behaviour that the child has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the child and the risks towards others are measured by all agencies involved including the child and their parents or carers. This may mean additional supervision of the child or protective strategies if the child feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

16.5 The school may also choose a consequence such as exclusion, suspension or time in another year group to allow the child to reflect on their behaviour.

16 After Care

17.1 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.

17 Preventative Strategies

18.1 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.

18.2 St. Michael's Church of England Primary 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.

18.3 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'. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

18 Links to Other Policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Statement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies