



St Michael's
C.E. Primary School

Child on Child, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy

Last reviewed: September 2026
Next review due: September 2027



"Courage to Flourish in the Love of God"

Our Theologically Rooted Christian Vision



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)



*"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:

COURAGE



Phillippians 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



1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"Love is patient and kind... it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth."

FORGIVENESS



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

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 Relationships and Behaviour Policy

2. Context and definition

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.

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.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware that it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely that it will be perpetrated by boys. But it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. In order for all pupils to experience life in all its fullness, reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will respond in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and any multi-agency advice required. Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment will always be treated as a safeguarding concern. Where the behaviour also meets the definition of bullying, it will also be recorded and addressed in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

3. Staff awareness

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

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
- sharing nudes and semi-nudes
- 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

Children 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

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

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

This policy is underpinned by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The child's welfare is paramount, and all decisions will be informed by the voice, wishes and feelings of the child, alongside professional judgement and multi-agency advice where appropriate.

6. Abuse and harmful behaviour

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

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.

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.

Children can abuse other children. This includes, but is not limited to: bullying (including online, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse in intimate relationships between children; physical abuse (including online elements); sexual violence and harassment (including online); causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; sharing of nude/semi-nude images (consensual or non-consensual); upskirting; and initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2025)

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

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

Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children who have been the victims of violent crime, including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

7. Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children, 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.

Physical abuse:

- 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 accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

- This must always be referred immediately to the Safeguarding Lead(s). The DSL(s) will follow the statutory guidance outlined in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, which provides detailed procedures for responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.
- 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.
- Sexually harmful behaviour from children 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.
- Sexually harmful behaviour may include:
 - inappropriate sexual language
 - inappropriate role play
 - sexual touching.
 - sexual assault/abuse.
- 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.

8. Bullying

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 children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

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

- an imbalance of power: 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.

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

9. Online bullying

Online bullying refers to:

- 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

10. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including youth-produced sexual imagery

The school uses the term “sharing nudes and semi-nudes” to refer to the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children under 18. Any incident involving nudes or semi-nudes must be reported immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL. Staff must not view, copy, print, share, store or forward images unless specifically directed by the DSL as part of safeguarding procedures.

Upskirting: 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.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11. Prejudiced behaviour

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic,

cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

12. Recognising child-on-child abuse

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

13. Take action

All concerns or reports of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, sexual harassment, bullying, online abuse, physical abuse, prejudiced behaviour or the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes, must be taken seriously and acted on immediately.

Staff must not dismiss any concern as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”. Even behaviours that appear low-level or minor may indicate a wider safeguarding concern or may escalate if not addressed.

If a child makes a disclosure or a member of staff becomes aware of a concern, staff must

- listen carefully and calmly;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult;
- not promise confidentiality;
- not ask leading questions;
- avoid investigating the concern themselves;
- make a factual record using the child's own words where possible;
- report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- record the concern and actions taken on CPOMS as soon as possible.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the needs and safety of all children involved, including:

- the child who has been harmed;
- the child alleged to have caused harm;
- any other children who may have witnessed or been affected by the incident;
- whether there is any ongoing risk within school, online or in the wider community.

The DSL will consider whether an immediate risk assessment or safety plan is required. This may include increased supervision, separation where appropriate, named trusted adults, safe spaces, adjustments to movement around school, support during unstructured times, and regular check-ins with the children involved.

The DSL will decide on the next steps in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and local safeguarding procedures. This may include:

- seeking advice from the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS);
- making a referral to Children's Social Care;
- contacting the police where a crime may have been committed;
- informing parents/carers, unless doing so would place a child at further risk;
- arranging Early Help support;
- putting individual support plans or behaviour support plans in place;
- contributing to any multi-agency assessment or planning.

Where the concern involves sexual violence, sexual harassment or the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes, this must always be referred to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. Staff must not view, copy, print, share, store or forward any images unless specifically directed by the DSL as part of safeguarding procedures.

All actions will be child-centred, proportionate and based on the individual circumstances of the incident. The school will balance the need to safeguard the child who has been harmed with the need to understand and support the child who has displayed harmful behaviour, recognising that they may also have unmet needs or may themselves be at risk of harm.

14. Risk assessment and safety planning

Following any report or concern of child-on-child abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether an immediate risk assessment or safety plan is required.

The purpose of the risk assessment or safety plan is to protect and support all children involved, including the child who has been harmed, the child alleged to have caused harm, and any other children who may have witnessed or been affected by the incident.

The risk assessment or safety plan may include:

- increased adult supervision;
- separation of children where appropriate;
- named trusted adults for the children involved;
- safe spaces or agreed places children can go if they feel worried
- adjustments to movement around school;
- support during unstructured times, including playtimes, lunchtimes and transitions;
- consideration of online safety risks;

- regular check-ins with the children involved;
- communication with parents/carers, where appropriate;
- involvement of external agencies, including CASS, Children's Social Care or the police, where required.

Risk assessments and safety plans will be reviewed regularly and updated if circumstances change or further concerns arise.

Any actions agreed will be recorded on CPOMS and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

15. Informing parents/carers

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.

Parents/carers will usually be informed at an appropriate stage; however, this will not happen if doing so would place a child at further risk of harm, prejudice a police or social care investigation, or conflict with advice from Children's Social Care, CASS or the police.

Points to consider:

- What is the age of the children involved?
- How old are the children involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? However, any incident must be investigated and followed up.

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?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

- Can each of the children give the same explanation of the incident and what is the effect on the children involved?
- Is the incident seen to be bullying?
- Is the version of one child different from another and why?

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

- Do the children 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?

Repetition:

- Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion?

16. 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 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.

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.

17. For the child who has displayed harmful behaviour

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.

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

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). In serious cases, the Headteacher may consider suspension or permanent exclusion in line with statutory guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy. Any decision will be lawful, reasonable and proportionate, and will take account of safeguarding, SEND, equality duties, risk assessment and the need to provide suitable education.

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.

18. After care

It is important that following the incident the children 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 children 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 children following the incident(s) are imperative.

19. 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.

St. Michael's Church of England Primary School has an open environment where children 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.

Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Children are part of changing their circumstances and, through school council and pupil voice for example, we encourage children to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all children understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

20. Filtering and monitoring systems

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*, Part 2 (paragraphs 140–143), the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard pupils from harmful online content. These systems are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and proportionate, and staff are trained to understand and respond to online safety risks.

21. Links to other policies

- Positive relationships and behaviour policy
- Equality information and objectives statement
- Anti-bullying policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy