

## Child on Child Abuse Policy

**Policy Approved: October 2026**

**To be Reviewed: October 2027**

### School Vision, Values and Aims

Our school vision, values and aims are rooted in the Church of England's Vision for Education; *Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* and the biblical teaching of;

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength; and love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12.30,31).*

### Vision

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

### Values

|                |               |                                         |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Respect        | Luke 10:25-37 | The Good Samaritan                      |
| Responsibility | Luke 15:11-32 | The Prodigal Son                        |
| Compassion     | Luke 19, 1-10 | Zacchaeus the tax collector             |
| Perseverance   | Luke 5:17-26  | A man is helped by friends to see Jesus |

### Aims

Our principle aim - For all to know that they are welcome

To show kindness and forgiveness

To listen to one another

To seek enjoyment in our work

To show patience with one another

To show love towards one another

To show courage in our work

To keep the children at the heart of our decisions

To embrace innovation and change

To trust one another

To inspire one another

To celebrate the dignity and worth of each individual

To begin each new day positively

To reach out to one another

To have confidence

To encourage one another

To support and challenge one another

To believe in one another

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### **1. Statement of Intent**

Leckhampton C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children can abuse other children and that such behaviour can cause significant harm.

Child-on-child abuse will never be tolerated, ignored, minimised or dismissed as normal childhood behaviour. All allegations, reports and concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and responded to in a child-centred manner.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.
- Prevent child-on-child abuse through an effective curriculum and positive culture.
- Encourage children to report concerns.
- Support children affected by abuse.
- Hold children involved in abusive behaviour accountable whilst recognising that they may also require support.
- Work effectively with parents, external agencies and safeguarding partners.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

## 2. Terminology

Throughout this policy:

**Child affected** refers to any child who has experienced abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour from another child.

**Child involved** refers to any child alleged to have caused harm or engaged in abusive behaviour.

This terminology is used to maintain a child-centred approach and to avoid labelling children.

## 3. Definition

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by a child or group of children that intentionally harms another child physically, emotionally, sexually or psychologically.

It can occur:

- Face-to-face
- Online
- Inside or outside school
- Between children of the same age or different ages
- Between any gender

Child-on-child abuse can be a one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour.

The fact that the child responsible is also a child does not minimise the seriousness of the behaviour. KCSIE makes clear that child-on-child abuse should be regarded as a safeguarding concern and never accepted as normal behaviour.

## 4. Types of Child-on-Child Abuse

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

### Physical Abuse

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Punching
- Spitting
- Tripping
- Physical intimidation
- Damaging belongings

### Emotional Abuse

- Deliberate exclusion
- Threats
- Humiliation
- Intimidation
- Coercion
- Manipulation
- Verbal abuse

Prejudiced and Discriminatory Behaviour, including behaviour related to:

- Sex
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Family circumstances

Examples may include:

- Sexist comments
- Racist language
- Homophobic language
- Ableist remarks
- Stereotyping

Bullying

Including:

- Physical bullying
- Verbal bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Relational bullying
- Cyberbullying

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including:

- Sexual comments
- Sexual jokes
- Sexualised name-calling
- Sexual gestures
- Displaying sexual images
- Online sexual harassment

Sexual Violence

Sexual offences committed by children against other children.

Online Abuse

Including:

- Cyberbullying
- Sharing inappropriate images
- Online harassment
- Use of social media to intimidate others
- AI-generated or manipulated images designed to humiliate, embarrass or abuse another child

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum and can range from developmentally inappropriate behaviour through to behaviour which is abusive and may cause significant harm to another child. Staff should not dismiss sexualised behaviour as harmless or assume it is typical for a child's age without careful consideration.

Where concerns arise regarding sexualised behaviour, the school will use professional judgement, seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and refer to **Appendix A: NSPCC - Responding to Children Who Display Sexualised Behaviour** to support decision-making and ensure a proportionate safeguarding response.

Where incidents involve sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence or concerning sexualised behaviour, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the nature, frequency, context and impact of the behaviour. The school will use **Appendix A: NSPCC - Responding to Children Who Display Sexualised Behaviour** alongside statutory safeguarding guidance to help determine appropriate actions, support and referrals.

## 5. Vulnerable Groups

Any child can be affected by child-on-child abuse.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable, including:

- Children with SEND
- Children who are or have been in care
- Children who are bereaved
- Children experiencing domestic abuse
- Children with communication difficulties
- Children who are socially isolated
- Children with mental health difficulties

Staff should remain alert to additional barriers that may prevent some children from reporting concerns.

## 6. Prevention

The school will work proactively to prevent child-on-child abuse through:

Curriculum

Children will be taught:

- Respectful relationships
- Consent and personal boundaries
- Online safety
- Healthy friendships
- Diversity and inclusion
- Recognising abusive behaviour
- How to seek help

School Culture

We will:

- Promote kindness and respect.

- Challenge discriminatory language.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes.
- Encourage pupils to speak up.
- Foster an environment where children feel safe.

For example, comments such as:

- "Girls are rubbish at football."
- "Boys don't join the choir."

would be challenged because they reinforce damaging stereotypes and conflict with our values of equality and inclusion.

### Staff Training

All staff will receive safeguarding training which includes:

- Recognition of child-on-child abuse
- Responding to disclosures
- Recording concerns
- Professional curiosity
- Online safety risks

## 7. Reporting Concerns

Children should be encouraged to report concerns:

- To any trusted adult
- To the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Through school reporting systems 'Tell Us Boxes'

All staff must:

1. Listen carefully.
2. Remain calm and supportive.
3. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing.
4. Avoid asking leading questions.
5. Report immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
6. Record the concern promptly on CPOMS.

Staff must never:

- Promise confidentiality.
- Investigate independently.
- Minimise concerns.

## 8. Responding to Concerns

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider:

- The nature of the incident.

- The ages and developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance.
- Whether there is a pattern of behaviour.
- The wishes and feelings of the child affected.
- Whether other children may be at risk.
- Whether external agencies need to be involved.

The child affected will be supported throughout the process.

## **9. Supporting the Child Affected**

Support may include:

- Access to a trusted adult
- Regular pastoral support
- Emotional support
- Adjustments to routines if required
- Referral to external services where appropriate

The school will ensure that the child affected feels listened to, protected and supported.

## **10. Responding to the Child Involved**

The school recognises that children displaying harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced adversity, trauma or abuse.

Responses may therefore involve:

- Behaviour support
- Pastoral interventions
- Individual support plans
- Safeguarding assessment
- External agency involvement

Appropriate sanctions may also be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

## **11. Recording**

All concerns, allegations and incidents will be recorded on CPOMS by the member of staff receiving the disclosure or witnessing the concern.

Records will include:

- Facts of the incident
- Actions taken
- Decisions made
- Outcomes
- Ongoing support provided

The DSL will maintain oversight and monitor patterns or emerging risks.

## **12. Working with Parents**

The school will normally inform parents/carers of concerns and outcomes unless doing so could place a child at increased risk of harm.

The welfare and safety of children will always be the primary consideration.

## **13. Multi-Agency Working**

Where appropriate, the school may seek advice or support from:

- Gloucestershire Children's Services
- Family Help Services
- Police
- Health professionals
- Youth support services

Referral decisions will be made by the DSL in line with local safeguarding procedures.

## **14. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following significant incidents
- Following changes to statutory guidance
- Following safeguarding audits or reviews

The Governing Body will receive assurance that child-on-child abuse is effectively monitored and addressed.

# Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

It's important to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviours from those that may be problematic or harmful, and make sure children get appropriate support. Always consider the child's holistic needs and safeguarding concerns alongside any sexualised behaviour and follow due procedures accordingly. This guide is a tool to support objective decision making about a child or young person's sexual behaviour and does not replace professional judgement or policy and legislation. Visit [nspcc.org.uk/hsb](https://nspcc.org.uk/hsb) for more information.

## Need advice?

Contact our helpline for advice and support:  
 ➤ Call **0808 800 5000**  
 ➤ Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)  
 ➤ Visit [nspcc.org.uk/helpline](https://nspcc.org.uk/helpline)

## Childline

For children who need further support our free, confidential helpline is available 24/7:  
 ➤ Call **0800 1111**  
 ➤ Visit [childline.org.uk](https://childline.org.uk)

## Developmentally typical

## Problematic

## Harmful

### Hackett Continuum

#### Normal

- Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour
- Consensual, mutual and reciprocal
- Decision making is shared

#### Inappropriate

- Single instances of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Behaviour that may be socially acceptable within a peer group but not in wider society
- May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal

#### Problematic

- Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour
- May be compulsive
- Consent may be unclear and the behaviour may not be reciprocal
- May involve an imbalance of power
- Doesn't have an overt element of victimisation

#### Abusive

- Intrusive behaviour
- May involve a misuse of power
- May have an element of victimisation
- May use coercion and force
- May include elements of expressive violence
- Informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely)

#### Violent

- Physically violent sexual abuse
- Highly intrusive
- May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
- May involve sadism

#### How to respond

- Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response
- Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally
- Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours
- Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse
- Signpost helpful resources like our 'Talk PANTS' activity pack: [nspcc.org.uk/pants](https://nspcc.org.uk/pants)
- Make sure young people know how to behave responsibly and safely

#### How to respond

- Amber behaviours should not be ignored
- Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally
- Consider the child's developmental age as well as their chronological age, alongside wider holistic needs and safeguarding concerns about the problematic sexualised behaviour
- Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection
- Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who can be notified and will provide support
- Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate

#### How to respond

- Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action
- If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999
- Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection
- Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who should be notified and will provide support
- Typically referrals to children's social care and the police would be required. Referrals to therapeutic services should only be made once statutory services have been informed and followed due procedures

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Learning

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