Child-on-child Abuse Policy

Person responsible for Policy	Abigail Moss
Written/Reviewed	November 2026
Date for next Review	November 2027

TRUE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

1. Statement of Intent

At Hague Bar Primary School, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. We recognise that abuse can occur between children and that child-on-child abuse can take place both inside and outside of school, including through online platforms and digital technology.

Our school values of **Be Inclusive, Be Kind and Be Your Best** underpin all aspects of school life and guide our approach to safeguarding, relationships and behaviour. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, listened to and protected from harm.

We adopt a whole-school approach to preventing, identifying and responding to child-on-child abuse. We believe that all children have the right to learn and thrive in an environment free from abuse, harassment, discrimination and bullying.

This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of mutual respect and inclusion.
- Ensure all pupils understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Encourage pupils to report concerns confidently.
- Ensure all concerns are taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
- Support victims effectively.
- Educate pupils about safe relationships and online behaviour.
- Ensure staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Establish clear procedures for recording, investigating and responding to concerns.
- Work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

The policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- SEND Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

3. Definitions

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is any form of abuse inflicted by one child or group of children against another child or group of children.

This policy applies to incidents that occur:

- On school premises.
- During educational visits.
- Travelling to and from school.
- Online.
- In the wider community where there is a safeguarding impact on pupils attending the school.

Child-on-child abuse can include:

- Bullying and cyberbullying.
- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment.
- Online abuse.
- Image-based abuse.
- Discriminatory behaviour.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Exploitation.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour is sexual behaviour that:

- Is inappropriate for the child's age or stage of development.
- Causes physical or emotional harm.
- Violates another person's dignity or boundaries.
- Is abusive, coercive or violent.
- May indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Harmful sexual behaviour may take place face-to-face, online or through a combination of both.

Image-Based Abuse

Image-based abuse includes:

- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes.
- Sharing intimate images without consent.
- Taking or distributing images without permission.
- Upskirting.
- Sharing screenshots of private content.
- Threatening to share intimate images.
- AI-generated or digitally manipulated intimate images.

The school recognises that image-based abuse can cause significant emotional harm and will respond in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology

The school recognises that advances in technology create new safeguarding risks.

These may include:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Deepfakes.
- Synthetic media.
- Digitally manipulated images and videos.
- Online misinformation and disinformation.
- AI-generated content designed to deceive or exploit.

Pupils will be taught how to critically evaluate online content and use technology safely and responsibly.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Ensure safeguarding remains a strategic priority.
- Ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Ensure this policy complies with statutory guidance.
- Monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding provision.
- Ensure pupils are taught about child-on-child abuse and online safety.
- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure governors receive safeguarding and online safety training.
- Ensure robust reporting and escalation systems are established.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote a strong safeguarding culture.
- Ensure staff follow safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure staff receive regular safeguarding training.

- Provide resources to support effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensure concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Take lead responsibility for child-on-child abuse concerns.
- Provide advice and support to staff.
- Undertake risk assessments.
- Make referrals where required.
- Liaise with external agencies.
- Monitor patterns and trends.
- Maintain accurate safeguarding records.
- Ensure victims receive appropriate support.

Staff

All staff will:

- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".
- Recognise the signs of abuse.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Record safeguarding concerns accurately.
- Support pupils who make disclosures.
- Promote positive relationships and respectful behaviour.

5. School Culture

Hague Bar Primary School adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to child-on-child abuse.

Our values of:

Be Inclusive

We include everyone and celebrate differences.

Be Kind

We treat others with care, respect and compassion.

Be Your Best

We show determination and always try our best.

These values underpin our expectations for all relationships.

The school will never dismiss abuse as:

- "Banter"
- "Just a joke"
- "Part of growing up"
- "Boys will be boys"

All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

6. Types of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include:

Physical Abuse

Including:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Pushing
- Physical intimidation

Emotional Abuse

Including:

- Manipulation
- Humiliation
- Threats

- Social exclusion
- Coercive behaviour

Sexual Violence

Including:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault
- Non-consensual sexual activity

Sexual Harassment

Including:

- Sexual comments
- Sexual jokes
- Sexual gestures
- Online sexual harassment
- Unwanted physical contact
- Sexualised language

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Including:

- Repeated harmful behaviour
- Online harassment
- Social exclusion
- Intimidation
- Derogatory language

Discriminatory Behaviour

Including discrimination related to:

- Race
- Religion
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

- Gender reassignment
- Special educational needs
- Any protected characteristic

Online Abuse

Including:

- Abusive messaging
- Trolling
- Online intimidation
- Image-based abuse
- AI-generated abuse
- Deepfake content
- Grooming and exploitation

7. Curriculum and Prevention

The school believes prevention through education is essential.

Online safety, safeguarding and respectful relationships are taught through:

- RSHE
- Computing
- Assemblies
- Safeguarding workshops
- Theme days
- Pupil voice activities

Pupils are taught about:

- Healthy relationships
- Consent and boundaries
- Respectful behaviour
- Online safety
- Cyberbullying
- Digital footprints
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes
- Image-based abuse
- AI and deepfakes

- Online grooming
- Misinformation and disinformation

8. Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that some pupils may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse.

This may include:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender.
- Children experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Young carers.
- Children experiencing family adversity.

Staff will consider individual vulnerabilities when assessing risk and planning support.

9. Reporting Concerns

Pupils can report concerns through:

- Any trusted adult.
- Their class teacher.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Members of the pastoral team.
- School worry boxes.
- Parents or carers reporting on their behalf.

The school actively promotes a culture where reporting concerns is viewed as a positive and responsible action.

10. Responding to Disclosures

Staff will:

1. Listen carefully.
2. Reassure the child.
3. Avoid asking leading questions.
4. Never promise confidentiality.

5. Record the disclosure accurately.
6. Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

All concerns will be treated seriously.

11. Investigation and Escalation Procedure

Stage 1: Initial Concern

The DSL will:

- Review the concern.
- Gather initial information.
- Consider immediate safety measures.
- Determine the level of risk.

Stage 2: Risk Assessment

The DSL will assess:

- The nature of the concern.
- Vulnerabilities of those involved.
- Whether others may be at risk.
- Immediate safeguarding needs.
- The need for external support.

Stage 3: Determine Response

The school may:

Manage Internally

For low-level concerns:

- Educational intervention.
- Restorative approaches.
- Behaviour support.
- Monitoring.

Early Help

Where additional support is required:

- Family support.
- Pastoral intervention.

- Multi-agency support.

Referral to Children's Social Care

Where a pupil:

- Has been harmed.
- Is at risk of harm.
- Requires statutory intervention.

Police Referral

Where a criminal offence may have occurred, including:

- Sexual assault.
- Rape.
- Sharing indecent images.
- Serious threats.
- Exploitation.

12. Risk Assessment

Risk assessments will consider:

- The victim.
- The alleged perpetrator.
- Other pupils.
- The school environment.
- Ongoing risks.
- Required support measures.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly.

13. Support for Victims

The school will:

- Listen to and respect the wishes of the victim.
- Provide pastoral support.
- Offer regular check-ins.
- Consider timetable adaptations where necessary.
- Liaise with external agencies where appropriate.
- Protect victims from retaliation or further abuse.

14. Support for Alleged Perpetrators

The school recognises that some alleged perpetrators may also require support.

Support may include:

- Behaviour support.
- Pastoral intervention.
- Safeguarding support.
- External agency involvement.

Where abuse is substantiated, appropriate sanctions will be applied in line with school policies.

15. Working with Parents and Carers

The school will work closely with parents and carers wherever appropriate.

Parents will normally be informed unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm.

The school will provide clear information regarding:

- Actions taken.
- Support offered.
- Ongoing arrangements.

16. Pupil Voice

The school values pupil voice as an essential component of safeguarding.

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- Share their views.
- Discuss safety concerns.
- Evaluate school systems.
- Contribute to policy development.

Pupil voice information will help inform safeguarding practice and curriculum development.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and Headteacher and approved by the Governing Board.

The policy may also be reviewed earlier if:

- There are changes to safeguarding legislation or statutory guidance.

- Updates are made to Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- New safeguarding risks or local concerns emerge.
- Lessons are identified through safeguarding incidents, audits or reviews.
- Recommendations are made by the Local Authority, safeguarding partners or other relevant agencies.

Any amendments will be communicated promptly to staff, governors, parents and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.