

Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School



Child on Child Abuse Policy September 2025

Introduction

At Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School we have a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). We believe that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will **never** be passed off as “banter,” “just having a laugh,” “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys.” We will **respond to all signs, reports, and concerns** of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises, and/or online. We recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers, and we take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. We recognise that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening- it may be the case that it is just not being reported – we understand that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. We acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable. We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

In cases where child-on-child abuse is suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures, taking a contextual, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation including the victim(s) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed) and **alleged** perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children).

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (September 2025) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from: staff, Governors and parents.

This policy is available:

- Online on the school website <https://www.hallcroft.notts.sch.uk/>
- From the school office

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with children maintain an attitude of ‘**it could happen here,**’ and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The Head teacher Jo Cook has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), and outside agencies.

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility – however, all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies in our school are Jo Cook, Sian Babenko, Katie Allen and Sarah Davy.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is Philip Metcalfe.

Definitions

Nottinghamshire County Council recommend the definition of child-on-child abuse provided by the [Safe-guarding Network](#) (which has been adapted from Keeping Children Safe in Education):

Inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature including [physical](#), [sexual](#), or [emotional](#) abuse, [exploitation](#), [sexual harassment](#), all forms of [bullying](#), [coercive control](#), [hazing/initiation rituals](#) between children and young people, both on and offline (including that which is within intimate personal relationships).

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-related and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). This may also be an indicator of wider exploitation such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and/or County Lines.

Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

Recognising:

At Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School we recognise that behaviours associated with child-on-child abuse take place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child’s behaviour falls on this spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

We recognise that all children grow and develop at their own pace. We will use our professional judgement and knowledge of child development when responding to child-on-child abuse.

Reporting and Responding:

At Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School we want children, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We recognise that our school's initial response to a report of child-on-child abuse is incredibly important - how we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims to report or come forward. As a school we will also respond to reports of alleged child-on-child abuse that have occurred online or outside of school. These reports will be treated seriously, and the school remains committed to supporting and safeguarding all parties including the victim(s) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed), **alleged** perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children), and any other child(ren) who may be affected.

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking the leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as the Local Authority, Children's Social Care, and the Police as appropriate. We will ensure that we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community: the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Children (including bystanders):

It is important to understand that a victim (a child who has been harmed) may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally - some children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim (a child who has been harmed) may not make a direct report. We recognise that in some instances another child may report on another child's behalf. All children will know how to report concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse.

We ask that all children report any concerning behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about “telling a grown up” regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the child and make an initial note of their concerns. They will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. In line with the statutory guidance provided in [Keeping children safe in education](#), we will never promise a child that we will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child. The member of staff will make a formal record of the concern on the usual safeguarding form and will tell the DSL or DDSL's.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff so we encourage staff to be aware and observe changes in children's behaviour or other changes that may cause concern. At their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place.

Parents/carers

We understand that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with making or receiving a report that their child has been the victim of (has been harmed) or is an alleged perpetrator (has allegedly harmed a child or children) of child-on-child abuse.

In line with the statutory guidance provided in [Keeping children safe in education \(Part 5, page 112-143\)](#), we will seek advice and support from other services as decided on a case-by-case basis. All decisions and actions taken by the school will consider the needs of the individual children involved, and the wider school community.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on-child abuse, that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (in person/via telephone call/via email) to explain their concerns.

We ask that parents/carers speak directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of child-on-child abuse. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and ongoing investigations by statutory services. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Staff

Our staff work closely with our children and therefore may notice a change in a child's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a child or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or are concerned that a child is displaying behaviours that may show they have been the victim of (are being harmed/has been harmed) or that they are perpetrating (are harming/have harmed a child or children) child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head teacher. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the report on the school's safeguarding forms. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.).

We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about child-on-child abuse, that they have witnessed, or have been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to

the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/the Head teacher/a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day.

Recording and evaluating:

We will ensure a written report is made as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated. We will ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will be informed as soon as possible and the staff member making the report completes the safeguarding forms. We will ensure that details of decisions made and reasons for decisions are recorded as well as any outcomes.

We will ensure that any necessary 'safety plans' are recorded and kept under review with the safeguarding records.

Strategies for Prevention:

Our school Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

- **Staff training** – including for supply staff, governors or management committees, volunteers, and visitors. Give specific details of the information and training to be provided - you may include:
 - All forms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
 - Contextual safeguarding ('harms outside the home' or extra-familial harm)
 - Making it clear there is a **zero-tolerance approach** to child-on-child abuse (especially in relation to SVSH) that it is **never** acceptable and will not be tolerated. Ensuring it is **never** passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys."
 - Recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
 - Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) such as pulling down trousers, lifting-up skirts etc in an age appropriate way. Taking advice from the ESHAWH team if required.
 - Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
 - Ensuring that the Governing body are aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities (effective child protection policy – child-on-child abuse policy)
 - Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding lead so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify those children who may need additional support
 - Regular updates are provided to parents with weekly National Online Safety Updates to offer support and advice in relation to online safety.
- **Information for children** - give specific details of when, where, and how this information is shared – this may include:
 - Creating an ethos and culture in which all children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment, and have them listened to
 - All children are reminded to be kind to each other and treat each other with respect.
 - They are taught about personal space and that "Pants are Private" from the NSPCC



- Educating all children about the importance of standing up for yourself and telling a grown up if they are uncomfortable. These are embedded RHE/RSHE curriculum and the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum.
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- Teaching of age-appropriate information regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety.
- **Information for parents/carers** - give specific details on engagement with parents/carers
 - Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the review of school policies.
 - Challenging the attitudes that underlie child-on-child abuse – in school and/or the wider community
 - Ensuring parents /carers are aware of the ethos and culture of the school or college
 - Sharing of regular information regarding online risks, harms, and technology-assisted abuse, and appropriate signposting of further support and advice in relation to online safety.
- **RHE (Relationships and Health Education) / RSHE curriculum** - you may wish to give specific details of your school’s ethos as well as linking with your RSHE policy and curriculum development
 - The school have a clear set of values and standards, upheld, and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life, which is supported by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE curriculum
 - Our RHE/RSHE/PSHE (Jigsaw) programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and/or other vulnerabilities)
 - We will, through our RHE/RSHE/PSHE programme promote:
 - Healthy, respectful and kind friendships and relationships
 - Boundaries and consent
 - Equality and raise awareness of stereotyping and prejudice
 - Body confidence and self-esteem
 - The concepts of Pants being Private.

Breaches / Complaints:

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school’s actions, we ask that they follow our school’s complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

Links with other policies:

You may find it helpful to read this child-on-child abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Child Protection Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding

Behaviour and Relationships Policy	Includes details about the school’s behaviour system including potential sanctions for pupils
Anti-Bullying Policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and vulnerable groups
Online E-Safety Policy	Includes information about children’s online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Equality Policy	Includes information about our school’s approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
PSHE and RSHE Policy	Includes information about our school’s RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school’s response

Further information and support can be found through the following links:

- Part 5: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment (pages 112-143) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) - [Keeping children safe in education 2025 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115222/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2025.pdf)
- Definitions - [Keeping children safe in education 2025 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115222/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2025.pdf)
- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours -
 - [Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
 - [NSPCC Learning Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [Shore Space](#) – Lucy Faithful Foundation, confidential service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else’s sexual thoughts and behaviours

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Date approved by the Governing Body: 21.11.2025

Date to be reviewed: As required and when advice from County changes.