



# St. Stephen's School and Children's Centre

*Learning for life*

## FEDERATED CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every year.

	Date written	By	Role	Link Governor for safeguarding	Ratified
Version 1	September 2021	Jenna Chapman	Deputy Head Teacher/ DSL	Elizabeth Goodyear	November 2021
Version 2	November 2022	James Frecknall	Assistant Headteacher/DSL	Elizabeth Goodyear & Asif Siddiquee	November 2022
Version 3	November 2024	Jennifer Ward	Assistant Headteacher/DSL	Elizabeth Goodyear	November 2024
Version 4	November 2025	Jennifer Ward	Assistant Headteacher/DSL	Elizabeth Goodyear	December 2025

*We are a Rights Respecting School and we use the United Nations Convention to ensure that every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. (Article 19)*

## 1. Introduction

At St. Stephen's Primary School, we take child-on-child abuse extremely seriously. This policy sets out our procedures for managing incidents of harmful abuse between children, including sexual abuse. While some children may display sexualised behaviour as part of their development, any sexualised behaviour that becomes harmful or abusive is unacceptable and must be addressed immediately.

We recognise that all pupils are vulnerable to, and capable of, abusing their peers. Allegations of child-on-child abuse are treated with the utmost seriousness and are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern, following procedures and seeking advice from external agencies as needed.

This policy complies with the safeguarding requirements outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and aligns with Part 5 of the statutory guidance on managing reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment. It also reflects earlier relevant DfE guidance.

## 2. Definition of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes forcing or enticing a child or young person to engage in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. These activities may involve physical contact (e.g. inappropriate touching) or non-contact acts (e.g. encouraging children to view or produce sexual images, sexting). It can also include online abuse or technology-facilitated behaviour.

This definition remains consistent with KCSIE guidance.

## 3. Examples of Child-on-Child Abuse can include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships
- Physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling)
- Sexual violence (e.g. inappropriate touching, sexual assault)
- Sexual harassment (e.g. sexual comments, jokes, online sexual harassment)
- Coercion into sexual activity without consent (e.g. forcing someone to strip, touch themselves, or involve a third party)
- Youth-produced sexual imagery ("sexting")
- Upskirting
- Initiation-type violence or rituals

We recognise that harmful sexual behaviour may also be shaped by online contexts, so our online safety policy applies. Abuse can occur in a variety of settings: in school (classrooms, corridors, toilets, changing rooms), on the way to or from school, or online.

## 4. Minimising the Risk of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

We aim to foster a culture of healthy, safe relationships and mutual respect. Our Relationships, and Health Education (RHE) curriculum helps pupils:

- Know correct anatomical terms

- Understand which parts of their body are private
- Recognise good touch versus bad touch
- Understand consent and that some behaviour is unacceptable
- Know how to report concerns and whom to talk to if they feel unsafe

We promote an environment where pupils feel heard, supported, and confident to share concerns. Parents and carers are also encouraged to reinforce these messages at home.

## 5. Our Response to an Incident or Allegation

Any pupil reporting an incident will be treated seriously, with respect, and reassured that appropriate action will be taken. Staff will not promise full confidentiality, but will explain that concerns will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other relevant professionals. The DSL must be informed immediately. If needed, we will make a referral to Children's Social Care, the police, or other relevant agencies. For incidents with an online element, we will follow current guidance (including KCSIE's expectations for online safety) to protect all pupils involved.

## 6. Guiding Principles

When responding, our actions will be informed by:

- The developmental stage of pupils involved.
- Any power imbalances (e.g., age, maturity, vulnerability).
- The nature of the incident (one-off vs. repeated).
- Risks to the wider school community (including other pupils and staff).

We will provide support to both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, working with parents/carers and external agencies where needed.

## 7. Investigation and Risk Assessment

We will conduct a risk assessment as soon as an incident is reported, to ensure safety for all pupils. The DSL, supported by the Headteacher, leads the investigation in partnership with external agencies (e.g., Children's Social Care, police) if necessary. Parents/carers will be informed at the earliest appropriate moment, considering safety and confidentiality. A detailed, accurate record of the incident, risk assessment, actions taken, and outcomes will be maintained. We will periodically review risk assessments and the action plan to reflect evolving needs.

## 8. Supporting Victims and Alleged Perpetrators

Victims: may receive pastoral support, changes to class/timetable, separation from the alleged perpetrator, referrals to external mental health services, or other adaptations to support healing. Alleged perpetrators: support is not just punitive. We aim to address behaviours through pastoral care, behaviour support plans, and targeted intervention, helping them understand the harm caused and reduce the risk of reoccurrence. We work with external agencies when required to provide specialist support. Any disciplinary sanctions are proportionate, focused on rehabilitation and safeguarding.

## 9. Investigation Outcomes

The outcome of an investigation will be determined based on the facts of the case, taking into account the nature and severity of the incident. The following options may apply:

**Manage internally** - For one-off or lower-level incidents, the matter may be addressed through our behaviour policy, with appropriate support for those involved.

**Early Help** - Where no statutory intervention is required, we may work with the pupil and their parents/carers to provide Early Help support.

**Request for support from Children's Social Care** - If a pupil is at risk of harm, has been harmed, or requires additional safeguarding intervention, we will make a referral to Children's Social Care.

**Reporting to the Police** - In cases where a criminal offence may have been committed, including sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault, we will report the matter to the police.

We will communicate the outcome of the investigation to parents/carers and relevant professionals as appropriate, ensuring confidentiality and sensitivity throughout.

## 10. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, in conjunction with our wider safeguarding policy, to ensure continued alignment with KCSIE, current best practice, and the needs of our pupils.

Risk assessments and action plans for individual cases will also be reviewed regularly.