



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Child on Child Policy

Rev	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1.2	Sept 2022	RTL	Dec 2022	LA approved model policy
1.3	September 2025	RTL	18 Sept 25	align with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and latest statutory guidance

Date Issued: September 2025

Prepared By: RTL

Approved: [Date]

Comments: Updated to align with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and latest statutory guidance

Introduction

At Sparken Hill Academy, 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 Academy 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 acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable. We are committed to a whole Academy approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our Academy 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 and alleged perpetrator.

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 Academy community with input from:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents

This policy is available:

- Online on our Academy website (www.sparkenhillacademy.com)
- From the Academy office
- Child friendly versions are on display and in welcome packs for new pupils

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually or when statutory guidance changes require amendments.

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 Principal (Mr R Lilley) 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 the responsibility of all 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 Academy are:

- Mr R Lilley (DSL)
- Mrs Karen Gardiner (Deputy DSL)
- Mrs Deb White (Deputy DSL / Safeguarding Officer)
- Mrs Kate Phoenix (Deputy DSL)

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is **Mrs Clare Middleton**.

All staff should understand that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside of school and online, and they have an important role to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Legal Framework and Context

This policy aligns with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** - statutory guidance
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** - statutory guidance
- **Human Rights Act 1998** - particularly Articles 3 (freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment), 8 (right to respect for private and family life), and 14 (non-discrimination)
- **Equality Act 2010** - including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**
- **Children Act 1989**
- **Crime and Policing Bill 2025** - introducing mandatory reporting requirements for child sexual abuse

The academy recognises that being subjected to harassment, violence and abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and circumstances.

Definitions

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

- **Bullying** (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based 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 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

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school and online, and that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

Understanding Risk Factors and Vulnerabilities

Children Who May Be More at Risk

All children can be at risk of child-on-child abuse, however some children may be particularly vulnerable, including:

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Children who are looked after or previously looked after
- Children who are young carers
- Children who may be questioning their gender or sexual orientation
- Children experiencing mental health difficulties
- Children from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Children experiencing domestic abuse at home
- Children who are frequently absent from education
- Children involved in the youth justice system

Recognising Harmful Behaviour

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, ensuring our approach is:

- **Child-centred** - considering what is in the best interests of the child at all times

- **Trauma-informed** - understanding the impact of trauma on behaviour and development
- **Contextual** - considering the child's wider circumstances and environment
- **Proportionate** - ensuring responses are appropriate to the level of concern

Prevention Strategies

Our Academy actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse through:

1. Creating a Positive Culture

- Establishing an ethos and culture where all children feel able to share their concerns openly
- Promoting fundamental British values: democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance
- Challenging inappropriate language, attitudes and behaviours immediately
- Creating a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment
- Ensuring our behaviour policy promotes positive relationships and respect for others

2. Staff Training and Development

All staff receive training that includes:

- **Safeguarding awareness** - understanding types and indicators of abuse
- **Child-on-child abuse recognition** - identifying concerning behaviours and warning signs
- **Contextual safeguarding** - understanding risks in different environments
- **Equality and diversity** - recognising and addressing discrimination and prejudice
- **Online safety** - understanding digital risks and how to respond
- **Trauma-informed approaches** - supporting children who have experienced harm
- **Professional boundaries** - maintaining appropriate relationships with pupils

Training ensures staff understand:

- There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse
- It is never acceptable and will not be tolerated
- It should never be passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys"
- The scale of harassment and abuse, recognising that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening
- How to challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviours
- Their responsibilities under relevant legislation including equality duties

3. Curriculum and Education

Through our planned curriculum, we promote:

Relationships and Health Education (RHE)

Age-appropriate content covering:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise abusive behaviour
- Where to get help and support
- Understanding of equality and diversity
- Digital citizenship and online safety

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education

Regular lessons addressing:

- Anti-bullying messages
- Respect and tolerance for others
- Understanding differences and similarities
- Conflict resolution skills
- Emotional regulation and mental health

Whole Curriculum Opportunities

Across all subjects we:

- Model respectful relationships and communication
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudice
- Promote critical thinking skills
- Celebrate diversity and achievement
- Teach pupils about their rights and responsibilities

4. Physical Environment and Online Safety

We ensure our premises and digital environment are safe by:

- **Supervision** - Appropriate adult supervision in all areas
- **Physical spaces** - Well-designed areas that minimise opportunities for inappropriate behaviour
- **CCTV** - Appropriate monitoring in communal areas (not in private spaces)
- **IT filtering and monitoring** - Robust systems to prevent access to harmful content
- **Mobile device policies** - Clear rules about appropriate use of technology
- **Reporting systems** - Multiple ways for children to report concerns

5. Working with Parents and Families

We engage parents and carers through:

- Information sessions about child-on-child abuse awareness
- Clear communication about our policies and expectations
- Guidance on supporting children at home
- Resources about online safety and appropriate relationships
- Opportunities to contribute to policy development
- Regular communication about safeguarding matters

Reporting and Responding

Reporting Systems

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our Academy community:

Children (including bystanders)

Children can report concerns through:

- **Direct reporting** to any member of staff (teaching or non-teaching)
- **Worry boxes** in each classroom for written concerns or drawings
- **Designated safeguarding email** for those who prefer digital communication
- **Trusted adult conversations** during regular check-ins
- **Peer support systems** where appropriate

We regularly remind children about:

- Who their trusted adults are
- Different ways to report concerns
- That all reports will be taken seriously
- That they will be supported throughout any process

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers should report concerns by:

- Contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy directly
- Calling the Academy office to arrange a meeting
- Using our safeguarding email address
- Speaking to their child's class teacher who will escalate appropriately

We encourage parents to:

- Come directly to the Academy with concerns rather than discussing with other community members
- Trust that we will handle concerns appropriately and professionally
- Understand that information sharing may be limited due to confidentiality requirements

Staff

Staff should:

- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Not assume others will take action
- Make detailed records of concerns and incidents
- Follow up if they feel concerns have not been adequately addressed
- Understand they can make direct referrals if necessary

Visitors

All visitors are informed of our safeguarding procedures and should:

- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL, Principal, or Senior Leadership Team member
- Not delay reporting until after their visit
- Understand the seriousness of safeguarding concerns

Response Process

When a report is received, we follow these steps:

1. Immediate Response

- Listen carefully and sensitively to the child
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in reporting
- Explain that we take all reports seriously
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain information will only be shared with those who need to know
- Make clear it is not the child's fault
- Record the conversation accurately

2. Assessment and Decision Making

The DSL will:

- Assess the immediate risk to all children involved
- Consider whether a crime may have been committed
- Determine the appropriate level of response required
- Consult with relevant external agencies as appropriate
- Consider the needs of all children involved (victim, alleged perpetrator, witnesses)

3. Investigation and Support

Depending on the nature and severity of the allegation:

- **Internal management** through pastoral support and behaviour policies
- **Early help assessment** involving external agencies
- **Referral to children's social care** under s17 or s47 of the Children Act 1989
- **Police involvement** where a crime may have been committed
- **Multi-agency response** involving relevant specialists

4. Ongoing Support

We ensure:

- Continued support for all children affected
- Regular review of safety measures
- Monitoring of the situation
- Liaison with external agencies as required
- Clear records of all actions taken

Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

For each case, we will:

- Conduct a thorough risk assessment considering all children involved
- Develop appropriate safety plans and risk management strategies
- Consider the proximity of children involved (classes, break times, routes to school)
- Review and update arrangements regularly
- Ensure appropriate supervision and support
- Consider whether alternative arrangements are needed (different classes, supervised contact)

Supporting Children

Supporting Victims

- Believe what they tell us and take their concerns seriously
- Reassure them it is not their fault
- Provide appropriate counselling and support
- Ensure they feel safe and supported at school
- Involve parents/carers appropriately
- Consider referrals to specialist services
- Regular check-ins to monitor wellbeing
- Academic support to minimise impact on learning

Supporting Alleged Perpetrators

- Recognise they may also be vulnerable and in need of support
- Ensure appropriate behaviour management and consequences
- Provide education about appropriate behaviour and relationships
- Consider underlying factors that may have contributed to behaviour
- Involve parents/carers in developing support plans
- Referrals to appropriate services for assessment and intervention
- Clear expectations and boundaries for future behaviour

Supporting Other Children

- Address any wider concerns within the peer group
- Provide reassurance and support as needed
- Reinforce messages about appropriate behaviour
- Monitor for any ongoing issues
- Consider additional education or awareness sessions

Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Information Sharing Principles

We share information in accordance with legal requirements and statutory guidance:

- Information is shared when necessary to protect children from harm
- Sharing is proportionate and relevant to the concern
- Information is accurate, up-to-date and shared securely
- We comply with Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR requirements
- Fears about sharing information will not prevent us from safeguarding children

Record Keeping

We maintain:

- **Detailed records** of all concerns, discussions and decisions
- **Confidential filing systems** with restricted access
- **Clear timelines** of actions taken and outcomes
- **Evidence** including witness statements where appropriate
- **Safety plans** and risk assessments
- **Communication logs** with external agencies

All records are:

- Stored securely with appropriate access controls
- Transferred when children move schools
- Retained in line with our retention schedule
- Subject to regular review and monitoring

Working with External Agencies

We work collaboratively with:

- **Local Authority Children's Social Care** for child protection concerns
- **Police** where crimes may have been committed
- **Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership** for strategic oversight
- **Health services** for therapeutic support and intervention
- **Educational psychology services** for assessment and support
- **Voluntary sector organisations** for specialist support
- **Youth services** for preventative work and intervention

Channel Programme

Where there are concerns about radicalisation or extremism, we will:

- Make appropriate referrals to the Channel programme
- Co-operate with Channel panel processes
- Provide ongoing support and monitoring
- Maintain detailed records of involvement

Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

Understanding Online Risks

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can occur online and may include:

- **Cyberbullying and harassment** through social media, messaging apps and gaming platforms
- **Non-consensual sharing** of intimate images or videos
- **Online sexual harassment** including unwanted sexual comments or content
- **Digital abuse in relationships** including monitoring, control and threats
- **Exposure to harmful content** including pornography and extremist material
- **Online grooming** by peers who may themselves be being exploited

Our Response to Online Incidents

When online child-on-child abuse is reported, we will:

- Treat it as seriously as offline abuse
- Preserve evidence appropriately (screenshots, URLs, etc.)
- Consider whether incidents should be reported to police
- Work with social media platforms to remove harmful content
- Provide support to all children involved
- Review and strengthen online safety measures
- Provide additional education about digital citizenship

Preventative Measures

We implement:

- **Robust filtering and monitoring** systems on school networks (Smoothwall)
- **Digital citizenship education** as part of our curriculum
- **Clear acceptable use policies** for technology
- **Regular review** of online safety measures
- **Staff training** on digital safeguarding issues
- **Parent/carer education** about online risks and safety

Special Considerations

Children with SEND

We recognise that children with SEND may:

- Be more vulnerable to abuse
- Face additional barriers in recognising or reporting abuse
- Require specialised support and communication methods
- Need reasonable adjustments to policies and procedures

We ensure:

- Close liaison between DSL and SENCO
- Appropriate communication support
- Enhanced pastoral care and monitoring
- Involvement of specialist services where needed
- Regular review of safety measures

Looked After Children

For children who are looked after, we:

- Maintain close contact with social workers and carers
- Understand their particular vulnerabilities
- Provide enhanced monitoring and support
- Ensure information sharing with relevant professionals
- Consider the impact of their experiences on behaviour and relationships

Children Who May Be Questioning Their Gender

When supporting gender questioning children, we:

- Take a cautious and sensitive approach
- Work in partnership with parents (except where this would cause significant harm)
- Consider clinical advice where available
- Address specific vulnerabilities including risk of bullying
- Create an inclusive and supportive environment
- Follow any future revised government guidance when published

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Regular Review

We ensure effective implementation through:

- **Annual policy review** and update
- **Regular training** for all staff
- **Monitoring of incidents** and responses
- **Feedback from children, parents and staff**
- **Analysis of trends and patterns**
- **Consultation with external agencies**
- **Learning from serious case reviews and inspections**

Key Performance Indicators

We monitor:

- Number and types of child-on-child abuse incidents reported
- Timeliness of responses to reports
- Outcomes for children involved

- Effectiveness of support provided
- Impact of preventative measures
- Staff confidence in dealing with issues
- Children's understanding of how to seek help

Accountability

Our Governing Body:

- Receives regular reports on safeguarding matters
- Challenges and supports senior leaders
- Ensures adequate resources for safeguarding
- Monitors policy implementation and effectiveness
- Ensures compliance with statutory requirements

Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

All staff must:

- Model appropriate behaviour and language at all times
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour immediately
- Maintain professional boundaries with all children
- Report concerns about colleague behaviour
- Participate in regular training and development
- Follow the staff code of conduct

Low-Level Concerns

We have clear procedures for reporting and managing low-level concerns about staff behaviour that may not meet the harm threshold but could be indicative of poor practice or inappropriate conduct.

Complaints and Appeals

If You Are Not Satisfied

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our Academy's response to a child-on-child abuse concern, we ask that they follow our Academy's complaint policy and procedures. This is available:

- Online from our Academy website
- On request from the Academy office

External Support

Families can also contact:

- Local Authority Safeguarding Team
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111

- Local police if a crime has been committed

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

Policy	How it links
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	Overarching safeguarding framework and procedures
Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy	Positive behaviour strategies and consequences
Anti-Bullying Policy	Specific approaches to preventing and responding to bullying
Online Safety Policy	Digital citizenship and online risk management
Equality and Diversity Policy	Promoting inclusion and challenging discrimination
SEND Policy	Supporting children with additional needs
RSHE Policy	Age-appropriate relationship and health education
Staff Code of Conduct	Professional standards and expectations
Complaints Policy	Process for raising concerns about our response

Training and Development

Mandatory Training

All staff complete:

- **Safeguarding induction** within the first week of employment
- **Annual safeguarding updates** including child-on-child abuse awareness
- **Online safety training** covering digital risks and responses
- **Equality and diversity training** addressing discrimination and unconscious bias

Specialist Training

Key staff receive additional training on:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead training** - comprehensive multi-day courses
- **Child-on-child abuse** - specialist workshops and conferences
- **Trauma-informed approaches** - understanding impact of adverse experiences
- **Mental health awareness** - recognising and supporting emotional wellbeing
- **Working with external agencies** - effective multi-agency collaboration

Regular Development

We provide:

- **Termly safeguarding briefings** with case studies and updates
- **Team meetings** to discuss safeguarding concerns and practice
- **Access to online resources** including government guidance and research

- **Peer support networks** for sharing good practice
- **External training opportunities** for continued professional development

Resources and Support

Internal Support

- Designated Safeguarding Lead team
- Pastoral support team
- Learning mentors
- Counselling services
- Peer support programmes

External Support

For Children:

- Childline: 0800 1111
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
- Local authority children's services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Victim support services

For Families:

- Family Lives: 0808 800 2222
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
- Local authority family support services
- Domestic abuse support services
- Parent support groups

Professional Resources:

- NSPCC Learning: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance
- Brook: <https://www.brook.org.uk/>
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year and updated:

- **Annually** as a minimum
- **When statutory guidance changes**
- **Following significant incidents**
- **In response to inspection recommendations**
- **Based on feedback from stakeholders**

Date approved by the Governing Body: 18 September 2025 (FGB)

Date to be reviewed: September 2026