



## CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

### 1 Purpose & Aim

- 1.1 This policy outlines what Lockwood Primary School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of child-on-child abuse.
- 1.2 At Lockwood Primary 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 'kids being kids.' We will respond to all signs, reports, and concerns of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises, or online. We recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers, 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, additional needs, disability, sex, ethnicity 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.
- 1.3 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
- 1.4 In this policy the term victim(s) means the child or children who have been harmed) and perpetrator means the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children.

### 2 Responsibilities

#### 2.1 Head Teacher

The Head teacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), and outside agencies. The Head Teacher will communicate this policy to the school community and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.

#### 2.2 Governing Body

Governors will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy, including the appointment of a named safeguarding governor.

#### 2.3 All Staff

All staff, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff will support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.

#### 2.4 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will support their children and work in partnership with the school.

#### 2.5 Pupils

Pupils will abide by the policy and contribute to its development, implementation and review through pupil voice.

### **3 Definitions**

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudiced-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 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.

**3.2** 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.

### **4 Recognising child-on-child abuse**

**4.1** At Lockwood Primary 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.

**4.2** 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.

### **5 Reporting and responding to child-on-child abuse**

**5.1** At Lockwood Primary School we want children, parents and 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) alleged perpetrator, and any other children who may be affected.

**5.2** We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy safeguarding lead (DDSL) 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.

- 5.3 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.

## **6 Children - including bystanders**

- 6.1 It is important to understand that a victim 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, additional need, disability, sex, ethnicity, 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 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.
- 6.2 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 teaching assistant, the Head Teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.
- 6.3 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 2024 , 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 school's Child Protection and Online Monitoring system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.
- 6.4 The school will treat equally as seriously any reports made to staff in written form, email or any other method of communication including via a third party, a parent or carer or a witness to an incident.

## **7 Parents and Carers**

- 7.1 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 or is an alleged perpetrator of child-on-child abuse.
- 7.2 In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping children safe in education 2024 (Part 5, page 111-142), 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.
- 7.3 We ask that if parents and carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on-child abuse, that they raise this matter with the class teacher. The member of staff will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail and will report the concerns to the DSL or DDSL. Following the report or the meeting, the DSL will make a formal record of the report on CPOM and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The DSL will decide if any further action is immediately warranted, e.g. a referral to children's social care or the police.
- 7.4 We ask that parents and carers speak directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.
- 7.5 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 fully.

- 7.6 If a parent or 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.

## **8 Staff**

- 8.1 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 or that they are perpetrating child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.
- 8.2 We ask that staff report their concerns directly to the Head Teacher, a DSL or DDSL. 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 CPOM and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The DSL/DDSL will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

## **9 Visitors**

- 9.1 We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and how they can report safeguarding concerns. The school provides a helpful safeguarding leaflet for visitors that is available at the school entrance.
- 9.2 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 a teacher, the Head Teacher or the office administrator. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the concerns on CPOMs and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The DSL/DDSL will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

## **10 Recording and evaluating**

- 10.1 We will ensure a written report is made and uploaded to CPOMS 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 DSL/DDSL will be informed as soon as possible, if they were not involved in the initial report. We will ensure that details of decisions made and reasons for decisions are recorded as well as any outcomes.
- 10.2 We will ensure that any 'safety plans' are recorded on CPOMS and kept under review.

## **11 Strategies for Prevention**

- 11.1 Lockwood Primary School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:
- 11.2 **Staff training** – including for supply staff, governors, volunteers and visitors including at least annually:
- KCSIE training
  - Online safety and prevention of cyberbullying
  - Recognising, recording and reporting when a child makes a disclosure

## **11.3 Information for children**

- 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 frequently told what to do if they witness or experience any form of child-on-child abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it
- They are regularly informed about the school's approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including the school's zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of child-on-child abuse, the process for reporting their concerns of child-on-child abuse and where to go for further help, support, and advice
- Educating all children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via a well embedded RHE, PSHE and wider 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.
- Marking of special events and awareness days/weeks such as Anti-bullying Week and Children's Mental Health day.

#### **11.4 Information for parents and carers**

- Talking to parents, both in groups and one-to-one
- Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the review of school policies and lesson plans; and encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue
- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie child-on-child abuse – in school and in the wider community
- Ensuring parents and carers are aware of the ethos and culture of the school
- 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.

#### **11.5 Relationships and Health Education**

The school have a clear set of values and standards, upheld, and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is supported by a comprehensive Relationships and Health Education Curriculum. Our RHE 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 other vulnerabilities)

#### **11.6 We will, through our RHE curriculum, promote:**

- **Families and people who care for me-** the characteristics of healthy family life and that sometimes, other families look different from our own
- **Caring friendships** - the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties, together with how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, and how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable
- **Respectful relationships** - the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them; about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- **Online relationships** – that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not; the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them

- **Being safe** - what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others, including online; that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.

## 12 Complaints

Deviances from this policy will be dealt through the school's disciplinary procedures, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent or 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.

## 13 Links to other policies

**13.1** This policy links with several school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Child Protection policy
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
- Curriculum policies, including the PSHE, RSE and computing policies

These are available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

## 14 Further information

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

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 \(KCSIE\) Part 5: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment](#)
- [Relationships Education \(Primary\) – DfE](#)
- [NSPCC – What is Child Abuse](#)
- [NSPCC - Sexual development and behaviour in children](#)
- [NSPCC - Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership – Information for Children](#)
- [Internet Matters – Child-on-child abuse online](#)

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