



Thameside Primary School:
Child-on-Child Abuse & Managing Allegations Policy

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Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	<p>Expanded introduction – integrated recognition of victim impact, links to Behaviour Policy, and reference to safeguarding thresholds (p.2–3).</p> <p>Definitions updated – aligned to KCSIE 2025 wording, clarified inclusion of HBT bullying, TA-HSB, and hazing (Sections: What is child-on-child abuse, p.3–4).</p> <p>Harmful Sexual Behaviour expanded – explicit continuum and technology-assisted HSB added (HSB section, p.5).</p> <p>Vulnerability factors – more detail on risks for SEND, LGBT+, EAL and care-experienced children (p.6).</p> <p>Zero-tolerance stance strengthened – reinforced cultural expectations and preventative curriculum links (p.7).</p> <p>Recording & reporting – explicit reference to CPOMS, DfE Info Sharing 2023, BWSCP referral pathways (p.8).</p> <p>Support section expanded – clarified victim support, perpetrator assessment, and restorative approaches (p.9).</p> <p>Allegations procedures clarified – step-by-step process, including parent communication and risk assessments (p.10).</p> <p>EYFS 2025 compliance added – supervision, intimate care, key person responsibilities (p.11).</p> <p>Preventative curriculum – updated in line with DfE 2020/23 statutory guidance (p.12).</p> <p>Cross-references added – linked explicitly to Safeguarding & CP Policy (Sept 2025), Behaviour, Online Safety, and Anti-Bullying policies (p.13).</p>



Introduction

At Thameside Primary School, we recognise that children are capable of abusing other children. Abuse is abuse and will not be tolerated. All staff must maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and remain vigilant both in and out of school, including online environments. Addressing inappropriate behaviour at an early stage is essential to preventing escalation into abuse or violence.

Victims of such abuse are likely to find the experience distressing, which can have a significant impact on their progress and wellbeing in school. This impact may be compounded if the alleged perpetrator attends the same school. While in most cases student conduct will be managed under the school’s Behaviour Policy, some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they raise safeguarding concerns. These are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation. Such incidents will be dealt with under this policy.

We also recognise that incidents are likely to involve older pupils abusing younger children or those who are particularly vulnerable. Our responsibility is to ensure that all children are protected from harm, whether the abuse occurs in school, online, or in the wider community.

This policy aligns with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**, the **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** guidance, and our school’s **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (September 2025)**.

What is child-on-child abuse?

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, including HBT bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm – including online threats that facilitate or encourage harm)
- Sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Sexual harassment (online or offline, including comments, taunting, unwanted physical behaviour, and sexualised online behaviours)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting (criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019)
- Hazing/initiation-type violence and rituals (including online elements)

All forms of abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Abuse will never be dismissed as “banter,” “part of growing up,” or “just having a laugh.”

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Thameside recognises a continuum of sexual behaviours, ranging from developmentally appropriate to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent. Harmful sexual behaviour can be:

- **In-person** (verbal, physical, relational)
- **Technology-Assisted (TA-HSB)**, such as sexting, online grooming, pornography-sharing, and coercion via digital platforms.



Staff will use the **Continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Response Triage** (Appendix A) when responding to concerns.

Vulnerability and Risk Factors

Certain groups of children are more likely to be at risk of child-on-child abuse. These include:

- Children with SEND or EHCPs
- Children with communication or cognitive difficulties
- LGBT+ children and those questioning their identity
- Children who have experienced domestic abuse, are care-experienced, or face additional trauma.

Staff must be alert to additional barriers these children may face in reporting abuse.

Zero-Tolerance & Whole-School Approach

We adopt a zero-tolerance stance towards all forms of child-on-child abuse. This includes harmful sexual behaviours, discriminatory language, online harassment, and any physical abuse.

We create a supportive environment by:

- Delivering a developmentally appropriate PSHE, Relationships Education and Computing curriculum that addresses consent, boundaries, respect, equality, and safe online behaviour.
- Challenging all forms of harmful or sexualised behaviour, including derogatory language.
- Promoting a culture where children feel confident to report concerns safely.

Recording, Reporting and Escalation

- All incidents and concerns must be logged on CPOMS immediately.
- Staff must not wait for a disclosure - any concern must be acted on.
- The DSL (or Deputy DSL) will triage incidents and determine referral pathways (Children's Social Care, Police, CAMHS, Prevent).
- All records must include the rationale for decisions, in line with DfE Information Sharing Guidance (2023).
- The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) procedures will be followed.
- The governing body should 'Ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children' **DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education** and that the school is actively minimising the risks of child on child abuse.

Support for Victims and Alleged Perpetrators

- Victims will be supported on a case-by-case basis and reassured they are taken seriously.
- Support may include internal pastoral support, Family Hub input, CAMHS referral, or therapeutic services.
- Alleged perpetrators will also be assessed for underlying needs, recognising that their behaviour may indicate safeguarding concerns.
- Restorative approaches may be considered, but safeguarding will always take priority.
- Both victim and alleged perpetrator(s) will be monitored for ongoing risk and need.



Ongoing Support and Safeguarding

We are committed to ensuring that all children affected by child-on-child abuse receive appropriate and sustained support.

Victims

- Victims will be supported with sensitivity and respect on a case-by-case basis, recognising the varying impact of different incidents.
- Staff will challenge all inappropriate and harmful behaviours, making clear that sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable.
- Victims will be reassured that the law exists to protect them, not criminalise them.
- We will provide or seek long-term support where necessary, including therapeutic services, external agencies, and a safe environment within school.
- Additional risks faced by girls, LGBT+ pupils, and children with disabilities will always be taken into account.

Alleged Perpetrators

- Support for alleged perpetrators will consider their age, developmental stage, and any safeguarding needs that may underlie their behaviour.
- Responses will be proportionate, balancing the safety of victims with the need to provide education and support for the alleged perpetrator.
- Advice will be sought from social care, police, or specialist services where appropriate.

Other Children

- Witnesses and peers will be provided with support, recognising the potential impact of witnessing or being aware of abuse.
- The school will take steps to prevent bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any children involved, including considering safe transport and supervision arrangements.

Communication and Environment

- Staff will create safe opportunities for open communication, validating children's feelings and empowering them with choice and control.
- A safe space will be provided for those who need time away from the classroom. Alternative provision or transfer to another school will only be considered at the request of the victim and following consultation with parents and the DSL.

External resources and guidance, including the NSPCC dedicated helpline (0800 136 663), and resources from the CSA Centre, DfE, and KCSIE, will be signposted as appropriate.

Allegations Between Children

Where a pupil makes an allegation against another pupil:

- Staff must record the allegation and inform the DSL immediately (not investigate).
- The DSL will consult with social care and police where appropriate.



- Parents/carers of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator will be informed, unless this creates additional risk.
- Individual risk assessments and supervision plans will be created where needed.

Early Years (EYFS 2025 Compliance)

In line with the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2025)**:

- EYFS staff will receive safeguarding training relevant to early childhood development.
- Key person systems will be used to support disclosures.
- Safe supervision will be maintained at all times.
- Toileting, changing and intimate care will be managed in line with safeguarding best practice.

Preventative Curriculum

We will continue to educate pupils about:

- Respectful relationships and diversity
- Consent and bodily autonomy
- Online safety, filtering and monitoring
- Challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination

This is delivered through PSCH, RSE, Computing, and whole-school assemblies. Curriculum content reflects statutory guidance (DfE 2020, updated 2023) on Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education.

Policy Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Sept 2025)**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**

S Greenaway
October 2025

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

