



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

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Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	• Updated approval, review and publication dates. • Strengthened recording, reporting and escalation procedures, including immediate DSL/Deputy DSL notification for serious safeguarding concerns. • Added reference to KCSIE Part 5 and strengthened alignment with current safeguarding guidance. • Enhanced risk assessment requirements and contextual safeguarding considerations. • Clarified that child-on-child abuse can occur between any children, in person or online. • Strengthened support and protection arrangements for victims, alleged perpetrators and witnesses. • Added protections against retaliation, intimidation and bullying following disclosures. • Clarified governance responsibilities for monitoring child-on-child abuse arrangements. • Corrected terminology and minor drafting amendments.



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 pupil 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) 2026**, the **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** guidance, and our school’s **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (September 2026)**. This policy should be read alongside Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, which provides specific guidance on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

What is child-on-child abuse?

Child-on-child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender and may involve individuals or groups. Abuse can take place inside and outside of school, face-to-face, online, or through a combination of these.

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 will also consider contextual safeguarding factors such as online activity, community influences, peer groups and circumstances outside school that may increase vulnerability or risk.

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, disclosures, allegations, concerns, actions taken and outcomes must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible and on the same working day.
- Where a disclosure or concern relates to sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, child protection, or any allegation that a child may be at risk of significant harm, staff must make a direct verbal report to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately and must not rely solely on CPOMS recording.
- Recording on CPOMS does not replace the requirement to share urgent safeguarding concerns in person or by telephone with the DSL or Deputy DSL at the earliest opportunity
- 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

The school will not tolerate retaliation, intimidation, coercion or bullying towards any child involved in a safeguarding investigation. 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.
- Consideration will be given to timetables, seating arrangements, breaktimes, clubs, educational visits and transport arrangements to ensure victims feel safe whilst remaining fully included in school life.
- 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.
- The DSL (or deputy) will complete and regularly review risk assessments for victims, alleged perpetrators and, where appropriate, wider groups of pupils affected by the incident.

Where concerns cannot be substantiated, this does not necessarily mean the allegation was false. Appropriate support and monitoring will continue where required.

Allegations Involving Children From Other Settings

Child-on-child abuse may occur between children who attend different schools or educational settings. Where an allegation involves a child from another setting, the DSL will work collaboratively with the safeguarding lead from the other school to share relevant information, assess risk, coordinate support for all children involved and agree appropriate safeguarding actions. Information sharing will be proportionate, lawful and in line with safeguarding and data protection guidance. Where necessary, Thameside Primary School will work alongside Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to ensure children are protected from harm.

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 PSHE, 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 2026)**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Monitoring

The governing body will monitor safeguarding arrangements relating to child-on-child abuse and seek assurance that appropriate policies, procedures, staff training and reporting mechanisms are in place.

S Greenaway
September 2026



APPENDIX

Appendix 1

