



Child on Child Abuse Policy

Unfortunately, child-on-child abuse can and does happen in a whole range of settings that children attend. However, it often goes unseen. It might take place online, for example, or away from the school or setting. Therefore, training for professionals to help them recognise the signs, and know what to do, is essential.

For schools, there is detailed Department for Education [advice](#) on what to do if a child is sexually harassed or experiences sexual violence. This expands on the principles set out in the statutory guidance '[Keeping children safe in education](#)'.

We expect all our staff to be familiar with this guidance and to apply it. Staff should understand child protection policies and use them: there is no point to a policy that is not put into action. It should be clear that child-on-child abuse will never be accepted or dismissed as 'children being children'.

We expect all staff to know what to do if they come across, or are worried about, child-on-child abuse. They should know who to speak to and what action to take to make sure children are safe.

Understanding child-on-child abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- 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)
- Emotional abuse - online or offline
- Abuse in intimate relationships between peers
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, which 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.
- Consensual and non-consensual sexual relations.
This is explained in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) and the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Child-on-Child sexual abuse

This can take many forms, such as:

- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Upskirting, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting, which covers both consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing them to strip, touch themselves sexually or engage in sexual activity with a third party

Sexual violence

This means rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching).

Sexual harassment

This means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature – such as sexual comments, sexual jokes or taunting, physical behaviour like interfering with clothes, or online harassment such as sexting.

Staff Training

All our staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. They address inappropriate behaviours as soon as they happen, helping to prevent abusive/violent behaviour further down the line. Victims will be listened to and reports will be taken seriously.

It is vital our staff know and can identify peer-on-peer abuse early to prevent it from escalating. We provide staff with regularly updated and appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- Their role in preventing peer-on-peer abuse
- How to identify the indicators of abuse
- What to do if they have a concern about a child

- How to respond to a report of abuse
- How to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
- Where to go if they need support
- That children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:
 - Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- That they need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- That even if there are no reports in your school, it doesn't mean it's not happening
- The importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour (see more on this below)
- That girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators

Reporting abuse

If we are dealing with an allegation of peer-on-peer abuse, we follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding school policy and report incidents internally using CPOMS

Some of our safeguarding partners are:

- Lancashire Children's Social Care
- Lancashire Early Help Team
- Police Community Support Liaison Officer (PCSO)

How does our Nether Kellet CP curriculum support?

Our curriculum ensures that children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online.

Our PSHE curriculum is based on SCARF (enhanced by the Life Education team visit annually) and is supplemented by the PSHE Association. It tackles (in an age-appropriate and inclusive way) issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Consent
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Cyber-bullying
- Sexting
- Peer pressure
- Self-esteem

We also use the Kidsafe programme with a clear cycle of programmes for the children as they move through school. The aim of this programme is to teach children about staying safe, keeping their bodies safe and being able to say no.

How we support our pupils to feel confident to report abuse?

We have robust systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. Worry boxes are available in classrooms for children to express their concerns and child friendly posters are in prominent places to remind children who they can talk to.

Our children know that we treat their concerns seriously and that they can safely express their views and give feedback. All staff are trained and available to listen to children's worries and concerns and know how to record on CPOMS and report these promptly to DSLs as appropriate so that they can be dealt with swiftly.

Other organisations/ agencies we may work with

Child-on-Child abuse incidents and/or inappropriate behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school. We consider the context when preventing and dealing with such incidents.

For example, when tackling violence it is important to:

- Understand the problems that young people are facing both in school and in their local community
- Consider possible avenues of support
- Work with local partners (who may have valuable information, resources or expertise).

When addressing issues that emerge in both victim and perpetrator, there may be a need for counselling, therapy or other intervention by a trained practitioner and school is proactive in seeking support from other agencies where required.

Actions taken in the event of Child on Child abuse

Where child on child abuse is identified, parents of both perpetrator and victim will be informed and action will be taken, proportionate to the behaviour and in line with the needs and circumstances of the individual children. Determining the action taken is the responsibility of the DSL in consultation with the backup DSLs and potentially in consultation with the LA Safeguarding Schools Team. This is to ensure consistency and a proportionate response in line with that of other local schools.

As detailed previously, staff are trained to be aware that the circumstances leading to the abuse can be varied and complex and supporting the perpetrator may be as important as supporting the victim and dealing with the behaviours themselves.