



CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

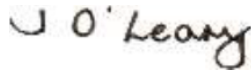
SHINE Multi Academy Trust

Management log

Document	Child-On-Child
Author	Jane Grundy
Person responsible for the document	Headteacher at Ironville and Codnor Park Primary School
Date approved	11 th March 2025
Date issued	4 th April 2025
Review period	Yearly
Next review	Spring 26
Signed	Signed



Chair of the board



CEO

Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Relationships, Health and Education
- Anti-bullying
- Online safety
- Behaviour
- Acceptable Use

All above policies are available through our academies local servers, directly through SHINE or through the Trust website www.shine-mat.com

Contents

1. What is Child-On-Child Abuse?	1
2. Preventing Child-On-Child Abuse	2
3. Systems for Children to Report Abuse	3
4. Action on Concerns	3
5. Sanctions	5
6. The Role of the SHINE Multi-Academy Trust	6
7. The Role of the Governor	6

Introduction

SHINE and its academies are committed to a whole school approach to identifying, tackling & responding to child-on-child abuse, sexual harm/violence and harassment.

A child as described in the policy is a child and young person up until 18 years.

All staff working in or on behalf of one of the SHINE academies maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* – this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

The academies recognise that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

We will take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We will respond to all reports and concerns, including those that have happened outside of the academy or online. In addition, we also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

What is Child-On-Child Abuse?

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse within 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 nudes and 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
- Initiating/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)
- It can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour.
- Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum and different forms of abuse may overlap.
- It can affect any child/young person of any age and sex and can occur between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children

Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:

- Those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
- Young people in care
- A child who is at risk of/or is been exploited or at risk of exploited (CRE, CSE)
- Those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
- A child who goes missing or is missing education
- Black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- Evidence also shows that children with SEND, and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk.

It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children/young people spend their time - home, school, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer

Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible

While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

There is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)

Preventing Child-On-Child Abuse

There is a whole school approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The academy will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The establishment has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school.

The academy provides a safe environment, promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour, takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities. This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

The academy deals with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via the academy based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour and school screening, searching
- [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Anti-bullying/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Online safety and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes and extremist material
- Attendance
- Relationships, Health and Education

Systems for Children to Report Abuse

Even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse, that certain children may have additional barriers to telling someone and children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it.

Action on Concerns

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. In particular, reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a report is very important. Members of staff will take the concerns seriously and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases. The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the academy will be treated just as seriously as that which has occurred within the education environment.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the Senior DSL or Deputy DSL.

When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare.

Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- What are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- What is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember there may be other

forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmful sexual behaviours been displayed?

- What is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this e.g. coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same school, classes, or transport?
- What are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- Is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- Are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others e.g. other children in school, adult students, school/college staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. There must also be careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on the academy premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the setting. For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, academy premises and transport should be considered immediately.

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as SHINE Multi-Academy Trust, local authority children's social care and the police as required. The designated safeguarding lead will refer to relevant assessment tools and guidance as appropriate such as:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- Behaviour in schools
- School suspension and permanent exclusion
- Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool
- Local Authority Thresholds Document
- Local Authority Safeguarding Children Procedures, in particular children who present a risk of harm to others and Online Safety and Internet Abuse procedures
- When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges

Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the designated safeguarding lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- Whether there have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator/s
- All the other children at the school, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s, or from future harms
- The time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- When information can be disclosed to staff and others, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

Whenever local authority children's social care and/or the police are involved, the academy will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded on CPOMS. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment and plans recorded in writing.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via early help (emerging needs) or through local authority children's social care (complex/serious needs or child protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care.

All risk and needs assessment and action plans whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

The academy uses the Contextual Safeguarding School Beyond Referrals Self-Assessment Toolkit & Guidance to self-assess our response to harmful sexual behaviour. All relevant policies will be updated to reflect the lessons learnt and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur.

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another education setting, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the new provider will be made aware of any on-going support needs (and will discuss this with the victim and where appropriate their parents/carers, as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the safeguarding/child protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

Sanctions

We will consider the sanctions available to use as academy in reference to our Behaviour Policy.

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of child-on-child abuse and this school will consider all courses of action and intervention.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any child, other children, parents/carers and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to attempt to resolve these.

The Role of SHINE Multi-Academy Trust

When relevant, SHINE Multi-Academy Trust will be made aware of the complexities when an incident or incidents come to light, and when staff in the school are trying to manage these behaviours. This includes the use of sanctions, exclusions, pressures from parents/carers to exclude and dealing with the parents/carers of the alleged abuser or any alleged victim/s.

We know that as a school, SHINE Multi-Academy Trust will also need to consider that they may be approached by members of staff who are angry or anxious about children with sexual behaviours. In addition, we will also consider that there may be occasions where the academy also feels pressure from external sources e.g. the local community and the media.

The Role of the Governor

When relevant, the Chair of Governors/Link Safeguarding Governor will be made aware of an incident or incidents come to light.