



Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

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Reviewed by	DLSI & SLT
Approved by	Trust Board
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Policy owner	DLSI
Location	Website

Statement of intent

SUAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil, both inside and outside of the Academy premises, and is aware that abuse against children can be inflicted by other children. We implement a whole-Academy preventative approach to managing child-on-child abuse, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

It will be achieved by:

- Creating a culture of mutual respect amongst all pupils.
- Teaching pupils about behaviour that is acceptable and unacceptable.
- Identifying and making provision for any pupil that has been subject to abuse.
- Ensuring that members of the Local Academy Council, the headteacher and staff members understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child-on-child abuse, and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear and easy to understand for staff, pupils and parents.

The Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s), together with Academy-specific pupil reporting arrangements, are identified in Appendix 1.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation'
- DfE statutory guidance on Suspension and Permanent Exclusion
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 'Right Help, Right Time Framework' and associated Escalation Process.

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2024) 'Information sharing'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview)'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- National Police Chief's Council (2020) 'When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

- GDPR Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Suspension and Exclusions Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Information Security Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy

2. Definitions

“Child-on-child abuse” is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as any form of abuse inflicted by one child or a group of children, i.e. individuals under the age of 18, against another child or group of children. This policy covers child-on-child abuse both inside and outside of an academy.

“Harmful sexual behaviour” is defined as any sexual behaviour which:

- Does not observe and respect any individuals on the receiving end of the behaviour, e.g. touching someone without their consent.
- Is inappropriate for the age or stage of development of the pupil.
- Is problematic, abusive or violent.
- May cause developmental damage.

Please note: Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or face-to-face, and can also occur simultaneously between the two.

This policy will use the following terms to describe pupils involved in child-on-child abuse:

- **Victim(s)** – the individual(s) against whom the abuse has, or has allegedly, been inflicted.
- **Perpetrator(s)** – the individual(s) exhibiting abusive behaviour against their peers.
- **Alleged perpetrator(s)** – individual(s) against whom a report of abusive behaviour has been made, where guilt has not yet been ascertained.

The term “alleged perpetrator” indicates that a report has been made but that the facts and appropriate response have not yet been determined. Its use does not diminish the seriousness with which the report will be treated or the support provided to the child making the report. Where appropriate, particularly when working with younger children, the Academy may use terminology such as “child who has displayed the behaviour.”

Staff will also be conscious of the fact that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described this way. Staff will be prepared to use any term which the individual child is most comfortable. Staff will think very carefully about terminology when speaking in front of pupils, and the use of appropriate terminology will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board has a duty to:

- Hold overall strategic responsibility, as proprietor, for safeguarding and child protection across the Trust and ensure that safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory requirements.
- Ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and systems are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including arrangements for responding to child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the Trust contributes effectively to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that Academy procedures take account of local safeguarding partnership arrangements and relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that an appropriately qualified member of the senior leadership team is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with one or more appropriately trained deputy DSLs.
- Ensure that the DSL has the appropriate status, authority, time, funding, training, resources and support necessary to fulfil the role effectively.
- Ensure that appropriate systems are in place for identifying safeguarding concerns, making referrals, escalating concerns and responding to allegations of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements take account of obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and applicable safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place relating to behaviour, child-on-child abuse, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including child-on-child abuse and online safety, through an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that staff and those responsible for governance receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and filtering and monitoring responsibilities, which is regularly updated.
- Receive appropriate Trust-wide safeguarding assurance information to enable the Board to scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and identify themes, risks and areas requiring improvement.

The Local Academy Council has a responsibility to provide local safeguarding challenge and assurance, in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. This includes:

- Seeking assurance that this policy and the Trust's safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively within the Academy.
- Providing appropriate local challenge and scrutiny of safeguarding practice, including arrangements for preventing and responding to child-on-child abuse.

- Receiving appropriate safeguarding assurance information, including relevant trends, patterns, lessons learned, the effectiveness of preventative measures and the impact of safeguarding education.
- Seeking assurance that pupils know how to report concerns and that their wishes and feelings are appropriately considered when safeguarding decisions are made.
- Seeking assurance that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Seeking assurance that appropriate systems are in place for identifying, recording, referring and escalating safeguarding concerns.
- Seeking assurance that Academy procedures reflect the requirements of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Escalating significant safeguarding concerns or areas of non-compliance to the Trust Board in accordance with the Trust's governance and reporting arrangements.

The headteacher has a duty to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Local Academy Council, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff members.
- Provide staff, upon induction, with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Part One of KCSIE, the Behaviour Policy, the Children Missing from Education Policy, appropriate online safety training, and the identity of the DSL and any deputies.
- Ensure staff receive training on recognising indicators of abuse and handling disclosures or concerns about a pupil.

The DSL has a duty to:

- Understand and keep up to date with local safeguarding arrangements.
- Act as the main point of contact with the three safeguarding partners and the child death review partner.
- Make the necessary child protection referrals to appropriate agencies.
- Understand when they should consider calling the police, in line with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) [guidance](#).
- Liaise with the headteacher to inform them of safeguarding issues and ongoing enquiries.
- Liaise with the deputy DSL(s) to ensure effective safeguarding outcomes.
- Act as a source of support for pupils who have been abused by, or who have abused, other pupils.
- Lead the Academy in taking a preventative approach to child-on-child abuse.
- Keep detailed, accurate, factual and secure safeguarding records using MyConcern (or the Academy's agreed safeguarding recording system), ensuring that records clearly evidence concerns raised, disclosures made, actions taken, decisions reached, the rationale for those decisions, multi-agency involvement, outcomes, ongoing review and the

child's voice where appropriate. Records will be maintained as a clear chronology to support effective safeguarding, information sharing and decision-making.

Other staff members have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession.
- Provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn.
- Act in accordance with Academy procedures with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. Exercise professional curiosity, recognising that behaviour, attendance, presentation, online activity or changes in relationships may indicate safeguarding concerns requiring further exploration.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the Academy, inside and outside the home, and online.
- Adhere to the early help process and understand their role in it.
- Understand and adhere to the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused by a peer.
- Understand that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- Understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding issues.
- Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the DSL.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases, and always act in the best interest of the child.
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature.
- Build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of safeguarding concerns, decisions made, and whether or not referrals have been made, and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

4. Types of child-on-child abuse

Staff will familiarise themselves with the forms that child-on-child abuse can take, including but not limited to:

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, throwing, burning, drowning and poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to another child.

Sexual abuse

A form of abuse involving sexual activity between children – sexual abuse, for the purposes of this policy, is divided into two categories: sexual violence and sexual harassment.

“Sexual violence” encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, i.e. non-consensual sexual touching, and causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent, e.g. forcing someone to touch themselves sexually.

“Sexual harassment” refers to any sexual behaviour that could violate another child’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment, including:

- Sexualised jokes, taunting or comments.
- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone.
- Online sexual harassment, including:
 - Upskirting.
 - Sexualised online bullying.
 - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
 - Sexual threats or coercion.

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (sometimes referred to as sexualised imagery) can also constitute sexual harassment. Staff will also recognise that image-based abuse may involve the creation, alteration, sharing or threatening to share intimate or manipulated images without consent, including AI-generated content, and will respond to these incidents as safeguarding concerns.

This refers to the consensual and non-consensual sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including that which depicts:

- Another child posing nude or semi-nude.
- Another child touching themselves in a sexual way.
- Any sexual activity involving another child.
- Someone hurting another child sexually.

Staff will understand that children creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of other children is a criminal offence, even where the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed with the permission of the child depicted, or by the child themselves. Incidents involving the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes will be handled in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must not view, copy, print, forward, share, save or ask a child to send nude or semi-nude imagery. If imagery is reported, the device should be secured and the DSL informed immediately. Viewing should only take place where unavoidable, after the DSL has considered the relevant UKCIS guidance and recorded the reason for doing so. Where the imagery may constitute evidence of a crime, the DSL will seek police advice before deleting material or resetting a device.

Bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

Bullying, harassment and abusive behaviour will generally be managed in line with the Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy. Where behaviour may amount to child-on-child abuse or presents a safeguarding concern, it will also be managed in accordance with this policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

Technology-facilitated abuse (including online abuse)

This involves the use of technology and the internet in order to harass, threaten or intimidate another child. Instances of Technology-facilitated abuse will be managed in line with this policy, the Online Safety Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Staff will recognise that safeguarding concerns may be identified through the Academy's filtering and monitoring systems. The Academy will ensure that concerns identified through filtering and monitoring are reviewed promptly by appropriately trained staff, recorded where appropriate and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay where they indicate a safeguarding concern. Responses will be proportionate to the level of risk and managed in accordance with the Academy's Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy and this policy.

This includes online coercion, sexually coerced extortion (sextortion), financially motivated sexual extortion, image-based abuse, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, AI-generated or manipulated sexual images and videos, online grooming, blackmail and other forms of technology-facilitated abuse. Staff will respond to these concerns in accordance with this policy, the Safeguarding Policy and national guidance.

Staff will understand that technology-facilitated abuse can take place both on and off Academy devices and networks and may involve social media, gaming platforms, messaging services, livestreaming platforms and emerging technologies.

Staff will remain alert to safeguarding risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI), including AI-generated indecent imagery, deepfake content, voice cloning, manipulated videos, image generation technologies and other emerging digital technologies which may be used to exploit, bully, harass, blackmail or sexually abuse children. Such incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in accordance with this policy.

Staff will also remain alert to online coercion, sextortion, image-based abuse, financially motivated sexual extortion, coercive online relationships and online grooming. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, reported to children's social care and/or the police.

Discriminatory behaviour

Discriminatory behaviour encompasses abuse inflicted on a pupil because of their protected characteristics, e.g. religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or any SEND. Discriminatory behaviour is never acceptable, and all cases will be handled in line with this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Academies will not tolerate unlawful discrimination against pupils because of any protected characteristics they may have.

Intimate partner abuse

This involves a romantic partnership between children in which one or both partners are emotionally, physically or sexually abusive to the other (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'). This could include:

- Repetitive insults.
- Controlling behaviour, e.g. preventing a child from socialising with others or deliberately isolating them from sources of support.
- Sexual harassment.
- Threats of physical or sexual abuse.

The Academy will manage intimate partner abuse in the same way as a case of abuse between any other children, i.e. via the processes outlined in the [Handling allegations of abuse against pupils](#) section of this policy, and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Other forms of child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse may also include, but is not limited to:

- initiation and hazing-type violence or rituals;
- coercive and controlling behaviour within children's relationships;
- stalking;
- prejudice-based and faith-targeted abuse; and
- abuse connected with money or financial exploitation where this occurs between children.

Staff should recognise that abusive behaviours may overlap and that individual incidents should be considered within the wider context of the children's relationships, circumstances and safeguarding needs.

5. A whole-Academy approach to tackling child-on-child abuse

The Academy will continue to involve all members of the Academy community, including the Local Academy Council, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-Academy approach to child-on-child abuse.

The Local Academy Council will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including child-on-child abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the Academy. The Academy will ensure that procedures for handling child-on-child abuse are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the Academy community who wishes to access them.

The Academy will implement a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that child-on-child abuse can occur within families, peer groups, schools, online, public spaces and the wider community. Safeguarding assessments and interventions will consider the contexts in which abuse occurs and work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to reduce risks and improve outcomes for children.

Safeguarding responses will also consider wider environmental factors affecting children, recognising that abuse may occur across multiple contexts and that effective safeguarding often requires coordinated multi-agency working.

The Academy maintains the presumption that child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will never be tolerated and should never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up, having a laugh, or boys being boys.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff receive adequate training on handling child-on-child abuse.

Academy culture

The Academy will prioritise cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils and ensure that all pupils are aware that the Academy will adopt a **zero-tolerance stance** on child-on-child abuse of any kind.

The Academy recognises that seemingly low-level behaviours, including sexist language, misogynistic comments, sexualised jokes, unwanted touching, online harassment, discriminatory language and the sharing of inappropriate material can normalise abuse and contribute to a culture that enables violence against women and girls (VAWG). These behaviours will always be challenged, recorded where appropriate and responded to proportionately through safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

The Academy recognises the national strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and acknowledges that misogyny, gender inequality, sexual harassment and sexual violence can contribute to harmful behaviours between children. Through its curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and culture, the Academy will actively promote equality, respect and healthy relationships whilst challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours.

The Academy will promote respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff will model appropriate and respectful behaviour. Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as 'boys will be boys' or describing such behaviour as 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up', as these phrases can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and normalised abuse.

The Academy will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of child-on-child abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage. The Academy will have a clear set of values and standards that will be upheld and demonstrated

throughout all aspects of Academy life and will be underpinned by the Academy's policies, procedures and curriculum.

The school will manage all early help and intervention for pupils that show early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Early help

Upon receiving notice of a concern or incident, the DSL or deputy DSL will advise whether the children involved in a child-on-child abuse incident require referral or would benefit from early help. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis after thorough examination of the information available, with the aim of reducing the probability of a problem getting worse.

The rationale for the decision to introduce early help as opposed to a referral will be recorded on the Safeguarding Concern Report Form.

The Academy will ensure that DSLs and deputy DSLs are suitably trained on the early help process and can access further support.

Early Help will be considered wherever emerging safeguarding needs can be addressed before statutory intervention becomes necessary. The effectiveness of Early Help support will be reviewed regularly by the DSL, in partnership with relevant agencies where appropriate, to ensure that interventions remain proportionate, effective and responsive to the child's changing needs. Where concerns escalate or risks increase, the Academy will make timely referrals to children's social care in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Early Help plans will be monitored and reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the child's needs. The Academy will work collaboratively with children, families and partner agencies to secure positive outcomes and reduce the likelihood of concerns escalating to statutory intervention.

Staffordshire Academies will use the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Right Help, Right Time Framework and associated Escalation Process when considering the level of need, support, referral and safeguarding response required. Where there is professional disagreement or concern about the response of another agency, the relevant SSCP escalation process will be followed.

Curriculum

The Academy maintains the position that education surrounding respectful and healthy attitudes and behaviour towards others is the best way to combat child-on-child abuse in the Academy. All staff, not just teaching staff, will be responsible for passing this knowledge on to pupils.

In order to prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the Academy will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the

importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The Academy will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. The Academy will also teach a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE, in accordance with the current statutory DfE guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such content will be fully inclusive, age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of pupils with SEND), and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- The concepts of, the laws relating to, and how to access support for the following:
 - Sexual consent
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Abuse
 - Grooming
 - Coercion
 - Harassment
 - Rape
 - Domestic abuse
 - So called honour-based violence, e.g. forced marriage or FGM
- What constitutes as sexual violence and sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable

Pupils will be allowed an open forum to talk about concerns and sexual behaviour. They will be taught how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

The curriculum will ensure that pupils of all ages are taught about and understand the concept of consent and its importance in an age-appropriate way.

6. Protecting pupils with increased vulnerability

The Academy is aware that, while child-on-child abuse can be perpetrated by, and against, anyone, there are certain groups of pupils who are at an increased risk of being on the receiving end of child-on-child abuse.

Staff will be careful to acknowledge the increased risk certain pupils face while refraining from making assumptions about the nature of any reported, witnessed or suspected abuse. Staff will be aware that pupils who are generally at increased risk of abuse can also be perpetrators of abuse.

The Academy will ensure that action is taken, where possible, before major concerns arise; therefore, incidents of low-level abuse related to the characteristics of the below groups will be handled in line with early help procedures, which are laid out within the Safeguarding Policy.

In considering vulnerability, staff will also recognise that additional safeguarding risks or barriers to reporting may affect children including, but not limited to:

- children with a social worker;
- looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- young carers;
- children with communication needs;
- children experiencing social isolation;
- children who are frequently absent from education or subject to repeated suspension;
- children accessing alternative provision;
- children affected by domestic abuse or significant parental conflict; and
- children whose earlier experiences of abuse, neglect, trauma or harmful behaviour may influence their own relationships or behaviour.

These factors will not be treated as evidence that abuse has occurred or that a child will display harmful behaviour. They will inform professional curiosity, appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and safeguarding assessment where concerns arise.

Girls

Staff will understand that girls are more likely to be on the receiving end of child-on-child sexual abuse than their male counterparts, and that sexual violence and harassment against girls is very common and accounts for the majority of cases.

Taking into account that sexual harassment against girls is widespread in society and is rooted in gender inequality, the Academy will encourage gender equality in all aspects of its operations. The Academy will promote and nurture healthy attitudes and respectful relationships amongst pupils of all genders by challenging gender stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes and harmful behaviours.

Staff will challenge any incidents of misogynistic language or gender-based abuse, whether of a sexualised nature or not, as holding misogynistic viewpoints can make a pupil more likely to commit sexualised violence in the future.

Staff will remain vigilant to harmful online content, including misogynistic material, incel ideology, violent extremist content, algorithmically promoted extremist or misogynistic content, coercive control, violence against women and girls (VAWG), harmful influencers, AI-generated abuse and unhealthy relationship narratives which may contribute to abusive behaviour towards peers.

LGBTQ+ pupils

Staff will understand that pupils who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+ whether they are or not, are more likely to be targeted by their peers, e.g. for discriminatory bullying.

The Academy will hold a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, regardless of whether or not the language is being directed at another individual. Every staff member will be individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils who are LGBTQ+, or who are perceived to be, is unacceptable.

The Academy will ensure that it is able to provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ pupils to speak out and/or share their concerns with members of staff.

Pupils with SEND

Staff will understand that children with SEND may be significantly more vulnerable to abuse and can face additional barriers to recognition and reporting. The Academy will ensure that appropriate mechanisms and reasonable adjustments are in place to enable pupils with SEND to raise concerns and seek help. Staff will also recognise that indicators of abuse may be incorrectly attributed to a child's disability or additional needs and will maintain professional curiosity where changes in behaviour, presentation or wellbeing occur. The Academy will ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support pupils with SEND in reporting abuse, with due regard that these pupils may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and that spotting signs of abuse in these pupils may be harder.

Staff will avoid assuming that changes in the behaviour of pupils with SEND are as a result of their needs or disability, and will report any concerns to the DSL. The DSL and the SENCO will collaborate in the handling of instances of abuse towards pupils with SEND to ensure that barriers to communication can be effectively managed.

Pupils from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

Staff will understand that minority ethnic pupils, particularly black pupils, may be less likely to report abuse committed against them, and may be more likely to be misidentified as perpetrators of abuse.

The Academy will hold a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using racist language, regardless of whether the language is being directed at another individual. Every staff member will be individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds is unacceptable.

Staff will also be aware that girls from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, pupils with SEND from minority ethnic backgrounds, and LGBTQ+ pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds may face increased vulnerability due to the intersection of these characteristics. Staff will be vigilant with regard to these pupils and the ways in which other pupils behave towards them, in order to ensure any incidents or potential incidents can be handled as soon as they occur.

7. Channels for pupils to report abuse

Pupils may report concerns through:

- Speaking directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.
 - Speaking to any trusted member of staff.
 - Reporting concerns to a form tutor, class teacher, Head of Year or pastoral lead.
 - Using the Academy's safeguarding reporting system.
 - Contacting the Academy through a dedicated safeguarding email address.
 - Asking a parent, carer or trusted adult to report a concern on their behalf.
- Sending a message to the confidential email address monitored by the DSL and their deputies.
 - Disclosing to the DSL in person during set walk-in hours.

All channels for reporting abuse will be promoted and publicised throughout the Academy, and all pupils will be made aware of how, and to whom, to report incidents of abuse. The Academy will also ensure pupils are aware of the type of behaviour that should be reported, ranging from criminal behaviour, e.g. rape or sexual assault, to everyday harassment, e.g. sexualised jokes or inappropriate comments, to ensure that victims do not view their experience as 'not serious enough' to report.

The Academy will maintain a culture that promotes reporting abuse, whether the individual reporting is the victim, a bystander, or a friend or relative of the victim. Staff will address any incidents of pupils equating reporting abuse to 'snitching' or being a 'tattle-tale', and will convey to these pupils how important it is to report abuse to help tackle the wider problem of child-on-child abuse in Academies.

8. Staff identifying and reporting concerns

Staff will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, and **annual** refresher training. This training will include guidance on how to recognise indicators of child-on-child abuse of all kinds, and how to distinguish between behaviour, particularly sexual behaviour, that is developmentally appropriate and that which is harmful.

When identifying pupils at risk of potential harm or who have been harmed by their peers, staff members will look out for a number of indicators including, but not limited to, the following:

- Injuries in unusual places, such as bite marks on the neck, that are also inconsistent with their age
- Lack of concentration and acting withdrawn
- Knowledge ahead of their age, e.g. sexual knowledge
- Use of explicit language
- Fear of abandonment
- Depression and low self-esteem
- Changes to their social group, e.g. spending time with older pupils, or social isolation
- Alcohol or substance misuse

Where a pupil is displaying signs of being impacted by child-on-child abuse, or displaying behaviour that may constitute child-on-child abuse, staff will report this to the DSL without delay.

If the DSL or a deputy is unavailable, this must not delay appropriate safeguarding action. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care where necessary. Any action taken must be shared with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Staff will recognise that changes in attendance, persistent absence, emotional based school avoidance, frequent requests to leave lessons, unexplained absences, or sudden changes in a pupil's engagement with education may be indicators of child-on-child abuse or other safeguarding concerns. Such patterns will be considered alongside all available safeguarding information and reported to the DSL in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures.

Staff will maintain professional curiosity and act upon concerns even where a child has not made a direct disclosure. All concerns will be passed to the DSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Staff will challenge all instances of abusive or harmful behaviour displayed by pupils that they witness or are reported to them. Staff will not wait for concerns or situations between pupils to escalate before intervening; minor or singular instances of abusive behaviour will still be brought to the attention of the DSL and the pupil will always be spoken to about their behaviour and disciplined, where appropriate, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Every substantiated incident will result in an appropriate and proportionate response. This may include safeguarding action, support, education, restorative or reparative work where safe and appropriate, and disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Responses will take account of the seriousness and context of the behaviour, the impact on the child harmed, the age and developmental needs of the children involved, SEND and any ongoing risk. Restorative approaches will never be imposed on a child who has experienced abuse and will not be used where they could minimise the abuse, create pressure to forgive or increase safeguarding risk.

Staff will understand that just because a victim of abusive behaviour does not report the behaviour or react to the behaviour negatively, this does not mean that the behaviour is not still harmful; staff will be made aware that some pupils will be uncomfortable challenging their peers on inappropriate behaviour, or may not be aware themselves that the behaviour is abusive.

Staff will ensure that both the perpetrator(s), or alleged perpetrator(s), and the victim(s) understand that such behaviour inflicted by or against them was unacceptable; staff will be made aware that failing to challenge a pupil on unacceptable behaviour can normalise that behaviour not just for the pupil in question, but for all pupils who see the behaviour going unchallenged.

Staff will remain cognisant that downplaying abusive behaviour can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour throughout the Academy and, as such, will respond promptly, seriously, sensitively and proportionately to all displays or reports of abusive behaviour in order to reinforce to all pupils that such behaviour will not be tolerated, and to prevent further instances of this behaviour in the future.

9. Handling allegations of abuse against pupils

Staff will always, when handling an incident of alleged abuse, take the report of the victim seriously, reassure them, support them and work to keep them safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem by reporting **any** form of abuse, be made to feel ashamed, or have their experience minimised by staff at the Academy. Staff will understand the importance of not downplaying any reports of abuse; however, will ensure that they remain sympathetic, and observant of the duty of care, to both the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s).

If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will take action – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it, or wait for a disclosure. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves, and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of children's social care where necessary. If staff are in any doubt, they will speak to the DSL. All staff will understand that pupils may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This will not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have any concerns.

Where an alleged incident took place away from the Academy or online but involved pupils from the Academy, the Academy's duty to safeguard pupils remains the same and the incident will be treated equally as seriously and investigated in the same way as an incident that took place in Academy.

All staff will be trained to handle disclosures. Effective safeguarding practice includes:

- Never promising confidentiality at the initial stage.
- Only sharing the report with those necessary for its progression.
- Explaining to the victim what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- Recognising that the person the pupil chose to disclose the information to is in a position of trust.
- Being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Not asking leading questions and only prompting the pupil with open questions.
- Waiting until the end of the disclosure to immediately write a thorough summary. If notes must be taken during the disclosure; staff will ensure they remain engaged and not appear distracted.
- Understanding that victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately and may be more comfortable providing information on a step-by-step basis.
- Ensuring that dialogue is kept open and encouraged.
- Only recording the facts as the pupil presents them – not the opinions of the note taker.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching, screening and confiscation advice.
- Wherever possible, managing disclosures with two staff members present (preferably with the DSL or a deputy).
- A child must never be asked to wait to make a disclosure until a second member of staff or the DSL is available. The member of staff chosen by the child should listen and respond in accordance with this policy.

- Informing the DSL or deputy as soon as possible after the disclosure if they could not be involved in the disclosure.

The DSL will be informed of any allegations of abuse against pupils with SEND. They will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

Staff must also comply with any individual statutory duty to report child sexual abuse under the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Recording a concern internally or reporting it to the DSL does not, by itself, discharge an individual statutory reporting duty, although a further report may not be required where the individual has confirmed that the required notification has already been or will be made within the permitted period. Staff should refer to the SUAT Safeguarding Policy and associated mandatory-reporting procedure.

Confidentiality

The Academy will only engage staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the Academy not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the Academy will not make this promise. The Academy will adhere to the principle that, even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk
- If a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to children's social care
- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that the report should be passed to the police, including where the child alleged to have displayed the behaviour is under ten. The DSL will follow local referral arrangements and liaise with children's social care and the police, taking account of the child's safety, wishes and best interests.

The DSL will weigh the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and others. If a referral is made against the victim's wishes, it will be done so extremely carefully and the reasons for referral will be explained to the victim. Appropriate specialist support will always be offered.

Anonymity

There are legal requirements for anonymity where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system. The Academy will do all it can to protect the anonymity of children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. It will carefully consider, based on the nature of the report, which staff will be informed and what support will be in place for the children involved. When deciding on the steps to take, the Academy will consider the role of social media in potentially exposing victims' identities and facilitating the spread of rumours.

Risk assessment

The DSL or a deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment any time there is a report of sexual violence. For reports of sexual harassment, a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risk assessments are not intended to replace the detailed assessments of experts, and for incidents of sexual violence it is likely that a professional risk assessment by a social worker or sexual violence specialist will be required.

Risk and needs assessments will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- Whether there may have been other victims.
- The alleged perpetrator.
- Other pupils at the Academy, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.
- The time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk and needs assessments will be recorded securely and regularly reviewed. They will be treated as live safeguarding documents and updated where circumstances, risks or needs change. The assessment will inform ongoing safeguarding decisions, safety planning, support arrangements and decisions concerning contact between the children involved. Records will be retained in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and safeguarding record-retention arrangements.

Taking action following a disclosure

The DSL or a deputy will decide the Academy's initial response, taking into consideration:

- The victim's wishes.
- The nature of the incident.
- The ages and developmental stages of the pupils involved.
- Any power imbalance between the pupils.
- Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
- Any ongoing risks.
- Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a pupil's life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
- The best interests of the pupil.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other pupils involved.

For reports of rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes shared with the victim whilst the Academy establishes the facts. The Academy will consider how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on Academy premises, and on transport where applicable. These actions will not be seen as a judgement of guilt on the alleged perpetrator.

For reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and the suitability of shared classes, premises and transport will be considered immediately. In all cases, the initial report will be carefully evaluated and the wishes of the victim, nature of the allegations and requirement to protect all children will be taken into consideration.

Where a pupil is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. non-consensually sharing indecent imagery of another pupil, the Academy will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

Managing the report

The decision of when to inform the alleged perpetrator of a report will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a report is being referred to children's social care or the police, the Academy will speak to the relevant agency to discuss informing the alleged perpetrator.

There are four likely outcomes when managing reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- Managing internally.
- Providing early help.
- Referring to children's social care.
- Reporting to the police.

Whatever outcome is chosen, it will be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons behind decisions will be recorded either on paper or electronically.

The following situations are statutorily clear and do not allow for contrary decisions:

- The age of consent is 16
- A child under the age of 13 can **never** consent to sexual activity
- Sexual intercourse without consent is **always** rape
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law
- Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of children under 18 **is illegal** – including children making and sending images and videos of themselves

Managing internally

In some cases, e.g. one-off incidents, the Academy may decide to handle the incident internally through behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.

Providing early help

The Academy may decide that statutory interventions are not required, but that pupils may benefit from early help – providing support as soon as a problem emerges. This approach can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent the escalation of sexual violence.

All staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

Referral to children's social care

If a pupil has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, the Academy will make a referral to children's social care. Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, e.g. if the referral will place the victim at risk. This decision will be made in consultation with children's social care.

The Academy will not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children.

The DSL will work closely with children's social care to ensure that the Academy's actions do not jeopardise any investigation. Any related risk assessment will be used to inform all decisions. If children's social care decides that a statutory investigation is not appropriate, the Academy will consider referring the incident again if they believe the pupil to be in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If the Academy agrees with the decision made by children's social care, they will consider the use of other support mechanisms such as early help, pastoral support and specialist support.

Reporting to the police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that it should be passed to the police, including where the child alleged to have displayed the behaviour is under ten. This will generally take place alongside a referral to children's social care where the relevant threshold is met. The DSL and deputies will follow the applicable local referral arrangements and liaise with children's social care and the police as appropriate.

Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Where parents are not informed, it is essential for the Academy to support the pupil with any decision they take, in unison with children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

The DSL and Local Academy Council will agree what information will be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. The DSL will be aware of local arrangements and specialist units that investigate child abuse.

In some cases, it may become clear that the police will not take further action, for whatever reason. In these circumstances, the Academy will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

Bail conditions

Pupils against whom further action is taken by the police may be released under bail conditions or 'released under investigation' (RUI) in circumstances that do not warrant the application of bail. Where this occurs and the perpetrator returns to Academy, the Academy's primary focus will be conducting an assessment of the risk the perpetrator poses to the victim or other pupils and staff at the Academy, both physically and in terms of trauma or emotional stress, and implementing any mitigating measures necessary to reduce the harm caused.

The Academy will work with children's social care and the police to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other pupils, especially witnesses, during criminal investigations. The Academy will seek advice from the police to ensure they meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

The Academy will liaise with police investigators to develop a balanced set of arrangements whereby both the alleged perpetrator and the victim can continue to receive a suitable education without compromising any ongoing investigations or the emotional state of the victim.

Managing delays in the criminal justice system

The Academy will not wait for the outcome, or even the start, of criminal proceedings before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children. The associated risk assessment will be used to inform any decisions made. The DSL will work closely with the police to ensure the Academy does not jeopardise any criminal proceedings, and to obtain help and support as necessary.

The end of the criminal process

Risk assessments will be updated if the alleged perpetrator receives a caution or is convicted. If the perpetrator remains in the same Academy as the victim, the Academy will set out clear expectations regarding the perpetrator, including their behaviour and any restrictions deemed reasonable and proportionate with regards to the perpetrator's timetable. The Academy will ensure that the victim and perpetrator remain protected from bullying and harassment (including online).

Where an alleged perpetrator is found not guilty or a case is classed as requiring 'no further action', the Academy will offer support to the victim and alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. Staff will understand that the victim is likely to be traumatised and the fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The Academy will discuss decisions with the victim and offer support. The alleged perpetrator will also be offered ongoing support if needed, as they have also been through a difficult and upsetting experience.

The headteacher will carefully consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether allowing the victim and the alleged perpetrator to share classes or attend the same activities is conducive to either party's effective education, and will implement alternative arrangements, in consultation with the DSL (and SENCO where the victim or alleged perpetrator has SEND), where necessary.

Ongoing support for the victim

Any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- The terminology the Academy uses to describe the victim
- The age and developmental stage of the victim
- The needs and wishes of the victim
- Whether the victim wishes to continue in their normal routine
- The victim will not be made to feel ashamed about making a report

- What a proportionate response looks like

Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately and they may be more comfortable talking about the incident on a step-by-step basis; therefore, a dialogue will be kept open and the victim can choose to appoint a designated trusted adult.

The Academy will adopt a trauma-informed approach when supporting victims of child-on-child abuse wherever appropriate. Staff will recognise that trauma may affect a child's behaviour, emotional regulation, attendance, relationships, engagement with learning and ability to disclose information. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of the child, reviewed regularly and adjusted in partnership with the child, their parents or carers (where appropriate) and relevant safeguarding agencies.

Staff will understand that victims may struggle in a normal classroom environment. Whilst the Academy will understand that it is important not to isolate the victim, the victim may wish to be withdrawn from lessons and activities at times. The Academy will ensure that this will only happen when the victim wants it to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. The Academy will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw to.

The Academy will be aware that victims may require support for a long period of time and will be prepared to offer long-term support in liaison with relevant agencies. The Academy will ensure that everything possible will be done to prevent the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made. If the victim is unable to remain in the Academy, alternative provision or a move to another Academy will be considered – this will only be considered at the request of the victim and following discussion with their parents. If the victim does move to another Academy, the DSL will inform the Academy of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

Ongoing support for the alleged perpetrator

Any decisions made regarding the support required for an alleged perpetrator will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- The terminology the Academy uses to describe the alleged perpetrator
- The balance of safeguarding the victim and providing the alleged perpetrator with education and support
- The reasons why the alleged perpetrator may have abused the victim – and the support necessary
- Their age and developmental stage
- What a proportionate response looks like
- Whether the behaviour is a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and/or materials
- What the outcome of the investigation was

When making a decision, advice will be taken from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police as appropriate. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another Academy, for any reason, the DSL will inform the destination Academy of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

If the reported abuse is found to have taken place, the Academy will work with professionals, as required, to understand why the abuse took place and provide a high level of support to help the pupil understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of them abusing again.

Disciplining the alleged perpetrator

Disciplinary action can be taken whilst investigations are ongoing and the fact that investigations are ongoing will not prevent the Academy reaching its own conclusion and imposing an appropriate penalty.

The Academy will make such decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role. The Academy will take into consideration whether any action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution. The police and children's social care will be consulted where necessary. The Academy will also consider whether circumstances make it unreasonable or irrational for the Academy to make a decision about what happened while an investigation is considering the same facts.

Disciplinary action and support can take place at the same time. The Academy will be clear whether action taken is disciplinary, supportive or both.

Shared classes

Once the DSL has decided to progress a report, they will again consider whether the victim and alleged perpetrator will be separated in classes, on Academy premises and on Academy transport – balancing the Academy's duty to educate against its duty to safeguard. The best interests of pupils will always come first.

Where there is a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from classes with the victim and potential contact on Academy premises and transport will be prevented.

Where a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, this will constitute a serious breach of discipline and result in the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the Academy would harm the education or welfare of the victim and potentially other pupils.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the Academy will consider suitable sanctions and permanent exclusion. If the perpetrator remains at the Academy, the Academy will keep the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and manage potential contact on Academy premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution, alongside the wishes of the victim, will inform any discussions made.

Where a report of sexual assault does not lead to a police investigation, this does not mean that the offence did not happen or that the victim has lied. Both the victim and alleged perpetrator will be affected and appropriate support will be provided. Considerations regarding sharing classes and potential contact will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In all cases, the Academy will record its decisions and be able to justify them. The needs and wishes of the victim will always be at the heart of the process.

Working with parents

In most sexual violence cases, the Academy will work with the parents of both the victim and alleged perpetrator. For cases of sexual harassment, these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The Academy will meet the victim's parents with the victim present to discuss the arrangements being put in place to safeguard the victim, and to understand their wishes in terms of support arrangements and the progression of the report.

Academies will also meet with the parents of the alleged perpetrator to discuss arrangements that will impact their child, such as moving them out of classes with the victim. Reasons behind decisions will be explained and the support being made available will be discussed. The DSL or a deputy will attend such meetings, with agencies invited as necessary.

Clear policies regarding how the Academy will handle reports of sexual violence and how victims and alleged perpetrators will be supported will be made available to parents.

Safeguarding other pupils

Pupils who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration, will be provided with support. It is likely that pupils will "take sides" following a report, and the Academy will do everything in its power to protect the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses from bullying and harassment.

The Academy will keep in mind that contact may be made between the victim and alleged perpetrator, and that harassment from friends of both parties could take place via social media, and will do everything in its power to prevent such activity.

As part of the Academy's risk assessment following a report, transport arrangements will be considered, as it is a potentially vulnerable place for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. The Academy will consider any additional support that can be put in place.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and the headteacher.

The Trust and Local Academy Council will receive appropriate safeguarding assurance regarding child-on-child abuse, including trends, patterns, lessons learned and the effectiveness of preventative measures. Where themes or emerging risks are identified, these will be used to inform policy development, staff training, curriculum planning, pupil education and safeguarding practice across the Academy and Trust.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2027.

Appendix 1 Academy-specific safeguarding contacts and reporting arrangements

Academy: All Saints CE Academy

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Rebecca Walker

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s): Emma Manby, Fiona Tomlinson, Anna Bennett

Headteacher: Rebecca Walker

Safeguarding email/address: executivehead@thesaintsacademies.co.uk

Pupil reporting arrangements:

The Academy recognises that children, particularly younger pupils, may find it difficult to explain or report behaviour that has upset, frightened or harmed them. Children may not always recognise that behaviour is inappropriate or understand how to ask for help.

The Academy promotes a culture in which children feel safe to speak to a trusted adult and know that they will be listened to, taken seriously and supported.

Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult if:

- Another child has hurt them, frightened them or made them feel uncomfortable.
- Someone has touched them in a way they do not like or asked them to do something that makes them feel worried or unsafe.
- Another child has repeatedly teased, threatened, excluded or bullied them.
- They have seen or heard something happening to another child that worries them.
- They are worried about something that has happened in the Academy, outside the Academy or online.

How pupils can report concerns

Children are encouraged to tell an adult they trust, such as their class teacher, teaching assistant, lunchtime supervisor or a member of the safeguarding team. If the first adult they speak to does not help them, or the worry continues, they should be encouraged to tell another trusted adult.

Staff will use age-appropriate language and approaches to help children communicate their concerns. This may include talking, drawing, using visual prompts or seeking support from an adult who understands the child's communication needs.

The Academy will regularly remind pupils that they should tell an adult if they are worried about themselves or another child. Staff will also remain alert to changes in behaviour, play, relationships or emotional wellbeing that may indicate a child is experiencing difficulties.

How the Academy will respond

All concerns will be taken seriously and reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL), in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures.

Staff will listen calmly, reassure the child and avoid asking leading questions or attempting to investigate the concern themselves. Children will not be promised secrecy, but staff will

explain in an age-appropriate way that they may need to share information with other adults to help keep them safe.

The DSL will consider the needs and safety of all children involved and determine the appropriate action, following the Academy's safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory guidance. This may include seeking advice from or referring concerns to children's social care, the police or other appropriate agencies.

The Academy will take appropriate steps to prevent further harm, protect children from retaliation and provide support according to their individual needs. This includes supporting the child who has experienced the behaviour, the child who has displayed the behaviour, and any other children affected.

The Academy will work in partnership with parents and carers where appropriate and safe to do so, taking account of safeguarding considerations. Concerns, decisions and actions will be recorded in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures.

Children will be reassured that they have done the right thing by telling an adult. The Academy will continue to monitor their wellbeing and take further action where necessary.

Local safeguarding/contact information:

The Academy follows the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance issued by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP).

Staffordshire Children's Safeguarding Referrals

Where a concern about a child requires referral to children's social care, staff must follow the Academy's safeguarding procedures and consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), as appropriate.

- **Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD):** 0300 111 8033
- **Out-of-hours Emergency Duty Service:** 0345 604 2886
- **Immediate danger:** Call 999.

Professionals should use Staffordshire County Council's online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) when making a referral, in accordance with local procedures.

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)

The SSCP provides local safeguarding guidance, procedures, training and information for professionals working with children and families.

Website: [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Reporting a concern about a child

For the latest referral guidance, contact details and online referral arrangements, refer to the official Staffordshire County Council webpage:

[Report a concern about a child's safety – Staffordshire County Council](#)

