Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding PARTNERSHIP

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Methodist Church

John Fletcher of Madeley
Primary School

Child on Child Abuse policy 2026 2027

Date of review: September 2027

Introduction

At John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School, we believe that children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other children.
We recognise that some children will sometimes negatively affect the learning and well-being of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.
The school recognises the principles of Contextual Safeguarding and understands that abuse may occur within peer groups, online environments, community settings and other social contexts beyond the school site.

This policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 (or current version in force), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges.

1 Introduction to abuse and harmful behaviour

All staff are aware that children can abuse other children. This can happen inside or outside of our setting and online.

All staff will be trained in our policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding to where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff understand that even if there are no reports in our setting it does not mean it is not happening, it may be that it is just not being reported. If staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, even if there are no reports in our setting, they should still speak to the DSL (or deputy).

All staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in 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 element of online 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 stand-alone 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 nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- AI produced images
- 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, and
- initiation/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).
- Child-on-child abuse can be motivated by prejudice or discriminatory attitudes linked to a protected characteristic and may include misogyny, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, disablism or racism.

Abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further riskof harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Safeguarding allegations:-

Very occasionally, allegations may be made against children by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Though very rare, safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse both in person and via social media, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

We recognise that children who have disabilities and/ or SEND may have additional barriers to disclosing incidents of a Child Protection nature. Similarly, professionals may also experience barriers when recognising signs of abuse and neglect with these particular children. Staff are trained to a high level in recognising signs of abuse and neglect and are fully aware of the policies and procedures to be followed in these instances.

It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a child, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:-

• Is made against an older child and refers to their behaviour towards a younger child
• or a more vulnerable child.
• Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
• Raises risk factors for other children in the school.
• Indicates that other children may have been affected by this child.

• Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this child.

Child on child abuse can take many forms.

Examples of safeguarding issues against a child could include:
(We appreciate that the risk of this happening in primary school is low, however it is still deemed a risk).
Physical Abuse
Violence, particularly pre-planned
Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
Emotional Abuse
Blackmail or extortion
Threats and intimidation either in person or via social media platforms.
Sexual Abuse
Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
Sexual Exploitation
Encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.
In areas where gangs are prevalent, older children may attempt to recruit younger children using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a child has engagedin such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.
In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm

others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potentialto happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Online Child-on-Child Abuse

including:

- cyberbullying
- online sexual harassment
- image-based abuse
- sextortion
- social media harm
- abuse occurring through gaming platforms and messaging apps

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behavior under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and is also supported by the Communications Act 2003.

If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of children under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support children may require in these instances,the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting and AI Imagery)

Youth produced sexual imagery (Sexting) is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

Child-on-child abuse may also include the creation, possession or sharing of AI-generated, manipulated or digitally altered sexualised images of children.

Recent DfE safeguarding updates and UKSIC guidance increasingly reference:

- AI-generated images
- deepfake sexual images

- digitally altered images
- image-based abuse

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the imageand these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, children are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

We will follow the guidance set out in UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.

Sexual Extortion (Sextortion)

Sexual extortion (sextortion) occurs when a child is coerced or blackmailed into sharing sexual images or money through online contact.

Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. We use the term "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). **HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two.** We will consider HSB in a child protection context.

Sexually harmful behaviour from children is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a child engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the child who instigates it as well as the child it is aimed at. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline, both inside and outside of our setting. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;

- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes;
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature,
- upskirting, and
- on-line sexual harassment.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. We recognise 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation,because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Hate crime

A hate crime, or hate incident, is an act motivated by, or perceived to be motivated by, prejudice against who the victim is, or what they appear to be, in relation to their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. These are known as protected characteristics. It does not matter if the person targeted has the characteristic that the prejudice is directed toward. Only that they are perceived to have that characteristic or belong to that community.

A hate crime does not have to amount to a criminal offence to be considered a hate crime. Non-criminal hate crime incidents can still be reported to the police to be recorded. Evidence of a hate crime is not required – it is enough that one person, such as the victim or a witness, perceives the incident to be a hate crime.

The Police and CPS define hate crime as: "Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or

sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."

Hate Crime covers a range of behaviours, including discrimination, exclusion, verbal abuse, physical assault, bullying including cyber-bullying and inciting hatred.

Hate Crime can manifest in the school environment. Our response may involve action and support from various agencies, including statutory agencies or educating the perpetrator about their language and impact. Following the incident, we will schedule check-ins with the victim to check on their well-being and ensure the issue has not continued.

All hate crime incidents reported in our setting must be recorded. The DSL will regularly review this data to identify emerging themes and inform preventative and responsive work around hate crime.

Racist incidents

A racist incident is "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person", according to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report.

We will comply with the Equality Act 2010, and not unlawfully discriminate against pupils or prospective pupils on the grounds of race (or other protected characteristics).

In line with the public sector equality duty (PSED) we will:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Comply with both specific education law on exclusions, and general law on discrimination, when suspending or permanently excluding pupils.

All racist incidents reported in our setting must be recorded.

Telford and Wrekin Council requires all schools and colleges to report racist incidents on an Individual and Annual Return, Racist Incident Reporting and Recording System (IRIS). The reporting of incidents should take place within 7 days of the incident being reported or as soon as reasonably practicable. The DSL will regularly review this data to identify emerging themes and inform preventative and responsive work around racist incidents.

We will manage racist incidents in line with our anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy.

Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social

sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physicalor sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power andmaintain control over the partner.

Expected action taken by all staff

We will undertake pre-planning, training for staff and implement an effective child-on-child abuse policy to help us develop the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports. We will review these regularly. The DSL (or a deputy) will engage with the local response to child-on-child abuse.

We understand the best responses to child-on-child abuse are based on a whole setting approach to safeguarding and child protection and we will involve our whole community in this.

Systems are in place, well promoted throughout our setting, and understandable and accessible for our pupils to confidently report abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.

Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards children from other children:-

We will follow the specialist support and advice on HSB available from the specialist sexual violence sector. Our DSL will undertake training in HSB and incorporate this into our approach to managing sexual violence and sexual harassment. This training will include the Brook Traffic Light Tool.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour **can** be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. We understand it is important that they are offered appropriate support.

These children will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other children are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

What to do:-
If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by another child/ren, or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing another child/ren, they should discuss their concern with the DSL (or deputy) without delay.

We will reassure **all** victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of our setting will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will we make a victim feel

ashamed for making a report. We will explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

When an allegation is made by a child against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed immediately.
Our Designated safeguarding leads are: **Stacey Cross, Sarah Wust, Melanie Nicholls, Nerissa Seastram, Marie Larkin and Aileen Wattle.**

As part of our commitment to our pupils, we have identified the following deputy DSLs, who are not part of our setting's senior leadership team, as staff in our setting, pupils can report child-on-child abuse to, if they choose not to report directly to a member of the senior leadership team.
Marie Larkin
Aileen Wattle
Nerissa Seastram

In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of school staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed. As with all safeguarding concerns, it is important that in such instances staff take appropriate action in accordance with their child protection policy. They should not assume that someone else is responding to any incident or concern. If in any doubt, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). In such cases, the basic safeguarding principles remain the same, but it is important for the school to understand why the victim has chosen not to make a report themselves. This discussion should be handled sensitively and with the support of children's social care if required.

There may be reports where the alleged sexual violence or sexual harassment involves pupils or students from the same school, but is alleged to have taken place away from the school, or online. There may also be reports where the children concerned attend two or more different schools. The safeguarding principles, and individual schools' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils and students, remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be especially important.

Safety Plan and safety planning & support

We take the view that child-on-child abuse does happen even if it is not reported. Therefore, on the advice of the TWSP we have implemented a Safety Plan to help to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse.

As per the advice of TWSP we refer to safety planning and support which is used for individual children in response to an alleged or actual incident child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and where appropriate, incidents of sexual harassment.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or a deputy) will implement an immediate safety and support plan to identify risk and need. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a safety and support plan will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but as good practice should be completed.
The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there may have been other victims;
- the alleged perpetrator(s);
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms, and
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

If any of the children involved has SEND, the DSL will liaise with the SENDCO to assist in the management of the report. If the report involves an online safety element, the DSL will liaise with the online safety lead if this is not the DSL.

Safety and support plans must be recorded (written or electronic) and will be kept under review. At all times, we will be actively considering the risks posed to all of our pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL (or a deputy) will engage with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional safety and support plans by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Our safety and support plan is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform our approach to supporting and protecting our pupils and updating our own risk assessment.

Action following a report of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Our DSL (and deputies) have a complete safeguarding picture and they are the most appropriate people to advise on our initial response. Important considerations will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with our duty and responsibilities to protect other children;

- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature);
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers;
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and,
- other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff will act in the best interests of the child. In all cases, we will follow general safeguarding principles. Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) (and any other children involved/impacted).

The starting point regarding any report will always be that there is a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, especially where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system.

Options to manage the report

When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that will be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and will not stop us taking immediate action to safeguard our children, where required.

We will regularly review our decisions and actions, consider our relevant policies and any lessons learnt. We will look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, we will decide on a course of action. Consideration will be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within our setting that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur and where appropriate extra teaching time and/or staff training could be delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

The DSL (or deputy) will use their professional judgement to: (a) assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour, and (b) determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required. The DSL and their deputies will consult the relevant local partnership threshold guidance to support their decision making and will engage in discussions with the statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered, part of the local arrangements.

In borderline cases the DSL (or deputy) may consult with Family Connect, and/or other relevant agencies on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

Where the DSL (or deputy) considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL (or deputy) will contact Family Connect or the local social care team for the child and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL (or deputy) becoming aware of the alleged behaviour. The DSL (or deputy) will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:

1. manage internally;
2. Family Help (previously known as Family Help (previously known as Early Help));
3. referral to children's social care; and
4. reporting to the police.

All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be recorded (written or electronic).

If bail conditions are in place, we will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within our setting.

There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children and adult students in the school or college. The DSL (or a deputy) will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, we will update our Safety Plan. We understand it is important that we ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain protected. Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s).

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Family Connect or the relevant children's social care team may be appropriate. If

a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per our own behaviour policy.

Ongoing response to child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence or sexual harassment and hate crime

We will consider the principles based on effective safeguarding practice and to help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s). We will consider what support is the most appropriate to support all children involved.

Victims may not talk about the whole picture immediately. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. We will offer victims a designated trusted adult in our setting to talk about their needs.

A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. We will avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This will be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, we will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

While we will give all the necessary support to victims to remain in our setting, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another setting will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

Please refer to our policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse.

We will always check in with all children involved or alleged to have been involved in child-on-child abuse that are in our school. This is to ensure our procedures have been followed and to understand their perception of the effectiveness of our procedures.

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

• The school should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe the “victim”.

• Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. Schools should be aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator.

• The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably

possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school or college is a safe space for them.

• The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.

• Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape. Support can include:

• Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs) provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with schools and colleges to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim.

• Police and social care agencies can signpost to ChISVA services (where available) or referrals can be made directly to the ChISVA service by the young person or school or college. Contact details for ChISVAs can be found at Rape Crisis and The Survivors Trust.

• Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

• Rape Crisis Centre's can provide therapeutic support for children who have experienced sexual violence.

• Internet Watch Foundation (to potentially remove illegal images)

Victims may not disclose the whole situation immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, schools should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or designated safeguarding lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's. Schools should respect and support this choice.

•A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While schools should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, schools should provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

• It may be necessary for schools to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. Schools should be prepared for this and should work with children's social care and other agencies as required.

• It is important that the school does everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.

• Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school or college, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

• It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and

should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate, their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator:

• The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand they need to safeguard the victim (and all other children, adult students and staff at the school or college) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.

• A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school or college. Schools should work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused a peer. It is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with, a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of them abusing again.

• Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.

• Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviour in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.

• It is important that if the alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children, adult students and staff. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

Discipline and the alleged perpetrator

With regard to the alleged perpetrator, advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them.

Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the police and/or children's social care are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly. This is a matter for the school and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should take a leading role. The school should consider if, by taking any action, they would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the police and/or children's social care should help the school make a determination.

It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for the school to reach their own view about what happened while an independent investigation is considering the same facts.

Discipline and support

Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. The school or college should be very clear as to what its approach is.
On the one hand there is preventative or forward-looking action to safeguard the victim and/or the perpetrator, especially where there are concerns that the perpetrator themselves may have been a victim of abuse; and, on the other, there is disciplinary action to punish a perpetrator for their past conduct. The school should be very clear as to which category any action they are taking falls or whether it is really both, and should ensure that the action complies with the law relating to each relevant category.

Working with parents and carers

The school will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk. Schools should carefully consider what information they provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved and when they do so. In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it will be important for the school or college to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.
It is good practice for the school to meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

It is also good practice for the school to meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Clear behaviour policies and child protection policies, especially policies that set out the principles of how reports of sexual violence will be managed and how victims and perpetrators are likely to be supported, that parents and carers have access to, will, in some cases, help manage what are inevitably very difficult conversations.

Parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided in Annex A of *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads May 2018*; Schools and colleges should consider signposting parents to this support.

Safeguarding other children

Consideration should be given to supporting children (and adult students) who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic and support may be required.

Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take "sides". The school should be doing all they can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed.

Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fall out from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between victim and alleged perpetrator and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the victim or alleged perpetrator online and/or become victims of harassment themselves.
School transport is a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator following any incident or alleged incident. The school or college, as part of its Safety Plan, should consider any additional potential support needs to keep all of their children safe.
A whole school or college approach to safeguarding, a culture that makes clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always unacceptable, and a strong preventative education programme will help create an environment in which all children at the school or college are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.
It is important that schools and colleges keep their policies, processes and curriculum under constant review to protect all their children. Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to environmental and or systemic problems that could and should be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes or relevant parts of the curriculum.

The role of education in prevention
The most effective preventative education programme will be through a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. John Fletcher of Madeley has a clear set of values and standards, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum. Such a programme has been developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering SEND children and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as:
• healthy and respectful relationships;
• what respectful behaviour looks like;
• consent;

• gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
• body confidence and self-esteem;
• prejudiced behaviour and hate crime;
• that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
• addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

Good practice allows children an open forum to talk things through. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of the processes to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

Other advice and guidance

This advice should not be read in isolation. It is important for schools and colleges to consider other relevant advice and guidance, including the following (which is not intended to be an exhaustive list), as part of their approach to protecting children from sexual violence and sexual harassment:

• Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units.
• Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
• Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education statutory guidance.
• Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance)
• Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff.
• Children Missing Education (advice for schools)
• Cyberbullying (advice for schools)
• Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (advice for schools)
• Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance (advice for further and higher education providers)
• Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
• Preventing and Tacking Bullying (advice for schools)
• The Equality and Human Rights Commission (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
• UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes guidance.