Child on Child Abuse Policy

Autumn 2025

At Southglade we want to provide a safe caring environment for our children, where they feel safe, nurtured and happy.

To achieve this, we have in place a group of policies that complement each other to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of our children.

Other policies that may need to be considered alongside our Child-on-Child Abuse policy are:

- Safeguarding Policy

- Anti bullying Policy

- PSHE Policy

- SEND Policy

- E-Safety Policy

- LAC Policy

- Behaviour Policy

- Whistle Blowing Policy

- Procedure for handling concerns and complaints

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Introduction

Southglade Primary School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Child on Child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or part of growing up.

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of Child on Child abuse within our school and beyond. In cases where Child on Child abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that Child on Child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Youth produced digital imagery, including nudes and semi nudes
- Up skirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display harmful sexual behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)

At Southglade we recognise that technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour. Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy. This policy concentrates on Child on Child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child on child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

Aims

The policy will: -

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing Child on Child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved.
- Acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community.

Understanding Child on Child abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence may occur online and offline.

The Context

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour-HSB).

We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as: -

"Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive"

Vulnerable groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk, however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010. Whilst research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and, girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools this is not confined to girls. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience Child on Child abuse. All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Responding to Alleged Incidents

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of Child on Child abuse will be managed on a case by case basis with the designated safeguarding team using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required. The flow chart in appendix three will be considered in all case management.

The immediate response to a report

- We will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- All staff will be trained to manage a report and this information will be recorded on My Concern
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- If the report includes an online element school staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;
- The alleged perpetrator;
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them;

Risk assessments will be recorded and uploaded to My Concern and kept under review.

The designated safeguarding team will ensure they are engaging with City MASH and police if necessary.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Following an incident, we will consider

- 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;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- 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 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;
- Any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff; and other related issues and wider context?

Follow up Actions

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

- The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Options to manage the report

1. Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support through our school ELSA- Mrs McCarthy, or through agencies such as MHST.

This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored by a DSL on My Concern.

2. In line with point 1 above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, a DSL will make a referral to City MASH following locally agreed protocols. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support. Where there is a difference in opinion between school and social care about the level of support a young person requires the escalation processes will be followed.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be made through City MASH. The designated safeguarding team will follow local processes for referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us. Whilst protecting children and/or taking

any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school /academy will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school/academy we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among others in the school community. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" 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 for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies (see Appendix 3).

We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL team will support this transition.

Where there is a criminal investigation the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises.

The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator.

Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of Child on Child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police. The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. Further information can be found via the following link

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour/understanding

This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour
- involves a misuse of power

Online Behaviour

Many forms of Child on Child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as cyberbullying and sexting. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found in the anti-bullying policy and the E-safety policy

Prevention

Southglade Primary School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of Child on Child abuse by:

- Training all staff on the nature, prevalence and effect of Child on Child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.

  This includes-

  (a) Contextual Safeguarding
  (b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and
  (c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of Child on Child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of Child on Child abuse is ever dismissed as 'banter' or teasing.

- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of Child on Child abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum. At Southglade we teach Relationship Education throughout our PSHE and RSE sessions across all year groups, through a progression ladder which has been written based on the curriculum content which needs to be covered in each year group. To supplement this further, we follow the Christopher Winter Project (see link in appendix) which teaches and supports children through an age appropriate progressive set of skills from Year 1 – 6. It focuses on appropriate relationships, consent, hygiene, health, friendships and families. In Year 6 children are taught about the physical act of sex and these are the only sessions which parents can opt out of, all other sessions are compulsory. We will actively speak to parents who choose to opt out to encourage them to participate and alleviate any concerns they may have around the content of the sessions. We also invite parents to attend annual meetings that inform them about the content of the sessions, allow them to ask questions and look at resources, then consult them on the policy.
- Pupils are told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
- They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of Child on Child abuse.
- Engaging parents on this issue by:
  (a)Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
  (b) Encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.
- Ensuring that all Child on Child abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who maybe in need of additional support. This is done by way of a weekly staff briefings and weekly DSL meeting at which all concerns about pupils including Child on Child abuse issues are discussed.
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- Working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community
- Teaching pupils Fundamental British Values through our learning values, PSHE and wider curriculum. This includes teaching children Democracy, Mutual Respect, Tolerance of the faith and beliefs of others, Rule of Law and Individual Liberty in a range of different ways including assemblies, developing community links and establishing a range of Ambassador roles.

- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to.
- Responding to cases of Child on Child abuse promptly and appropriately.

Multi-agency working

The School actively engages with its local partners in relation to Child on Child abuse, and works closely with, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies, and other schools.

The relationships the School has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the School is able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of Child on Child abuse. They help

the School:

(a) To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist;

(b) To ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly;

(c) To support and help inform our local community's response to Child on Child abuse;

(d) To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils.

The School actively refers concerns/allegations of Child on Child abuse where necessary to City MASH, children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies.

Children who attend Southglade but reside out of the city will be reported to their home county MASH or equivalent Social Care.

In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm and abuse and who have LAC status, the children's social worker must be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns will be required.

Appendix 1

Support for Young People: Local and National

Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChIVAs) provided by IMARA 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.

https://www.imara.org.uk/

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/children-and-families/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/get-help-from-camhs/

Appendix 2

Useful Publications and Websites and Government Publications

Christopher Winter Project- SRE

Teach SRE - Primary RSE resources and training

Keeping Children safe in Education

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement

www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence

Preventing and tackling bullying in schools

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Other useful documents

Sexting

Sexting in schools and colleges-Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

Preventing abuse among children and young people-guidance from Stop it Now

https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/

What is Age appropriate?

http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/what-is-age-appropriate

NSPCC-Harmful sexual behaviour

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour/

Understanding, Preventing, Responding

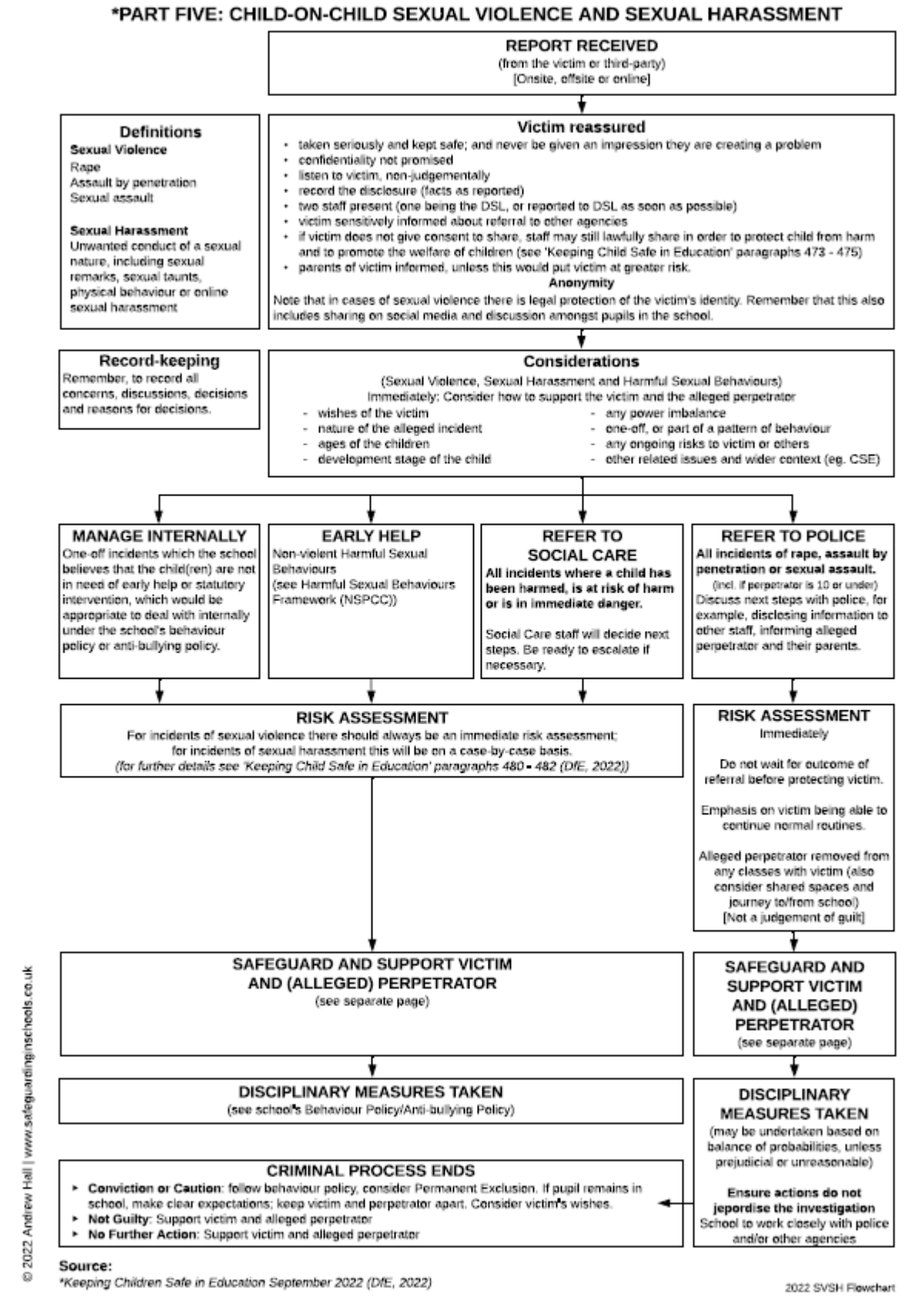
https://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame

Sexism

It's Just Everywhere- a study on sexism in schools –and how we tackle it

https://ukfeminista.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Report-Its-just-everywhere.pdf

Appendix 3


*PART FIVE: CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
REPORT RECEIVED
(from the victim or third-party)
[Onsite, offsite or online]
Definitions
Sexual Violence
Rape
Assault by penetration
Sexual assault
Sexual Harassment
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual remarks, sexual taunts, physical behaviour or online sexual harassment
Victim reassured
taken seriously and kept safe; and never be given an impression they are creating a problem
confidentiality not promised
listen to victim, non-judgementally
record the disclosure (facts as reported)
two staff present (one being the DSL, or reported to DSL as soon as possible)
victim sensitively informed about referral to other agencies
if victim does not give consent to share, staff may still lawfully share in order to protect child from harm and to promote the welfare of children (see 'Keeping Child Safe in Education' paragraphs 473 - 475)
parents of victim informed, unless this would put victim at greater risk.
Anonymity
Note that in cases of sexual violence there is legal protection of the victim's identity. Remember that this also includes sharing on social media and discussion amongst pupils in the school.
Record-keeping
Remember, to record all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions.
Considerations
(Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviours)
Immediately: Consider how to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator
wishes of the victim
nature of the alleged incident
ages of the children
development stage of the child
any power imbalance
one-off, or part of a pattern of behaviour
any ongoing risks to victim or others
other related issues and wider context (eg. CSE)
MANAGE INTERNALLY
One-off incidents which the school believes that the child(ren) are not in need of early help or statutory intervention, which would be appropriate to deal with internally under the school's behaviour policy or anti-bullying policy.
EARLY HELP
Non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviours
(see Harmful Sexual Behaviours Framework (NSPCC))
REFER TO SOCIAL CARE
All incidents where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.
Social Care staff will decide next steps. Be ready to escalate if necessary.
REFER TO POLICE
All incidents of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault.
(incl. if perpetrator is 10 or under)
Discuss next steps with police, for example, disclosing information to other staff, informing alleged perpetrator and their parents.
RISK ASSESSMENT
For incidents of sexual violence there should always be an immediate risk assessment; for incidents of sexual harassment this will be on a case-by-case basis.
(for further details see 'Keeping Child Safe in Education' paragraphs 480 - 482 (DfE, 2022))
RISK ASSESSMENT
Immediately
Do not wait for outcome of referral before protecting victim.
Emphasis on victim being able to continue normal routines.
Alleged perpetrator removed from any classes with victim (also consider shared spaces and journey to/from school)
[Not a judgement of guilt]
SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see separate page)
SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see separate page)
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(see school's Behaviour Policy/Anti-bullying Policy)
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(may be undertaken based on balance of probabilities, unless prejudicial or unreasonable)
Ensure actions do not jeopardise the investigation
School to work closely with police and/or other agencies
CRIMINAL PROCESS ENDS
Conviction or Caution: follow behaviour policy, consider Permanent Exclusion. If pupil remains in school, make clear expectations; keep victim and perpetrator apart. Consider victim's wishes.
Not Guilty: Support victim and alleged perpetrator
No Further Action: Support victim and alleged perpetrator
Source:
*Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022 (DfE, 2022)
2022 SVSH Flowchart
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