Child on Child Abuse Policy

Version: 7

Date: Autumn 2023

Review Date: December 2024

1. Aims

1.1 Albrighton Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other children. This is known as 'child on child abuse' or 'peer on peer abuse.' The school is committed to preventing child on child abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that child on child abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', part of growing up.' We appreciate that often there are barriers to reporting child on child abuse and as such, we understand that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

2. Definitions

2.1 The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- Staff or member of staff refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
- Child/children refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Child on child abuse (or peer on peer abuse) refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child on child abuse (or peer on peer) is most likely to include but is not 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 online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
❖ Sexual violence, such as race, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
❖ Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
❖ Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
❖ Consensual and non- consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and /or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

- ❖ Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to abtain 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).

3. Purpose

3.1 This policy has been written to

- Ensure that the school, including all of those working on behalf of the school, follow all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse;
- Provide information about Albrighton Primary School works to prevent child on child abuse
- Provide information about how Albrighton Primary School responds to concerns, disclosure and/or allegations relating to child-on-child abuse; and to
- Provide stakeholders with information about how Albrighton Primary School continues to support victims of child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

4. Legislation and relevant documentation

4.1 This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Child Protection Policy.

4.2 All staff should also refer to the Child Protection Policy in relation to any safeguarding matter or concerns.

4.3 This policy is part of a suite of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and Anti – Bullying Policy.

4.4 This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2021)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

4.5 The school will also refer to the government guidance documents 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges (May 2018) when managing reports or disclosures of child-on-child abuse of a sexual nature.

4.6 Rather than unnecessarily duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) in this policy, it should be understood that Albrighton Primary School will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice

5. Scope

5.1 This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors and volunteers.

6. Role of Governors

The Governors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023).
- Ensure that policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

6.2 **Role of the Headteacher**

6.2.1 The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child-on-child abuse.

6.3 **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child-on-child abuse.
- Make referrals to outside agencies as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by the staff.

6.4 **Role of all Staff**

6.4.1 All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the DSL in cases where they suspect cases of child-on-child abuse or become aware of cases of child-on-child abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- be expected to challenge any inappropriate behaviours between children which are actually abusive in nature.
- Receive training in identifying child on child abuse.

7. Responding to concerns or disclosure of child-on-child abuse

7.1 The school takes child on child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse immediately. Records of incidents will be logged on CPOMS after investigation has taken place.

8. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following

- The nature of the alleged incident including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities.
- The impact on the victim
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim.

9. Depending on the nature of the incident, the DSL may;

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim.
- Decide to manage the concern internally
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable)
- Make a referral to the police

9.1 Supporting the victim

9.1.1 The school recognises that child on child abuse has a significant impact on children and victims are likely to need ongoing support.

9.1.2 Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victims is receiving appropriate care.

9.1.3 The school will do everything we can to maintain the victims normal routine.

9.1.4 The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.

9.1.5 If a victim of child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting, the DSL will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

9.2 Supporting the alleged perpetrator

9.2.1 the school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision.

9.2.2 We recognise that children who perpetrate child on child abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.

9.2.3 A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.

9.2.4 If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the DSL will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other children at the new setting.

9.3 The DSL will take advice from outside agencies as necessary.

9.3.1 Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will (refer to KCSIE Part 5 for guidance)

Spotting the signs

Absence from school or lack of interest in school activities.
Physical injuries.
Mental or emotional ill-health.
Becoming withdrawn.
Poor self-esteem.
Tiredness.
Alcohol or other substance misuse.
Changes in behaviour.
Inappropriate behaviour for their age.
Displaying harmful behaviour towards others.

Particularly vulnerable groups

Those aged 10 and upwards.

Girls and young women are more likely to be harmed, while boys and young men are more likely to have harmed.
Black and minority ethnic children and young people are often under-identified as having been harmed and over-identified as having harmed others.
Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
Those with intra-familial abuse in their histories or those living with domestic abuse.
Those who are in care.
Those who are experiencing or have experienced bereavement following the loss of a parent, sibling or friend.
Those who are, or are perceived to be, LGBT+.
Those who are in boarding schools or other residential institutions.

It's important to remember that, as with all safeguarding issues, child-on-child abuse can impact on children and young people without these characteristics. Some of these characteristics may make a child or young person more visible, whilst those without any of the characteristics above may be less likely to be noticed by professionals.

Children and young people who have harmed others can be younger and/or physically smaller than their victims. We should never make assumptions based on a child's age or physical appearance.

We should consider interlinking factors and not just isolated incidents.

Ensure children and young people know the risks – **discuss child-on-child abuse in an age/ability-appropriate way.** Create opportunities for children and young people to weigh up the risks and recognise that sometimes this means they will take risks we as adults and professionals disagree with.

Our role is to positively influence children and young people to make the healthiest long-term choices and keep them safe from harm in the short-term.

All staff need to understand the impact of child-on-child abuse on children's and young people's mental health as well as the additional needs or vulnerabilities of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities; those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender; and/or those who have other perceived differences.

Check children and young people have safe relationships – in their family, with their peers and with your staff. Create the environment where it's okay to talk, even about the most difficult things. We do this through our PSHE curriculum.