Procedures for managing incidents of child-on-child abuse

October 2022

This guidance has been developed by the Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and reviewed by the Safeguarding Governor and staff. This procedure is reviewed annually.

Principles:

At Spurcroft Primary School all staff take seriously and will challenge any and all forms of abuse against children including child to child abuse and all forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Staff at Spurcroft will be supported to recognise unacceptable behaviours, and to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL or DDSL).

As a school, all staff will follow this guidance which has been written in addition to the School Child Protection Policy. These procedures should also be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour and RSE policies.

This document is based on guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2022:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101454/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf

Definitions:

Child-on-child sexual abuse is an overarching term that covers harassment and violence.

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 which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment

Sexual violence – this means rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; intentional sexual touching (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);

Sexual harassment – this means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Examples 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 (this is a criminal offence); online sexual harassment.

Online sexual abuse may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include: consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (taking and sharing nude photographs of under 18s is a criminal offence); sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social

media; sexual exploitation, coercion and threats; coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

School Expectations

As a school all staff will challenge any and all inappropriate behaviours by, for example:

Making clear that child on child abuse is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys' or 'girls being girls'.

We recognise that dismissing and ignoring inappropriate behaviour risks leading to:

- A culture of unacceptable behaviours
- An unsafe environment for children
- A culture that normalises abuse, leading to pupils accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We understand that children are capable of abusing other children and that this is likely to occur at some point in our setting. At Spurcroft, abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

Staff are aware that not all disclosures will be made at once and that pupils might share information over a period of time.

Within our school all forms of child-on-child sexual abuse are unacceptable and all concerns raised or observed will always be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy. However, the guidance in this document will be followed and applied to any allegations that raise concerns around any sort of sexualised element to the behaviour.

As a school we will minimise the risk of child-on-child sexual abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualized language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images.
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualized or aggressive touching or grabbing towards pupils, or initiation type violence.
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent, following guidelines in the PSHE scheme of work, DFE guidance and the school relationships and sex education policy (RSE).
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially through regular reminders in assemblies, PSHE lessons, ELSA sessions in a one to one conversation and as part of pupil discussions, for example in School Council.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this document.

Teaching and Learning to prevent child-on-child sexual abuse

As a school we will we address issues associated with child-on-child abuse through the PSHE Jigsaw programme which we have in school where all pupils will be taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online.

We will also address (in an age-appropriate and inclusive way) issues such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Consent
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment

As well as focusing on what's inappropriate as a school we will also help pupils to understand what good and healthy sexual behaviour means through promoting appropriate sexual behaviours such as:

- Consent
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Healthy relationships

Staff should follow and refer to further guidance contained in the school's Relationships and Sex Education Policy and the Jigsaw Scheme of work which supports the teaching of RSHE in school.

Staff actions when responding to allegations of child to child abuse

When a pupil makes an allegation against another pupil:

1. Victims must be reassured 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.
2. Staff will record the allegation and tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) as quickly as possible. Staff should not investigate the incident or tell anyone else. Staff should not inform other children, staff or parents of the allegation.
3. A review meeting will be led by the DSL or DDSL to identify next steps (see appendix A)
4. Parents will be informed (unless it would be dangerous to the child to do so)
5. The DSL or DDSL will contact the Local Authority Children's Services Team if necessary and follow advice, this could involve referring to Early Help services as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.

Staff actions when responding to an incident of sexting

Staff must follow the 5 steps in the section above.

Plus, when staff are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery') staff must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL or DDSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL or DDSL's responsibility) and wherever possible there should be two members of staff present.
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, pupil(s) or parents at this point

- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

Ongoing response after an incident

As a school our ongoing response to any reported incidents will be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

After the Initial Review Meeting and initial actions have been taken by the DSL or DDSL, Ongoing Response Review Meetings will take place to decide on the further follow up and to review the effectiveness of actions taken.

The following will be used as appropriate:

- A verbal warning
- Supporting the pupil to apologise to the other child through a restorative conversation
- A period of internal exclusion (length dependent on incident)
- Fixed-term suspension(length dependent on incident) or permanent exclusion (the use of exclusion from school will only be used in the most severe cases, for example if the police recommended an exclusion after an incident of sexual assault.)

As a school we will balance the importance of safeguarding other pupils with the need to support, educate and protect the alleged perpetrator(s).

We will consider:

- The age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s)
- The nature and frequency of the alleged incident(s)
- How to balance the protective and educational consequences needed

The DSL or DDSL will complete a safeguarding risk assessment/support plan for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.

This will include, if sought, any advice from Children's Services

This may include actions to keep the victim a reasonable distance apart from the alleged perpetrator(s) on school premises, including at before and after-school activities.

Risk Assessments/support plans will be shared with parents.

Supporting pupils:

The victim - Victims of this abuse will likely find the experience distressing, which can affect their progress in school. This can be made worse if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. As a school we will reassure them that we take them seriously and that they'll be supported and kept safe.

How we as a school will support the victim will depend on:

- The age and developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse
- The needs and wishes of the victim

As a school we are aware that:

- Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately, so dialogue should be kept open and encouraged
- Girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators
- There may be more than one perpetrator, which is why KCSIE refers to 'perpetrator(s)' rather than 'perpetrator'

The alleged perpetrator(s) - As a school we recognise that sometimes when pupils demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) towards one another, it is because they're communicating their own experience of abuse.

As a school we will offer them a safe space to explain what may have happened to them, and to discuss how their actions weren't appropriate. We will gently but firmly condemn the behaviour, not the pupil acknowledging that otherwise pupils may not feel safe to open up about their own experiences.

We will use a Therapeutic Thinking approach and a devise a support plan to help then modify their behaviour, this may involve counselling or clinical care.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for a group of pupils who have committed similar offences to engage in an outreach programme where they can hear first-hand about the impact of behaviour such as theirs. For example; The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Inform Young People programme offers training and support for young people in trouble with the police or their school for inappropriate online behaviour, including sexting.

We also understand that not all allegations are an accurate representation of the truth. Some allegations may be unsubstantiated. Staff will work to support and protect all pupils involved, following advice from children's services and (if appropriate) the police.

Appendix A

The following procedures will be undertaken by the DSL, or in their absence, a DDSL.

Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL or DDSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident, the class teacher and members of the safeguarding team.

This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response and how this will be gathered.
- If a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- When and how to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.
- Whether the report has an online element. In that case the key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection. Guidance from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-how-to-respond-to-an-incident-overview should be followed.
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- If it is necessary to refer to Children's Services due to the severity of the behaviour and/or the history of the behaviour.
- If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done by phoning 101 unless pupils are in immediate danger when 999 will be called.

The DSL or in their absence the DDSL will make an immediate referral to police

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL or DDSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL or DDSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL or DDSL need to record why it has not been reported.