

Child-On-Child Abuse Policy



**RHODES AVENUE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date: 30.11.22

Last reviewed: Spring 2021

New review – November 2022 to take account of changes to KCSIE 2022

Next review due: Autumn 2023

Safeguarding Governor: Lucy Freestone

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Including new expectations around Child on Child Abuse – Part 5 KCSIE 2022 - Part 1 para 32-35/Annex A paras 570-571, Part 2 para 98 1st bullet, para 155-156, Part 5 & *pages Annex B 149-151*

Introduction

Through training Rhodes Avenue ensure that all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. The senior leadership team and governing body are responsible for ensuring that procedures exist to minimise the risk of child on child abuse and consider how allegations of child on child abuse will be investigated and dealt with. There is a clear procedure on how victims of child on child abuse will be supported.

Aims of the policy

- to remind staff that 'it can happen here' KCSIE 2022 - Para 33, 445, 446, 450, 451 and 482
- to remind staff that it can happen inside and outside school and online KCSIE 2022 Para 445-449, 450 and 451
- importance of acknowledging and understanding scale of harassment and abuse, reference to term harmful sexual behaviours and the impact on a child KCSIE 2022 Para 454-457
- definitions of sexual violence KCSIE 2022 Paras 450 and sexual harassment KCSIE 2022 Para 452
- awareness that children may not find it easy to tell staff and a reminder that children can show signs in ways they hope adults will notice and react KCSIE 2022 Para 19 and 459-463
- zero tolerance approach – never acceptable or tolerated KCSIE 2022 Para 450
- girls being more likely to be victim of sexual violence or sexual harassment KCSIE 2022 Para 156 and 448, also recognition of increased risk for SEND pupils
- details of how all incidents of bullying will be recorded, analysed and reported to governors and senior leaders. This includes looking for patterns and trends and links to safeguarding.

Types of child-on-child abuse listed in KCSIE 2022(para 35) include:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- 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 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 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 nudes 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 obtaining 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).

All staff are aware of child on child abuse. These issues will be addressed through our school curriculum (Ourselves and Others), workshops and assemblies throughout the year. Rhodes Avenue Primary School will respond appropriately to **all** reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment both online and offline, including those that have happened outside of the school/college. Part 5 (Para 482) & summary pages 149-150 Annex B (also Para 33 & Annex A paras 570-571

All staff are aware that technology can be a significant component of Child-on-child abuse and that pupils are at risk of online abuse as well as face to face. Staff are aware that children can abuse their peers online through: abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages; non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups and sharing of abusive images and pornography.

All staff are expected to refer to HM Government guidance ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advise for practitioners’ for further help in identifying signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Staff understand the indicators of child-on-child abuse, know how to identify it and respond to reports. Staff also recognise that child-on-child abuse may be taking place, even if it is not reported. Inappropriate behaviour between peers is challenged and a safe environment is created leading to a culture that does not normalise abuse. This guidance can be found in Appendix A. Staff members who are concerned that a child might have been / being abused by another child should follow safeguarding and child protection procedures and report to the DSL.

In respect of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, Rhodes Avenue School takes a proactive approach to prevent such incidents from taking place. Throughout school, safeguarding is taught as part of our curriculum. We appreciate that whilst adults in school are working hard to keep children safe, children also play a large part in keeping themselves and their peers safe from abuse and neglect. An age-appropriate curriculum is rolled out in school to build capacity amongst our pupils in their understanding of particular issues, and what actions they can take to be safe.

We incorporate healthy relationships, people who help us and British values into our curriculum time in an age appropriate way for the year groups in school. Also from September 2021 we have included Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education in the school timetable, in line with DfE guidance and the national curriculum.

Students are taught to understand the issue and meaning of consent as delivered in the RSE curriculum (at an age-appropriate level) which includes causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Section 2

Non-Sexual Child on Child Abuse

All Rhodes Avenue staff are confident in responding to any reports on child-on-child abuse, including bullying that is non-sexualised.

- The different forms bullying can take:
 - bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
 - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.

Section 3

Child-on-Child sexual violence and sexual harassment

- the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) at Rhodes Avenue Primary has a complete safeguarding picture and is involved in the decision making on the initial response by Rhodes Avenue Primary. Important considerations will include: KCSIE 2022 Para 482
 - 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.
 - the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed
 - the ages of the children involved
 - the developmental stages of the children involved
 - any power imbalance between the children. For example, is/are the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, confident and well known social standing? 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 children
 - importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
 - 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.

Responding to reports of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment KCSIE 2022 para 459

Reporting Incidents or Concerns:

Pupils are taught through our curriculum about Safeguarding and how to stay safe. Students will be made aware of what constitutes unreasonable pressure from peers to engage in risk-taking or inappropriate behaviour. Pupils can report incidents or concerns to any member of staff that they feel comfortable talking to. All staff are fully trained to support any reports or concerns and will support pupils.

Allegations of abuse by a peer will be treated as seriously as allegations of abuse from an adult, it should never be dismissed as normal behaviour. All concerns are taken seriously and support will be given. Staff are aware that children should not be given the impression that they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed that they are making a report. Each report of an incident or concern will be discussed immediately with members of the headship team and relevant action taken.

Robust systems have been established in school for dealing with safeguarding concerns. All allegations of abuse and neglect, whether suspected or known will be treated seriously and in confidentiality. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We will respond and manage any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment in line with guidance added to KCSIE 2022.

Children with SEND

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face peer on peer abuse than other children. Rhodes Avenue work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by:

- Providing children with speech and language needs alternative ways to communicate what has happened to them.
- Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil’s SEND and will always explore indicators further.
- Rhodes Avenue have adapted the RSE curriculum and follows the Dfe guidance, so that all children can access it at their own level. LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children. The school’s response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

There are four likely scenarios for schools to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

1. Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, Rhodes Avenue may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support.

Rhodes Avenue's response is underpinned by the principle that child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated regardless of time taken to come forward and that abuse can have occurred online or outside school, that they are not creating a problem, and to feel reassured not feel ashamed or that they will be criminalized. KCSIE 2022 Para 468

Rhodes Avenue Primary are aware that **unsubstantiated, unfounded, false and malicious reports may occur**. A review of records for patterns of concerning and problematic or inappropriate behaviour will be investigated and if found false, consideration that the child and/or person who made allegation is in need of support and any disciplinary action. KCSIE 2022 Para 527-529

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and reported to the DSL (Emel Ali).

2. Early help

In line with 1 above, the Rhodes Avenue 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.

Referrals will be made to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). Early Help will work best when placed alongside our school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL (Emel Ali).

3. Referrals to MASH/Social Care/Police and managing the criminal process KCSIE 2022 para 515-526

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, Rhodes Avenue will make a referral to MASH/Social Care and/or the Police. At the referral to stage, Rhodes Avenue will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of MASH/Social Care and/or the Police. If a referral is made, enquires will then be made to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, Rhodes Avenue DSL will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker or other outside agency. Collaborative working will help ensure that 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. Risk assessment will also be carried out. (KCSIE 2022 para 479-481)

Rhodes Avenue will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a MASH/Social Care and/or Police investigation before protecting the victim and other children. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will work closely with MASH (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions it takes does not jeopardise a statutory investigation. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at Rhodes Avenue will be immediate. In some cases, MASH/Social Care and/or the Police will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. Rhodes Avenue, led by the designated safeguarding lead, will be prepared to refer again if the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will consider other support mechanisms such as Early Help, specialist support and pastoral support. Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL.

4. Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will be in parallel with a referral to MASH (as above). All staff are clear about Rhodes Avenue's processes for referrals and follow that process.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this should 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.

At this stage, Rhodes Avenue will inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, the DSL will continue to support the child in any decision which are made. This will be with the support of MASH and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where a report has been made to the police, Rhodes Avenue will consult with the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity and work together with parents and carers. (KCSIE 2022 para 540-552.

All police forces in England have specialist units that investigate child abuse. The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. All staff at Rhodes Avenue are aware of their local arrangements.

In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, Rhodes Avenue will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL.

Online Safety (KCSIE 2022 appendix 5 paragraph 123-135)

All staff are trained in Online Safety which is renewed annually. This training is integrated and aligned and considered as part of our whole school safeguarding approach. Rhodes Avenue ensures that parents are informed of any local contexts that become apparent, with links to further information on Rhodes Avenue's website. Rhodes Avenue provides parent workshops, fact sheets and support with firewalls for parents. At Rhodes Avenue, we have an appropriate level of security to protect all users and their data. This is reviewed annually .

Rhodes Avenue Primary staff have:

- awareness that abuse can take place online KCSIE 2022 Para 24, 26, 29, 31, 35, and 123
- a documented whole school approach to online safety that takes account of the 4Cs (conduct, content, communication and commerce) KCSIE 2022 Para 134-135
- an Online Safety policy that also cover use of mobile and smart technologies, consideration of the 4 Cs and the risks posed to pupils both at home and school and how the school addresses these KCSIE 2022 Para 137,
- Dealing with cybercrime KCSIE Annex B Page 143
- Training for staff in online safety KCSIE 2022 Para 123-127
- Opportunities to teach children about online safety this includes duties of governing body, teaching of RSHE, KCSIE 2022 Para 128-133
- Ensured that Online safety is a thread across all relevant policies and procedures KCSIE 2022 Para 136
- Ensured that Remote learning and safe approaches – identified to parents websites child may access and who from school they maybe in contact with KCSIE 2022 Para 138-139
- Overblocking KCSIE 2022 Para 133
- Filtering and monitoring KCSIE 2022 Para 133, 140-142
- Information security KCSIE 2022 Para 143
- Reviewed online safety (use of review tools) KCSIE 2022 Para 144-148
- DSL takes lead role for online safety KCSIE 2022 Para 102.

Further information available in Rhodes Avenue Online Safety Policy.

Guidance documents

Appendix A

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, May 2018](#)

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