

OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC ACADEMIES TRUST

ST JOHN RIGBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

*God's will be done through work and play, as we follow Jesus day by day*



## **Child-on-Child Abuse Policy & Procedural Guidance (Managing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence between Children)**

<b>Status: In line with OLICAT &amp; SJR Safeguarding Policy</b>
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## WHAT ARE OUR KEY PRINCIPLES AND AIMS?

John Rigby is a community based upon the strong Catholic values of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love and Trust. The ethos of our school is that it promotes inclusion and the valuing of each individual, encouraging self-esteem, self-discipline, and mutual respect.

Our mission statement lies at the heart of all we do and underpins our overarching core aims:



- To ensure **God's will** is achieved by empowering our children to develop as happy, safe, confident and successful learners who are able to make informed choices that are in their own and others best interests.
- To enable children to **work** with a joy and love for learning, acquiring the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to make a positive contribution to society.
- To enable children to **play** with an inquisitive and exploratory mind as they imagine, collaborate and create. They will take ownership of their learning journey and know that limitations are also opportunities for growth, showing courage to sometimes be wrong.
- To inspire children to grow, **day by day**, in their knowledge and understanding of the virtues to live by, reflecting our Gospel values of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love, and Trust, whilst continuing to flourish and discover their unique God given potential.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all our children. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 states that:

*'All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.'* (Paragraph 32)

This policy, alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (with particular reference to the section on Child on Child abuse), Positive Behaviour & Relationships Policy and all other relevant policies (see the end of this document), is designed to ensure that as a school we are alert to the signs of child-on-child abuse and act promptly and fairly against it.

### This policy aims to:

- Ensure clarity around what is meant by child-on-child in all its forms;
- Understand the culture within our setting
- Evidence how ALL staff support the children in our setting, particularly in relation to sexual harassment/violence
- Give children confidence that they will be supported and informed
- Give parents/carers the assurance that staff know how to deal with this abuse
- Evidence how our safeguarding staff handle reports/concerns/disclosures
- Inform of the post incident management process/ongoing support/safety planning

## HOW DO WE PUT OUR PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE?

As a school, the emotional and physical wellbeing of all our pupils lies at the heart of all we do. Inclusion and the valuing of each individual child ensures we work closely together to build relationships and establish an environment that:

- i) supports our Catholic Character Education, **Follow Jesus day by day**, and
- ii) ensures we are **Ready, Respectful and Safe** at all times

With this in mind we, therefore, build a positive, trusting relationships with children, giving our children frequent opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions, encouraging them to speak out, listening to them respectfully and responding appropriately to what they say.

At St John Rigby, our policies and procedure support in building a culture that challenges inappropriate behaviour, helping our children to feel more confident that they will be supported if they raise concerns. We also address, discuss and explore the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour by educating our pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through our curriculum, assemblies and PSHE.

The school also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and Computing sessions. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

Pupils will be allowed an open forum to talk about concerns and sexual behaviour. They are taught how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled

### **WHAT ARE OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?**

At St John Rigby Catholic Primary School, we strive to create an ethos of mutually respectful behaviour. However, if any type of abuse is seen, heard or reported **ALL** staff are confident in their actions and subsequent support.

We ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm, with full consideration of the impact on a child's emotional and mental health and well-being through a 'zero tolerance' approach.

Child-on-child abuse is referenced in our Safeguarding Policy but due to the sensitive nature and specific issues around child-on-child abuse, it necessitates us having this separate policy guidance.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024 states that:

*'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse'.*

#### **The Headteacher and Governors will:**

- ensure this policy is effectively communicated monitored and reviewed, ensuring the procedures and response measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably
- ensure clear systems are in place, which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.
- ensure there is an efficient process for how allegations of child-on-child abuse, particularly sexual harassment/violence will be recorded, investigated and dealt with.

#### **All Staff will:**

- recognise the increasing national concern regarding these issues, as highlighted in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024;
- are aware of the level and nature of risk that our pupils may be exposed to;
- understand the important role that they play in the culture of vigilance;
- recognise child-on-child abuse of all types;
- are confident and competent in responding promptly and appropriately with timely challenge of the attitudes and behaviours of child-on-child abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);
- listen to children, capture their voice, and help to create a culture in which our children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment;
- will not downplay behaviours and dismiss them as 'just banter', 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up';
- understand that by dismissing unacceptable behaviours it can lead to an unsafe environment for children and, in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not having the confidence to come forward, speak out and report what has happened to them;
- report and record their concerns following our safeguarding referral processes;
- understand that even if there are no reports of this type of abuse it does not mean that it 'does not happen here';

- are committed to a whole setting, whole staff approach, to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our setting and beyond;
- recognise and understand that children who harm others, may have additional or complex needs of their own, e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse, witnessing/ suffering abuse and therefore they too, will need support;
- encourage parents to communicate with us so that we can work together to ensure and enable a prompt and appropriate response to any type of child-on-child abuse;
- know that putting a stop to child-on-child abuse of any type and ensuring the safety of our children is a priority in our education setting;
- regard the introduction of this policy as a positive, proactive, and preventative measure.

### **WHAT IS CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE & HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR?**

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse using coercion/power and/or control by an individual child, or group of children, and is exercised between children and within their relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

Child-on-child abuse can be motivated by perceived differences. e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences and result in significant, long lasting, and traumatic isolation, intimidation, and/or violence to the victim.

**Child-on-child abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’.**

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

#### **BULLYING**

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. Children and young people who are bullied and/or who bully others may have serious and lasting problems.

To be considered bullying, the behaviour must be emotionally or physically aggressive and include the following:

- An imbalance of power such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. These imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition as these behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- 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 bullying (Cyberbullying)** is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms, etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It can take many forms and this list is not exhaustive:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails, or messages.
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites.
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else.
- Stealing someone’s online identity.
- Spreading rumours online.
- Trolling-sending menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chat rooms or games.
- Developing hate sites about another person.

#### **PREJUDICE-BASED & DISCRIMINATORY BULLYING**

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

As with all other unacceptable behaviour, staff should follow our Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy ensuring that the incident is logged and referred for follow up by the Inclusion Team.

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

This may include 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). There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action or consequence to be undertaken.

Any incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with following the procedures set out in our Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS, SEXUAL HARASSMENT & SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence can occur between two children of any age and sex. We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any setting where pupils are together and that the impact of this behaviour on children can be extremely distressing, impacting on their emotional health and wellbeing as well as affecting their academic achievement.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person. They will then ask staff to record all information and any disclosures on CPOMS.

The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance in Part five of the KCSIE document: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, September 2024. This guidance sets out four likely scenarios for schools to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

- Managing internally (KCSIE page 125)
- Early Help (KCSIE page 118-120)
- Referral to children's social care (KCSIE page 117)
- Reporting to the police (KCSIE page 117)

Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual harassment and Sexual violence exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

**Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)** - In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic, and harmful sexual behaviour. Harmful sexually behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in harmful sexual behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards. It may include:

- inappropriate sexual language or sexually explicit words and phrases
- inappropriate role play;
- sexual touching;
- sexual threats;
- sexual assault/abuse.

**Sexual Harassment** - For this policy we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. We refer to this 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 deliberating brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos, and sharing sexual images and videos (both often referred to as sexting); sexualised online bullying and inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence

**Sexual Violence** - For this policy we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Consent** is when someone agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. It is important to note that:

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- The age of consent is 16.

### **SEXTING**

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of nude or indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. These images may have been because of up-skirting.

**Upskirting** – this typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will follow the UKCIS guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (see also Appendix 1: Responding to an incident)

### **HAZING/INITIATION**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team, etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony 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 passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Staff should be aware that any pupils could disclose a concern like this about themselves or an older sibling. Any concerns of this nature should be immediately shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads so that this can be followed up through safeguarding procedures.

### **TEENAGE RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

Teenage relationship abuse is 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 physical or 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 and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

Staff should be aware that any pupil could disclose a concern like this about an older sibling. Any concerns of this nature should be immediately shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) so that this can be followed up through our safeguarding procedures.

## HOW WILL WE RESPOND TO ALLEGED CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE or SEXUAL HARRASSMENT?

When dealing with an alleged incident of child-on-child abuse or Sexual Harassment, an assessment of the incident between the children will be completed by a member of the leadership team, safeguarding team and/or the pastoral team. Whilst doing this they will consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- Whether the behaviour involved any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination, e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability?
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Whether there were any element of coercion or pre-planning
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, and if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or it has occurred over time.

It is also important that we:

- ascertain if there were there any witnesses to the abuse;
- make notes and record ALL conversations with children spoken to as well as parents/carers/other professionals, including any actions taken;
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk - while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves;
- ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both victim and alleged perpetrator.

We are aware that it is important to deal with a situation of child-on-child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents/carers when they become involved.

Staff will avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will always talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner, and will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Any incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with following the correct procedures as set out in our:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Managing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence between Children Policy

## HOW WILL WE ASSESS SEXUALISED BEHAVIOURS AND LEVEL OF CONCERN?

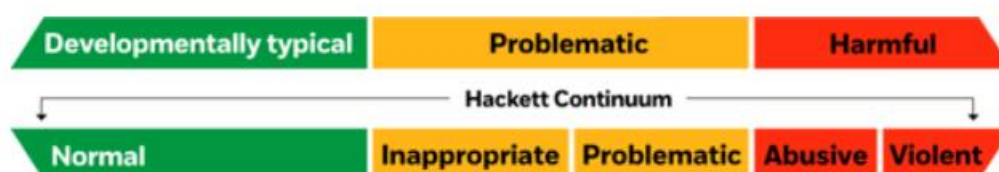
It can be hard to determine what sexual behaviour looks like in schools as it can sit on a continuum that ranges from **healthy** to **problematic** to **harmful**. Children and young people typically display a range of sexualised behaviours as they grow up. However, some may display problematic or abusive sexualised behaviour. This is harmful to the children who display it as well as the people it is directed towards.

Therefore, it is important to consider each incident case by case, and within each child's own context, with a professional understanding of what healthy behaviours are in order to avoid overreaction and unnecessary anxiety as well as being aware of behaviours that might be cause for concern and warrant further thought and investigation.

Harmful sexual behaviour is described as, "sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18-years-old, that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult" (Professor Simon Hackett).

Using NSPCC and Brook guidance, we will use the Hackett's Continuum and Brook's Traffic Light tools (Appendix 1: Identifying and Responding to Sexualised Behaviours) in order to:

- **Identify** behaviour and establish if sexual behaviour is typical or developmentally appropriate, problematic or harmful.
- **Understand** what that behaviour is communicating and why the child or young person may be exhibiting the behaviour.
- **Respond** appropriately, considering how the type of response will depend on what's motivating the behaviour, what the behaviour is communicating and the severity of the behaviour.



Brook's Traffic Lights:

<p><b>Green light</b> sexual behaviours are typical and developmentally expected.</p> <p>They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spontaneous, curious, light-hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual</li> <li>• Appropriate to the child's age and development</li> <li>• Activities or play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels.</li> </ul> <p>These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and provide support.</p>	<p><b>Orange light</b> sexual behaviours cause concern because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence, intensity, frequency or duration</li> <li>• The type of activity for the age and stage of development</li> <li>• Inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability</li> <li>• Risk to the health and safety of the child or others</li> <li>• Unusual changes in a child's behaviours.</li> </ul> <p>These behaviours should not be ignored and signal the need to monitor and provide targeted support.</p>	<p><b>Red light</b> sexual behaviours indicate or cause harm because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening</li> <li>• Secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery</li> <li>• Not appropriate for the age and stage of development</li> <li>• Between children or young people with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power</li> <li>• Abusive or aggressive.</li> </ul> <p>These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow up support.</p>
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## HOW WILL WE RESPOND TO REPORTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE and/or SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Guidance is clear in that it does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every particular case; it provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process and on a case by case basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy/ies (DDSLs) will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse using their professional judgement and working together practices. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure and it is important to maintain a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

### Reporting and Recording Sexualised Behaviour

Staff must:

- Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record all information and disclosures immediately on CPOMS
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

## Responding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Inclusion Team may take all or some of the following actions dependent on the severity of the incident:

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Consider the intent
- Assess the needs of the victim and alleged perpetrator
- Inform parents/carers
- Consider a referral to Social Care or the Police
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all actions taken

## Talking to the Victim(s) and Perpetrator(s)

When we talk about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children, we will refer to 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. This does not mean that we are taking sides nor making any judgement, or that these words are used with children or parents/carers, but for the purpose of this policy we will refer to children involved in this way.

**Victim** - When we speak to the 'victim' we will:

- listen and take any disclosure seriously;
- never make them feel that they are creating a problem or be ashamed;
- reassure them that they will be kept safe;
- handle the situation with sensitivity;
- use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child;
- ask open questions and not lead the victim;
- ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight 'hot spots' or vulnerable locations in our setting or within the community which may need to be revisited by either ourselves (in school) or by alerting police/partners if it is in the community;
- ascertain if other children witnessed this abuse;
- consider ongoing support within our setting;
- consider any referrals for external support

**Alleged perpetrator** - When we speak to the 'alleged perpetrator' we will:

- listen to what they say and not dismiss their account;
- handle the situation with sensitivity and a non-judgemental approach;
- offer ongoing support;
- record all conversations and all action taken;
- consider any referrals for external support, as required.

## Working with Parents/Carers

At St John Rigby we will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence or sexual harassment.

The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent/ carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information provided to the respective parents/carers about other children involved and when to do so. It is important to ensure open communication as the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view on this aspect, and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

It should be the case that we will meet the victim's parents/carers 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. (See Post Incident Management below)

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents/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. We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed including any referrals, if appropriate.

We realise that parents/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/carers are provided on the school website and at the end of the policy.

## **WHAT INFORMATION DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER?**

### **What is the age of the children involved?**

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked.

### **Where did the incident or incidents take place?**

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

### **What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?**

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

### **What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?**

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

### **Repetition**

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

## **HOW WILL WE MANAGE REPORTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT and/or SEXUAL VIOLENCE?**

There are four likely scenarios the school will need to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

**a) Manage internally** - In some cases of sexual harassment (for example, one-off incidents), we may take the view that the students concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally using our own sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy/Anti-Bullying Policy and by providing pastoral intervention and support.

**b) Early Help** - We may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help where we are the lead professional. 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. This will help to evidence the support that we have given, the work undertaken and if desired outcomes have been achieved.

**c) Referral to Social Care and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub** – In all cases of child-on-child abuse, but in particular with sexual violence and sexual harassment, consideration will be given to the reporting of the matter to Children's Services via Bedford Borough's [Integrated Front Door](#) (IFD)

If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. This 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 requiring support.

We will not wait for the outcome, or even the start of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for us to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

**Reporting to the Police** – At St John Rigby we understand our responsibilities to call the Police and reporting forms of Child-on-child abuse. This does not mean that we are looking to criminalise children, and this may not always be necessary.

The guidance that we follow is:

[When to call the police \(guidance for schools and colleges\)](#)

[Outcome 21 Sexting Guidance](#)

Where a report has been made to the police, school will consult with the police and agree what information is appropriate to disclose to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents/carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

This may also include the development of a clear and robust safety and support plan as part of Post Incident Management (see below).

Should the school decide to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this will be handled extremely carefully, the reasons will in most cases be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered. We will also consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- That the victim(s) 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. (We will balance this aspect and the need to balance our duty and responsibility to protect other children).
- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the pupils involved.
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature).

## **HOW WILL IMPLEMENT POST-INCIDENT MANAGEMENT?**

It is vital that all children involved in child-on-child abuse are given appropriate and ongoing support for as long as it is required/needed. This may include referrals to other agencies/professionals outside our setting and this decision will be made in conjunction with the children, their parents/carers, and other professionals.

If there are other professionals involved, then we will liaise with those colleagues to ensure that we are working together and understand one another's role in this support.

## **SUPPORT PLANNING**

It is imperative that, following any incident, the pupils involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they tell us that they are coping and managing. Sometimes feelings of embarrassment, remorse, regret, or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage. We will do our best to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the pupils following the incident(s) will happen as part of this plan.

**For the young person who has been harmed** – What support they require depends on the individual. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one-to-one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this pupil continues

to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions we would consider may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc. Also, through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education, PSHCE and SMSC, certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the pupil feels particularly vulnerable it may require a risk assessment to be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support. If this is the case, a risk assessment will be clearly recorded and kept under review.

**For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour** – It is important to find out why the pupil has behaved in such a way. It may be that they are experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed or abused themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one-to-one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the pupil has been met, it is important that they receive a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one-to-one-work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment will be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the pupil and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the pupil and their parents. This may mean additional supervision or protective strategies if the pupil feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour. This risk assessment will be kept under review.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal seclusion for a period of time to allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour.

### **SAFETY PLANNING/RISK ASSESSMENT**

Integral to post-incident management is robust safety planning/risk assessment and this is an invaluable and necessary process. It is one of the school's key priorities as part of the post-incident management. When looking at this process, consideration should be given to the following:

- if this is an ongoing police investigation, we will ask the police if we have any questions about the progress of the matter for example, are there any bail conditions in place or has there been a charging decision. It is key to have a central point of contact with the police for updates and progress. Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us to manage our safeguarding responsibilities. Where bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, as above, we will work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard our children;
- the importance in ensuring that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education;
- the importance of the alleged perpetrator in continuing to access education and support;
- do the victim and alleged perpetrator share classes;
- what measures need to be put in place when children move between lessons/classes;
- what measures need to be put in place for unstructured time (break and lunchtimes);
- what measures need to be put in place for the arrival at the start of the school day and leaving at the end of the school day;

- do the victim and alleged perpetrator travel to and from school using the same form of transport;
- appropriate information sharing with staff in our setting in order that the plan is manageable and as successful as possible;
- if it is the case that the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs.

In all cases, the school will record its decision making together with the rationale behind those decisions. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of all that we do as part of this process (supported by parents/carers as required). Our safety plan/risk assessment will be kept under review.

### **WHAT GUIDANCE & LEGISLATION SUPPORT THIS DOCUMENT?**

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that a child's welfare is paramount.

Another key document is the Working together to safeguard children, 2018, which highlights that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. (Working together to safeguard children, 2018:21) This view is also echoed in the Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023, which states that procedures should be in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Other documentation and statutory guidance includes:

Additional support and Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges

Responding to Sexting Guidance

Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education

Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018

CEOP-Safety centre

Disrespect NoBody

Behaviour and discipline in schools

UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Searching, screening and confiscation

Preventing sexual bullying

Preventing bullying

Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes

The NSPCC

Specialist Sexual Violence Rape Crisis

The UK safer internet centre email at [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)

Internet Watch Foundation

UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)

Think u know

This policy should be read in line with the school's policies on:

- SJR Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SJR Positive Behaviour & Relationships Policy
- SJR Anti-Bullying Policy
- SJR Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- SJR Relationships and Sexual Health Education Policy

APPENDIX 1:

**Identifying and Responding to Sexualised Behaviours**

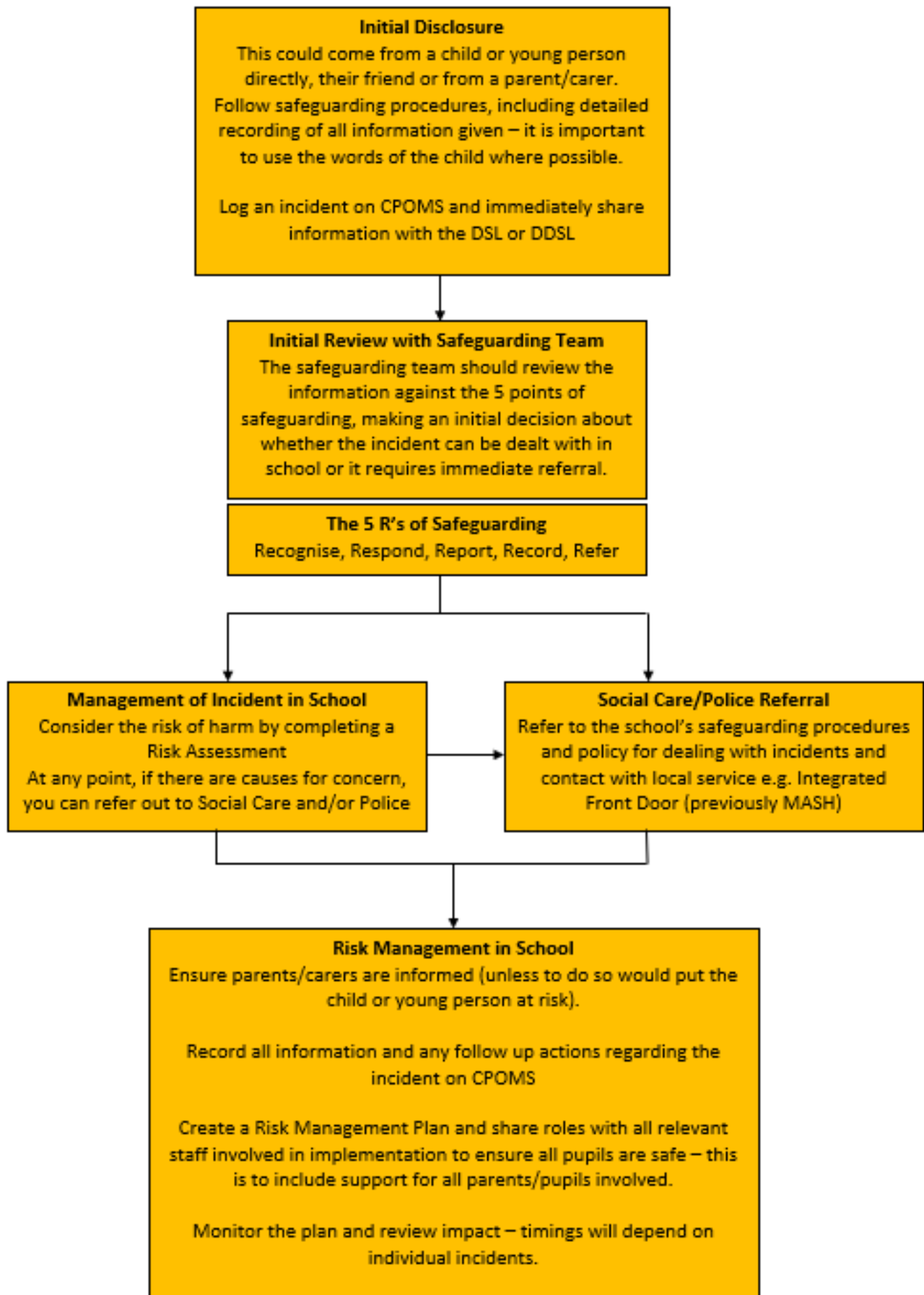
It is important to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviours from those that may be problematic or harmful, and make sure children get appropriate support. Always consider the child’s holistic needs and safeguarding concerns alongside any sexualised behaviour and follow due procedures accordingly. This guide is a tool to support objective decision making about a child or young person’s sexual behaviour and does not replace professional judgement or policy and legislation.

Developmentally typical	Problematic		Harmful	
<p>Typical and developmentally appropriate due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spontaneous, curious, light-hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual</li> <li>• Appropriate to the child’s age and development</li> <li>• Activities among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels.</li> </ul>	<p>Can cause concerns due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence, intensity, frequency or duration</li> <li>• The type of activity within the age and stage of development</li> <li>• Inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability</li> <li>• Risk to the health and safety of the child or others</li> <li>• Unusual changes in a child’s behaviours.</li> </ul>		<p>Indicate/Cause harm due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening, abusive or aggressive behaviour</li> <li>• Secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery</li> <li>• Not appropriate for the age and stage of development</li> <li>• Between children or young people with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power</li> </ul>	
Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour (Refer to Brook Developmental Behaviours)</li> <li>• Consensual, mutual, reciprocal</li> <li>• Decision making is shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single instances of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Behaviour that may be socially acceptable within a peer group but not in wider society</li> <li>• May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour</li> <li>• May be compulsive</li> <li>• Consent may be unclear and behaviour may not be reciprocal</li> <li>• May involve an imbalance of power</li> <li>• Doesn’t have an overt element of victimisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrusive behaviour</li> <li>• May involve a misuse of power</li> <li>• May have an element of victimisation</li> <li>• May use coercion and force</li> <li>• May include elements of expressive violence</li> <li>• Informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically violent sexual abuse</li> <li>• Highly intrusive</li> <li>• May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator</li> <li>• May involve sadism</li> </ul>
<p><b>How to Respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours</li> <li>• Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse</li> <li>• Signpost helpful resources like our ‘Talk PANTS’ activity pack: <a href="http://nspcc.org.uk/pants">nspcc.org.uk/pants</a></li> <li>• Make sure young people know how to behave responsibly and safely</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to Respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amber behaviours should not be ignored</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Consider the child’s developmental age as well as their chronological age, alongside wider holistic needs</li> <li>• Follow the school’s procedures, gather information and make a report via CPOMS</li> <li>• Liaise with the Inclusion Team to gain further advise &amp; support if needed to assess the appropriate action e.g. most inappropriate will follow Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate</li> </ul>		<p><b>How to Respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action</li> <li>• If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999</li> <li>• Follow the school’s safeguarding and child protection procedures, gather information and make a report via CPOMS, and immediately inform the DSL/DDSL</li> <li>• Safeguarding Leads will use the relevant guidance to assess the appropriate actions in line with the Managing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy</li> <li>• Typically, referrals to children’s social care and the police would be required. Referrals to therapeutic services should only be made once statutory services have been informed and followed due procedures</li> </ul>	

This document provides guidance and is not an exhaustive list of potential behaviours. Ages represent both chronological and developmental. All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

	GREEN BEHAVIOURS	AMBER BEHAVIOURS	RED BEHAVIOURS
	<p>Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability</li> <li>• reflective of natural curiosity,</li> <li>• experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices</li> </ul>	<p>Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of potential concern due to age, or</li> <li>• developmental differences</li> <li>• of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur</li> </ul>	<p>Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening</li> <li>• involving significant age, developmental, or power differences</li> <li>• of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur</li> </ul>
0 to 5 Years	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holding or playing with own genitals</li> <li>• attempting to touch or curiosity about other children's genitals</li> <li>• attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults</li> <li>• games e.g. mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses</li> <li>• enjoying nakedness</li> <li>• interest in body parts and what they do</li> <li>• curiosity about the differences between boys and girls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preoccupation with adult sexual behaviour</li> <li>• pulling other children's pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will</li> <li>• talking about sex using adult slang</li> <li>• preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people</li> <li>• following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them</li> <li>• talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistently touching the genitals of other children</li> <li>• persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults</li> <li>• simulation of sexual activity in play</li> <li>• sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects</li> <li>• forcing other children to engage in sexual play</li> </ul>
5 to 9 years	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling and touching own genitals</li> <li>• curiosity about other children's genitals</li> <li>• curiosity about sex and relationships, e.g. differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same-sex relationships</li> <li>• sense of privacy about bodies</li> <li>• telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given</li> <li>• sexual bullying face to face or through texts or online messaging</li> <li>• engaging in mutual masturbation</li> <li>• persistent sexual images and ideas in talk, play and art</li> <li>• use of adult slang language to discuss sex</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent masturbation in front of others</li> <li>• sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able children</li> <li>• forcing other children to take part in sexual activities</li> <li>• simulation of oral or penetrative sex</li> <li>• sourcing pornographic material online</li> </ul>
9 to 13 years	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling and touching own genitals</li> <li>• solitary masturbation</li> <li>• use of sexual language including swear and slang words</li> <li>• having girl/boyfriends who are of the same, opposite or any gender</li> <li>• interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online</li> <li>• need for privacy</li> <li>• consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• questions about sexual activity which</li> <li>• uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing</li> <li>• verbal, physical or cyber/virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression</li> <li>• LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) targeted bullying</li> <li>• exhibitionism, e.g. flashing or mooning</li> <li>• giving out contact details online</li> <li>• viewing pornographic material</li> <li>• worrying about being pregnant or having STIs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical behaviours include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exposing genitals or masturbating in public</li> <li>• distributing naked or sexually provocative images of self or others</li> <li>• sexually explicit talk with younger children</li> <li>• sexual harassment</li> <li>• arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret</li> <li>• genital injury to self or others</li> <li>• forcing other children of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities</li> <li>• sexual activity e.g. oral sex or intercourse</li> <li>• presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI)</li> <li>• evidence of pregnancy</li> </ul>

Brooks Traffic Light Tool Behaviours for age 13 – 17 can be obtained from the DSL



## Risk Assessment for Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse/ Violence/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The terms victim and alleged perpetrator are used to identify the children involved. NB: there should be no assumption of guilt on the part of the alleged perpetrator, pending investigation.

Each section/question will be considered from the perspective of both pupils. Considerations will be given for the impact on, and needs of, the wider school community. All concerns and proposed actions will be recorded.

The school will work with the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (Integrated Front Door) and other agencies as necessary when completing this risk assessment. This document should be reviewed frequently to ensure it is fit for purpose.

**\*A risk assessment should be completed for all cases relating to sexual violence or alleged sexual violence. Sexual violence is defined by the sexual offences act 2002 as "criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault".**

**\*This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges**

**Risk Assessment Written by (Position):**

**Date:**

Considerations	Risk (Consider Victim, Alleged Perpetrator, other pupils and staff)	Risk Level: High/Medium/Low	Actions to reduce risk	Revised Risk Level: High/Medium/Low
What was the nature of the incident?  Was it a crime?				
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.				
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?				

Is either the victim or the alleged perpetrator at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?				
Do they share classes?				
Do they share break times?				
Do they share transport to/from school?				
Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?  How can such contact be limited?				
Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

<b>Further action taken by school</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By Who</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Police informed				
Referral to MASH				
Referral to external support services				
Referral to internal support services				
Referral to CAMHS				
Referral to early help				
Other				

**Review Date:**

Appendix 3:

## Risk Management Plan for Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse/ Violence/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The terms victim and alleged perpetrator are used to identify the children involved. NB: there should be no assumption of guilt on the part of the alleged perpetrator, pending investigation.

Each section/question will be considered from the perspective of both pupils. Considerations will be given for the impact on, and needs of, the wider school community. All concerns and proposed actions will be recorded.

**\*This risk management plan should be completed and followed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy & Procedures**

**This document is confidential and should only be shared with relevant staff**

<b>Name of Pupil:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Staff Concerned:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Review Date:</b>		<b>Written by:</b>		
Considerations	Risk Management	Actions Required		Who	When	
<b>Further points to consider:</b>						
What work is being done to address the needs of the children?						
What support do parents need?						
Are there clear boundaries and expectations of acceptable behaviours?						
What support is in place to reduce the risk of isolation and to encourage the child to enjoy and achieve?						
Who will monitor this plan and liaise with other agencies should further concerns arise?						

Appendix 4:

## Review of Risk Assessment & Management Plan for Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse/ Violence/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Using the Risk Assessment and Management Plan, evaluate whether any changes need to be made to the Risk Assessment and Management Plan. A review will consider any new information, changes in circumstances and any work carried out the child(ren) and/or family.

<b>Name of Pupil:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	<b>Completed by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Further Review Date:</b>	<b>Agreed by:</b>	
<b>Summary of Progress Made</b>	<b>Actions /Amendments Required</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>Who/When</b>
Have there been any further incidents? If so, what actions were taken and what was the outcome?			
Has the child accessed the support available from the setting and from other agencies as part of this plan?			
Can the child remain in the setting given the current concerns? What additional support can be given?			