

Walderslade Girls' School

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

| Key Document Details: | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Author: | DSL | Department: | Education |
| Reviewer: | Headteacher | Version No: | 1.0 |
| Last Review: | October 2023 | Next Review: | September 2024 |
| Approver: | Executive Team | Date Ratified: | |

Key Contacts

| | <u>Name</u> | <u>Contact information</u> |
|---|------------------|--|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Layla Devaney | ldevaney@sflt.org.uk |
| Headteacher | Louise Campbell | Headteacher@sflt.org.uk |
| Safeguarding Governor | Susan Greenfield | sgreenfield@sflt.org.uk |

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Key Contacts..... | 2 |
| Document Change History | 3 |
| Mission Statement | 4 |
| Values..... | 4 |
| Statement of Equality..... | 4 |
| Purpose | 4 |
| Feeling safe at school | 5 |
| What is child-on-child abuse? | 5 |
| The role of the School? | 5 |
| Who does this policy apply to? | 7 |
| Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment | 8 |
| Bullying..... | 12 |
| Sexting..... | 13 |
| What are the signs to look out for with abuse? | 14 |
| Steps to take if you think someone else is being abused | 15 |
| What do I do if I am being abused?..... | 15 |
| Who can I talk to? | 16 |
| How can I help stop abuse from happening? | 16 |
| Working with our parents and carers..... | 16 |
| Sanctions | 17 |
| Reporting to the Police..... | 17 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Post Incident Management | 18 |
| Safety planning/Risk assessment | 18 |
| Additional support and guidance | 20 |

Document Change History

| Date: | Version: | Description of Changes: |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Oct 2023 | 1.0 | New Policy |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Mission Statement

“To nurture and develop all people in our Trust so that they reach their full potential academically, vocationally, and personally, including being positive role models for future generations in the community. We will achieve this by providing high quality values-based education that cultivates employability and life skills making our schools the first choice for young people, parents, carers, staff and employers.”

Values

The values of Respect, Excellence, Collaboration, Independence, Perseverance, Enjoyment, Leadership, Integrity and Care are central to everything we do at the Skills for Life Trust.

Statement of Equality

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Purpose

Skills for Life Trust has high quality careers advice and guidance, to support our all of our students to prepare for the next stage in life. This is developed throughout a student’s time at the school and is always supportive of their aspirations, strengths and skills.

We aim to:

- Prepare students for the transition to life beyond secondary school (higher education and the world of work);
- Support students in making informed decisions which are suitable and ambitious for them;
- Provide students with well-rounded experiences;
- Develop characteristics e.g. social skills, communication, innovation, resilience and leadership which support students in the curriculum and in their future careers;
- Inspire and motivate students to develop their aspirations.

This policy summarises the statutory guidance and recommendations. It then outlines the provision of careers education, work experience and provider access.

Feeling safe at school

At Walderslade Girls' School, we want to make sure that pupils/students feel looked after and safe when they are in and out of school.

Sometimes we don't know if something bad is happening, so we encourage for the need to tell us.

This policy looks at child-on-child abuse, and what can be done when there is a concern of abuse, or when it is noticed that someone else may be being abused.

At Walderslade Girls' school we can help by:

- Teaching what child-on-child abuse is.
- Teaching what to do if a pupil/student feels like they are being abused, or if someone else is being abused.
- Making sure pupils/students know who they can speak to if they are worried or how they can report a concern.

What is child-on-child abuse?

A **peer** is someone who might be a pupil/students friend, a pupil/student at school, or another young person they may know. You may hear child-on-child abuse referred to as '**peer-on-peer**' abuse.

Abuse is something which usually physically or emotionally **hurts** another person by using behaviour that is meant to **scare, hurt** or **upset** the victim, or decrease their self-worth.

Child-on-child abuse can happen inside and outside of school – It can happen online, or in-person and it is important for pupils/students to let someone know if they think that they or someone else is being affected by child-on-child abuse.

It is not always easy to identify abuse when it is coming from a peer such as a friend, or a classmate; but it is **important** to look out for the signs of child-on-child abuse and **report it** so that we can make sure it stops.

The role of the School?

- All staff at Walderslade Girls' School:
- recognise the increasing national concern regarding this issue as highlighted in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

- are aware of the level and nature of risk that our pupils/student are or 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 pupils/students, capture their voice, and help to create a culture in which our pupils/students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental 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 pupils/students and, in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to pupils/students 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 that it '*does 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 pupils/students 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 as well as educational underachievement and possibly an involvement in criminal activity 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 pupils/students is a priority in our education setting.
- regard the introduction of this policy as a positive, proactive, and preventative measure

At Walderslade Girls' School we work hard to create a culture where child-on-child abuse does not happen but recognise that it could happen here. We strive to create an ethos of mutually respectful behaviour. However, if this type of abuse is seen, heard or reported ALL staff are confident in their actions and subsequent support. We create a culture of vigilance, upskill confident and competent staff who recognise the signs that child-on-child abuse is occurring.

We create a culture where staff challenge immediately and understand the importance of language to use, recording what they see as soon as possible afterwards so a full current picture is formed. We ensure this happens through regular training throughout the year. This training comprises of face-to-face whole staff training, briefing notes, emails of resources and individual staff training sessions. Staff are made aware of the local area issues and the importance of contextual safeguarding.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that child-on-child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment, is never acceptable and that we have a zero-tolerance approach.
- Not dismissing this abuse as “banter”, “part of growing up” or “just having a laugh”; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as physical and sexual assaults e.g. grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia or sharing indecent images on line.

We have well-promoted and easily understood systems in place so that our pupils/students feel confident in knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. Any behaviour incident is recorded on the school Arbor system and if necessary additionally on MyConcern. If the incident is of a higher concern then pastoral leads, a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team will discuss and investigate the incident further.

All pupils/students have sessions on how we expect them to behave and what to do if they feel themselves or others are receiving abuse. We highlight the fact that they will be taken seriously, any incident reported will be fully investigated, sanctions will be put into place and follow up support will be provided for the victim and alleged perpetrator. Trends will be highlighted through the reports from Arbor and any concerns within the whole school, particular year group, class or peer group will be addressed.

Who does this policy apply to?

All pupils/students are at risk of child-on-child abuse, but some groups are more vulnerable than others to abuse and include the following:

- A pupil/student with additional needs and disabilities
- A pupil/student who falls under one of the protected characteristics including gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or disability
- A pupil/student living with domestic abuse
- A pupil/student who is at risk of/suffering significant harm
- A pupil/student who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of being exploited, criminally/sexually
- A looked after pupil/student
- A pupil/student who goes missing from school/home or is absent from their education
- Pupils/students who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQ+ The fact that a pupil/student or a young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, pupils/students who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other pupils/students. In some cases, a pupil/student who is perceived by other pupils/students to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as pupils/students who identify as LGBTQ+. These risks can be compounded where pupils/students who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced

and provide a safe space for these pupils/students to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

At Walderslade Girls' School we encourage our pupils/students to talk to us and tell us when they are worried and what they are worried about, be it about themselves or another pupil/student. We are confident that our pupils/students know:

- who to speak to and/or where to go for support
- that they will be listened to, taken seriously and not dismissed
- that they will receive the right help at the right time
- that they will receive ongoing support
- that they will be supported to feel safe in school
- that they will be supported to continue to access their education

We reassure all victims 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. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. Victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. We also recognise alleged perpetrators may be victims in their own right also and need support also.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

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

Sexual harassment is a form of abuse which involves **unwanted sexual behaviour** of one person to another which makes the victim feel uncomfortable, intimidated, degraded, objectified or violated. This can happen **online** and **face-to-face** (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable at any age.

It could be:

- Someone making **sexual comments**, like using inappropriate sexual language towards someone, saying sexual things about someone's appearance or clothes, or requesting sexual favours.
- Calling someone **sexual names**.
- **Sexual jokes** or teasing.
- Being physical, like **touching** which makes someone feel uncomfortable, messing with their clothes, or **showing pictures** or **drawings** which are of a sexual nature.

- Being sexual online, like **sharing sexual pictures** and **videos**, or posting sexual comments on social media.
- **Sexual threats** or pushing someone to do something sexually that they don't want to or aren't ready for.

Walderslade Girls' School has a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment – it will never be acceptable and will **never** be passed off as “banter” or “just having a laugh”. Everyone at our school **must recognise** that sexual violence and harassment is not normal.

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

- A pupil/student under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- The age of consent is 16
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape

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, to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be pupil/student sexual exploitation.

We encourage our pupils/students that if they ever feel like they have been or are the victim of sexual harassment, to make sure that they tell a responsible adult, and they will listen to what happened and support with any worries that the pupil/student may have.

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 pupil/student
- 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 pupils/students witnessed this abuse
- consider ongoing support within our setting
- consider any referrals for external support Parents or carers of the victim will be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).

Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes and the Designated Safeguarding Lead

(DSL) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other pupils/students within the school setting. If we do decide to make a referral to pupils/students' 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 pupils/students)
- 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 students involved
- The developmental stages of the students involved
- Any power imbalance between the students (e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?)
- 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)
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other pupils/students, adult students, or staff
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of pupil/student exploitation

We will give all the necessary support for the victim to remain in school; however, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school or college will be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This will only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

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

When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a decision that will be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to pupils/students' social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, we will speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations.

There are three likely scenarios we 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 policies and by providing pastoral intervention and support.

b) Early Help - We may decide that the pupils/students 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 pupil/student's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of pupils/students 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 the police

To help prevent child-on-child abuse, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim. Child-on-child abuse will be taught as part of the KS3 and 4 curriculum through ICT lesson, form time, as part of the Skills for Life curriculum and delivered assemblies. These sessions cover topic areas such as consent, healthy and respectful relationships, gender and equality, body confidence, self-esteem, sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Pupils/students also have the red button on the school website to report any concerns. This is promoted to the pupils throughout their time at Walderslade Girls' School. It is also reinforced to pupils/student that they can speak to any member of staff and their concern will be taken seriously.

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is 'behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally' (DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', July 2017).

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse and can be emotionally abusive. It can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development and wellbeing. Pupils/students and staff will identify bullying with the acronym 'STOP': 'Several Times on Purpose'.

Bullying is a type of abuse that takes place when someone tries to hurt another person on purpose. People can be bullied in many different ways:

Emotional bullying is a form of bullying which attempts to make the victim feel bad about themselves, such as how they look, what they wear and what they do. This type of bullying is often manipulative; people sometimes use emotional bullying to take advantage of you to get their own way by making threats or making you feel like you have to do something for them.

Physical bullying can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or purposely hurting someone. Physical bullying is easier to spot than other forms of bullying and is often a result of not dealing with non-violent bullying in the first instance.

Verbal bullying can include insulting someone because of how they look or because of their personality, and can often go beyond that. People can also use verbal bullying to be **racist, sexist** or **homophobic**. Verbal bullying usually exercises some form of prejudice which attacks the victim based on their personal attributes, such as their appearance, voice, clothes, disability and so on. This can also be based on the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, religion or belief, disability, age or sex.

Racist bullying means bullying someone because of their race, skin colour, the country they are from or their religion. **Racist bullying is a hate crime in the UK**, along with threatening behaviour, online abuse, damaging property and abusing someone physically or verbally because of their race or ethnicity.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying involves bullying someone because of their gender or sexuality; calling someone gay or lesbian as an insult or using these words in a derogatory manner would be classed as homophobic bullying. As with racist bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are illegal hate crimes in the UK. This type of bullying takes place when

someone is targeted and abused by another because the victim identifies themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or another protected identity (LGBTQ+). People who do not identify as LGBTQ+, but are perceived to be LGBTQ+, can also be subjected to this kind of bullying.

Sexist bullying and sexism primarily impacts women and girls but can impact boys also – abusing someone because they are female is associated with **misogyny** (hatred of women). Sexist behaviour can include **gender stereotyping**, believing one sex is superior to or **more valuable** than another, and **sexually objectifying** an individual's body.

Cyberbullying includes any kind of bullying which takes place online; cyberbullies send insulting messages over the internet and sometimes share sensitive or explicit information and images online. Cyberbullies often hide their identity and remain anonymous so that they can continue to abuse the victim without any consequences, meaning it could be someone you consider to be a friend. If you are being cyberbullied, the best option is to **block the person and report the bullying**.

Bullying is not always done by one person and can often involve a group of people 'ganging up' on someone – we encourage pupils/students that if they ever see someone being bullied, they must **never** join in and **always report it**.

Walderslade Girls' School **does not tolerate** any form of bullying and **all** reports of this form of abuse will be taken **extremely seriously**. Our Anti-Bullying statement can be found on the school website.

Sexting

Sexting is sending **sexually explicit pictures, videos or messages of a sexual nature** via social media, text, gaming platforms and streaming sites – they can sometimes be called 'nudes', 'nude pics', or 'dick pics', but can also be sexually explicit messages. **Pressuring** someone into sending these pictures, videos and messages is **abuse**. It is important to know that sharing nude images or videos of or with people under the age of 18 is **illegal** even if **consent** is given.

Consent means that someone has given another person permission to do something; if consent has not been given for someone to share nude images or videos to another person, it is both **abusive and illegal**.

For pupils/students sharing sexually explicit images and videos to someone you have a close relationship with is never a good idea, not only because it is illegal, but because that person may use this against them in the future in the event of an argument or fall-out – this is known as 'revenge porn' and can have serious consequences.

Incidents of sexting can be divided in to two categories:

Aggravated incidents are taken extremely seriously by the school. They occur when there is an abusive element involved in sending and possessing sexually explicit images, for example where:

- **An adult is involved** – Anyone over the age of 18 sending and receiving sexually explicit images and videos or attempting to develop a relationship via online platforms with someone under the age of 18 will be committing a criminal sex offence.
- **There has been an intent to harm** – The sharing of sexually explicit images and videos becomes abusive if they are shared around due to conflict, such as a fall-out or breakup, or if an element of blackmailing and making threats has been involved.
- **Reckless misuse** – If there has been no intent to harm another, but the images have been taken, sent or shared without consent, this will be seen as abusive behaviour as the victim may have been harmed as a result of reckless or thoughtless behaviour.

Experimental incidents, while still illegal, are not seen as abusive as there is no intent to harm anyone and consent has been given by all parties. These incidents will still be taken seriously by the school. An example of experimental sexting is where it has taken place between two young people who are in a close relationship, and the images are not intended to be distributed beyond them. Even if you are not the person who is sending them, it is **illegal** to have these kinds of pictures or videos of a person if they are under 18 years old.

What are the signs to look out for with abuse?

It might be hard to recognise signs of abuse, it is important all pupils/students/staff can **recognise** when behaviour isn't appropriate.

It's also important that pupils/students/staff can notice when **someone else** might be being abused.

Some signs might be:

- Not going to school.
- Having injuries, like bruises.
- Feeling sad and down.
- Feeling like they can't cope.
- Feeling withdrawn or shy.
- Getting headaches or stomach aches.
- Feeling nervous.
- Not being able to sleep, sleeping too much or getting nightmares.
- Feeling panicked.
- Changing their looks to look much older.
- Being abusive to someone else.

Steps to take if you think someone else is being abused

We encourage pupils/students that if they think that someone is being abused, that it is important to **help** that person. They should **never walk away** and ignore the problem if they see or think someone else is being abused, because the abuse may keep happening. We encourage that if a pupil/student can, and it is **safe** to do so, to tell the person who is being abusive to **stop**, but never get angry or hit them.

Then to **tell a responsible adult**, such as a teacher, as soon as they have seen someone being abused. A responsible adult can **stop the abuse** and give their support to the person who is being abused. Or that the pupil/student can also access the **red button** via the school website to log a concern about abuse (this can be done anonymously if needed). No pupil/student should **ever feel scared** to tell someone about suspected abuse.

If there is a concern that whilst abuse has not been directedly seen but a pupil/student or staff member is worried about them as they think they are being abused by **someone they don't know**, or someone they have told you about then we encourage the message that it is really important that you **tell someone** even if you are worried, but haven't **seen** any abuse.

What do I do if I am being abused?

If a pupil/student feels they are being abused, Walderslade Girls' School encourages them to **tell someone they trust**. This could be a family member, a friend or a teacher. We also encourage the use of the **red button** via our school website to log a concern about abuse. No pupil/student should **ever feel scared** to tell someone about abuse.

We also recommend that the pupil/student can ask the person they feel is abusing them to leave them alone; however, we stress the importance of remaining safe in such situations and assessing whether it would be better to ignore the person and **report it** so that someone can help.

No pupil/student should **ever**:

- Ignore the abuse without reporting it.
- Respond to abuse with violence.
- Continue to allow people to abuse.
- Allow the abuse to change who you are.

Always remember that as a pupil/student if you are being abused, it is **not your fault**, and you are **never alone**.

Who can I talk to?

It is important for pupils/students to **tell someone** as soon as they think they are being abused, or think that someone else is being abused. Speaking to someone like a parent, carer or teacher will mean that we can make sure the **abuse stops** and doesn't happen again.

If a pupil/student doesn't feel confident telling us in person to begin with, they can also access the **red button** via our school website to log a concern about abuse, this can be done anonymously. No pupil/student should **ever feel scared** to tell someone about abuse.

How can I help stop abuse from happening?

We can all help stop abuse at our school by:

- Making sure we **understand** how we should **treat** others.
- **Helping** others when they are in need.
- Being **kind, friendly** and **respectful** to others.
- Thinking about people's **feelings** before we say or do something.
- **Talking to someone** when we are worried.

Abuse in all its forms is never OK and it is serious. It is not funny, or part of growing up. Walderslade Girls' School will not tolerate abuse and if you abuse someone, you will be disciplined accordingly.

Working with our parents and carers

At Walderslade Girls' School we will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of child-on-child abuse including sexual or sexual harassment. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent or carer will put a pupil/student at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information provided to the respective parents or carers about other pupils/students involved and when to do so. In some cases, pupils/students' 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 or carers with the victim present 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.

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or 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 and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their pupil/student has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another pupil/student.

Sanctions

We will decide appropriate sanctions on a case-by-case basis in line with our Behaviour Policy and any graduated response required. As previously mentioned, it may be that other pupils/students in our setting start to 'take sides' and become involved and may behave in ways that can cause upset and distress to other pupils/students. We will take their behaviour seriously and again use a graduated response to this, whilst also educating them the importance of resolving any conflict in a respectful and restorative way. If there is police involvement, we will work closely with them to ensure that any disciplinary action taken by us, as a result of the incident, does not jeopardise the police investigation.

Reporting to the Police

At Walderslade Girls' School we understand our responsibilities to call the Police and report forms of child-on-child abuse. This does not mean that we are looking to criminalise pupils/students, 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

In any form of child-on-child abuse where it is believed that an offence has been committed, a report may be made to the police. Where a report has been made to the police, we 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 or 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 this early help process.

However, risk assessing, and safety planning is a key aspect of all child-on-child abuse. Regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils/students, where there is a report of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the starting point is that this should be passed to the police who will advise and log according to their own guidelines.

We will ensure that we explain that the law is in place to protect pupils/students and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way that avoids causing alarm or

distress. We also inform our pupils/students that there are other ways to report abuse if they are worried about themselves or other pupils/students and for whatever reason don't feel that they can speak to staff in school. For example, NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

Post Incident Management

It is vital that all pupils/students 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. There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. However, we will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator, and other pupils/students in the school and moving forward with our post incident management.

Support planning is vital, and it is imperative that following any incident the pupils/students 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 they 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 young people following the incident(s) will happen as part of this plan.

Referrals may have already happened, but it is important to establish which professionals continue to work with all children involved in this process and this is helped with robust planning.

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 our 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, we will record our 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 and carers as required). Our safety plan/risk assessment will be kept under review.

Additional support and guidance

- [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#)
- [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](#)
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018](#)
- [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [CEOP-Safety centre](#)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- [UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Preventing bullying](#)
- [Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#)
- [Cyberbullying advice](#)
- The NSPCC email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- [Specialist Sexual Violence Rape Crisis](#)
- The UK safer internet centre email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- [UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\)](#)
- [Think u know](#)