CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

2025 - 2026

SANDY SECONDARY SCHOOL &

MOGGERHANGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Approved by:	Ratified by Governing Body	**Date:** October 25
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Reviewed by:	Andrew Rutter – Head of School	
Website:		
Yes/No	YES	

Produced by the Safeguarding in Education team for Central Bedfordshire Council

Introduction

Sandy Secondary School and Moggerhanger Primary School recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal abuse as well as physical and sexual abuse. Child on child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or part of "growing up".

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2025 states that -

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

All staff should be clear as to the school's or college'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.

In cases where child on child abuse or bullying is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

This policy concentrates on child-on-child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse as set out in Keeping

Children Safe in Education (September 2025) and should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

Policy Development

The policy has been developed in consultation with the following groups: senior leaders, governors, staff, parents and children and young people.

Aims

The Policy will: -

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying, and managing child on child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved. Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents, or adults in the community.

Understanding Child on Child Abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

The Context

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as: -

"Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult."

We will also use Simon Hackett Continuum Model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours (Appendix 1).

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk, however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include children or young people who:

- have experience of abuse within their family.
- are living with domestic violence.
- are young people in care.
- are children who go missing.
- are children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities).
- are children who identify or are perceived as LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Whilst research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and, girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools, this is not confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour as a response to such abuse. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child on child abuse, but they do so in gendered ways.

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school,
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- a significant decline in performance,
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing,
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Responding to Alleged Incidents

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of child-on-child abuse will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement. Support will be sought from other agencies such as social care, or the police as required.

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and 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
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery?
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of peer 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 when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

The immediate response to a report

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- All staff will be trained to manage a report.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the discussion as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Assess the needs of the victim and child alleged to have caused harm.
- Where the report includes an online element, the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) is present.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed as soon as possible and consider a referral to the police and social care.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must complete a risk assessment (Appendix A) where sexual violence has occurred. This must be shared with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

When recording sexualised behaviour, it is essential that staff:

- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- 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.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately and gain a statement of facts from them. Use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the Intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm, you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If Social Care and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

Informing parents/guardians

The best way to inform parents/guardians is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/guardians whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Is the pupil 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident, the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/guardian (they may be scared to tell parents/guardians that they are being harmed in any way).

Points 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 what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example (regular and repetitive)? Is the version of one young person different from another, and if so, 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? Has that has prompted the behaviour?
- Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived?
- Does the young person have understanding of 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?

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, a risk assessment must be completed and submitted to Social Care. The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The child alleged to have caused harm; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded electronically and stored with Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will also be shared as appropriate with other members of the safeguarding and pastoral team and be kept under review. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) will ensure they are engaging with Social Care.

Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom:

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

- The child alleged to have caused harm will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and child alleged to have caused harm a reasonable distance apart on school or premises and on transport to and from the school.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the child alleged to have caused harm.

Options to Manage the Report

Manage internally

1. 1.In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, it may be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing additional pastoral support that is tailored to the needs of the child/ren. This decision is considered on the outcome of contact with Social Care and submission of a completed risk assessment.

This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored electronically and stored with the or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is important to ensure that details of sanctions for the child alleged to have caused harm are not shared with any other persons other than those providing care for them. This is to maintain confidentiality and privacy for the child involved.

2. In line with point 1 above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non- violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to Social Care following locally agreed protocols.

   Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the child alleged to have caused harm and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

Designated Safeguarding Leads have a responsibility to report all alleged crimes to the police.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will also follow local processes for safeguarding referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this will be passed on to the police immediately. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the child alleged to have caused harm is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare approach, rather than a criminal justice approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the child alleged to have caused harm and their parents or guardians. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (including potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the child alleged to have caused harm, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, Sandy Secondary School and Moggerhanger Primary School will update its risk assessment, ensuring relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the child alleged to have caused harm remains at Sandy Secondary School or Moggerhanger Primary School, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the child alleged to have caused harm now, they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the child alleged to have caused harm's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other students in the school. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the child alleged to have caused harm for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

It is also important to note that by law, every child has the right to an education.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

What support these children require depends on the individual young person. 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 young person 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 that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education, PSHE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can 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.

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies.

We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will support this move.

Where there is a criminal investigation, the child alleged to have caused harm will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the child alleged to have caused harm to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the child alleged to have caused harm is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and child alleged to have caused harm in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and child alleged to have caused harm. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and guardians as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Specific 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 young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives 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 that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

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

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important 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 young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated and, if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police.

The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum (Appendix 1) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g., related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour
- involves a misuse of power

Online Behaviour

Many forms of child-on-child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as cyberbullying and sexting.

Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found the school Anti- Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Prevention

Sandy Secondary School and Moggerhanger Primary School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

- Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, students, and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team and staff on the nature, prevalence, and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes:
    - Contextual Safeguarding.
    - The identification and classification of specific behaviours.
    - The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on-child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on-child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing.
    - Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via SMSC and the wider curriculum, including assemblies.
    - Students are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
    - They are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero- tolerance policy towards all forms of child-on-child abuse.
    - Engaging parents on this issue by:
        - (a) talking about it with parents, both through written correspondence and one to one
        - (b) asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks; and
        - (c) involving parents in the review of School policies; and
        - (d) Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue.
    - Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils/students who maybe in need of additional support. This is done by way of a weekly meeting at which all concerns about students (including child-on-child abuse issues) are discussed with the pastoral team.
    - Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom).
    - Working with Governors, the Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, students and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community.
    - Creating conditions in which our students can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships.

- Creating a culture in which our students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to.
- Responding to cases of child-on-child abuse promptly and appropriately.

Multi-agency working

The school actively engages with its local partners in relation to child-on-child abuse and works closely with Central Bedfordshire Council children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies and other schools.

The relationships the school has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the school is able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of child-on-child abuse. They help the school:

(a) To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist.

(b) To ensure that our students can access the range of services and support they need quickly.

(c) To support and help inform our local community's response to child-on-child abuse.

(d) To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our students.

The school actively refers concerns/allegations of child-on-child abuse where necessary to Central Bedfordshire Council children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies.

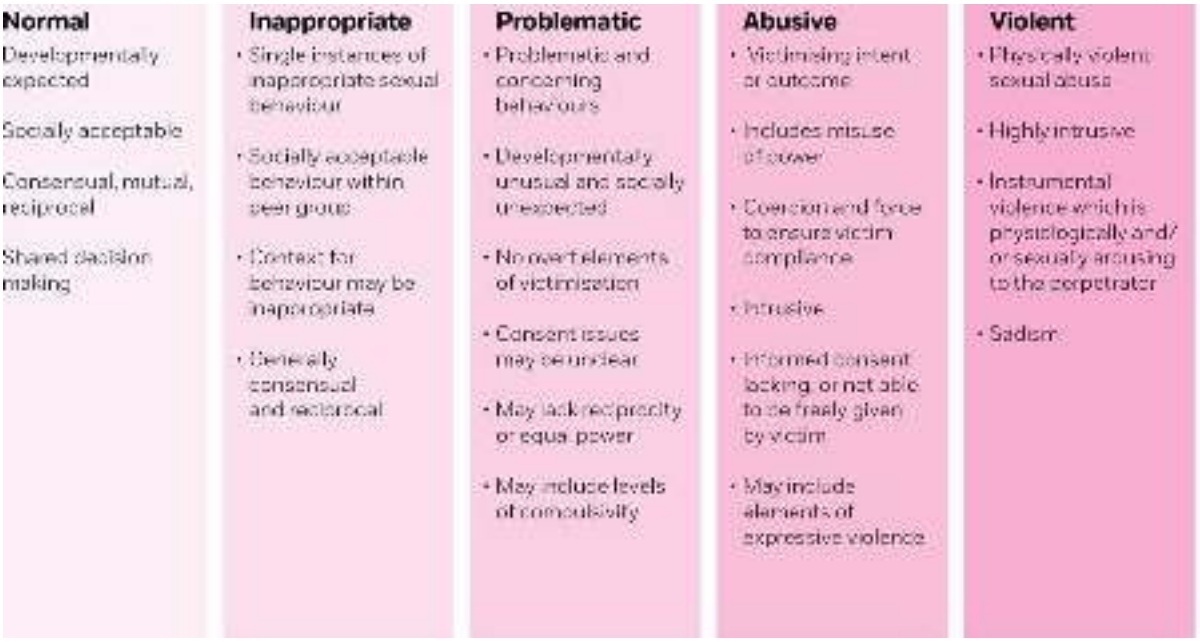
Children residing out of county but attending a Central Bedfordshire school/academy will be reported to their home authority Social Care team.

In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm and abuse and who have LAC status, the children’s social worker must be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns will be required.

Appendix 1

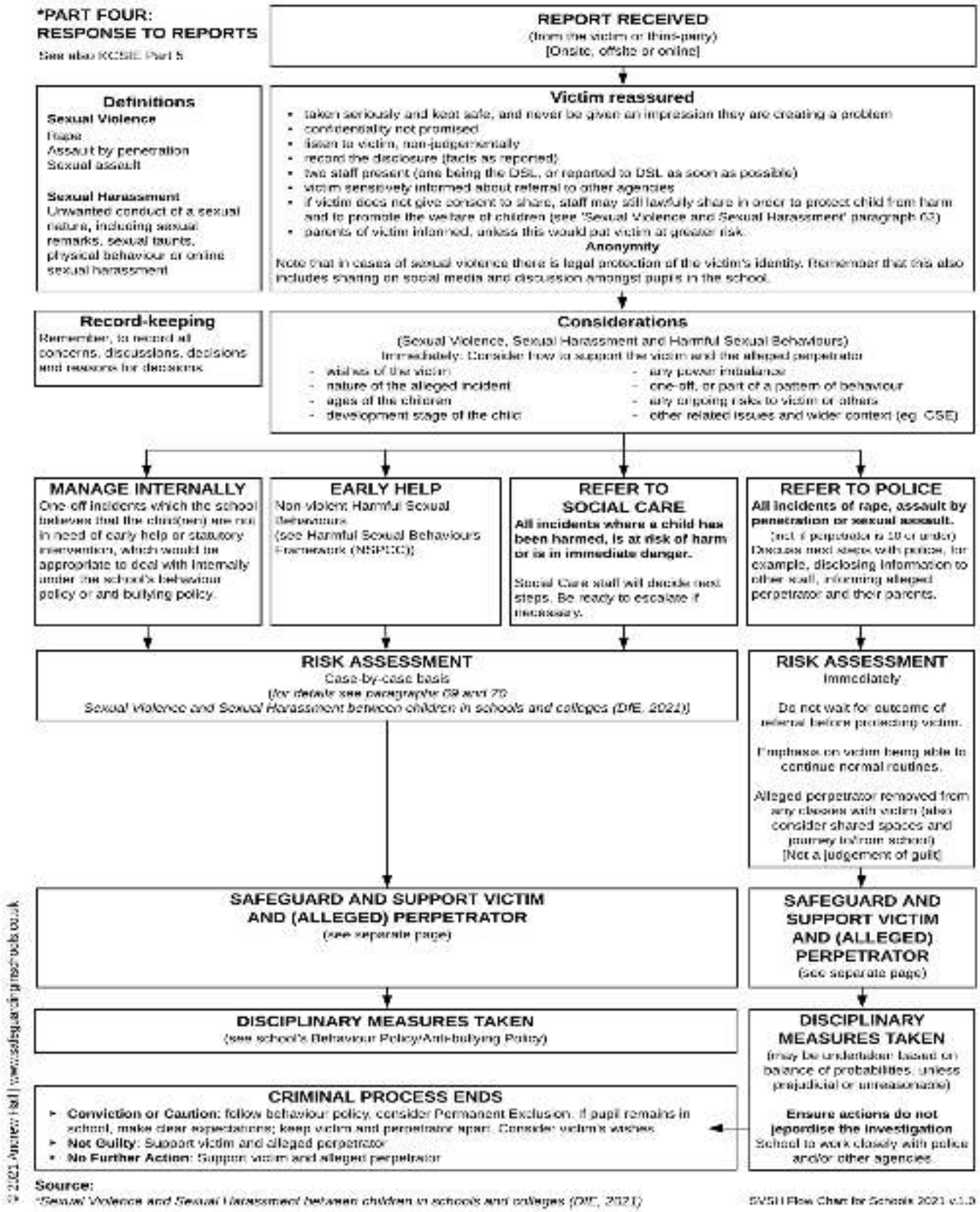
Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf



https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1149/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework-audit-tool.pdf

Appendix 2


*PART FOUR:
RESPONSE TO REPORTS
See also KCSIE Part 5
REPORT RECEIVED
(from the victim or third-party)
[Onsite, offsite or online]
Definitions
Sexual Violence
Rape
Assault by penetration
Sexual assault
Sexual Harassment
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual remarks, sexual taunts, physical behaviour or online sexual harassment
Victim reassured
taken seriously and kept safe, and never be given an impression they are creating a problem
confidentiality not promised
listen to victim, non-judgementally
record the disclosure (facts as reported)
two staff present (one being the DSL, or reported to DSL as soon as possible)
victim sensitively informed about referral to other agencies
if victim does not give consent to share, staff may still lawfully share in order to protect child from harm and to promote the welfare of children (see 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment' paragraph 63)
parents of victim informed, unless this would put victim at greater risk.
Anonymity
Note that in cases of sexual violence there is legal protection of the victim's identity. Remember that this also includes sharing on social media and discussion amongst pupils in the school.
Record-keeping
Remember, to record all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions
Considerations
(Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviours)
Immediately: Consider how to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator
ages of the victim
nature of the alleged incident
ages of the children
development stage of the child
any power imbalance
one-off, or part of a pattern of behaviour
any ongoing risks to victim or others
other related issues and wider context (eg CSE)
MANAGE INTERNALLY
One off incidents which the school believes that the child(ren) are not in need of early help or statutory intervention, which would be appropriate to deal with internally under the school's behaviour policy or and bullying policy
EARLY HELP
Non violent Harmful Sexual Behaviours
(see Harmful Sexual Behaviours Framework (NSPCC))
REFER TO SOCIAL CARE
All incidents where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.
Social Care staff will decide next steps. Be ready to escalate if necessary.
REFER TO POLICE
All incidents of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault.
(not if perpetrator is 10 or under)
Discuss next steps with police, for example, disclosing information to other staff, informing alleged perpetrator and their parents.
RISK ASSESSMENT
Case-by-case basis
(for details see paragraphs 69 and 70
Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021))
RISK ASSESSMENT
Immediately
Do not wait for outcome of referral before protecting victim.
Emphasis on victim being able to continue normal routines.
Alleged perpetrator removed from any classes with victim (also consider shared spaces and journey to/from school)
[Not a judgement of guilt]
SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see separate page)
SAFEGUARD AND SUPPORT VICTIM AND (ALLEGED) PERPETRATOR
(see separate page)
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(see school's Behaviour Policy/Antibullying Policy)
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TAKEN
(may be undertaken based on balance of probabilities, unless prejudicial or unreasonable)
Ensure actions do not jeopardise the investigation
School to work closely with police and/or other agencies
CRIMINAL PROCESS ENDS
Conviction or Caution: follow behaviour policy, consider Permanent Exclusion. If pupil remains in school, make clear expectations; keep victim and perpetrator apart. Consider victim's wishes
Not Guilty: Support victim and alleged perpetrator
No Further Action: Support victim and alleged perpetrator
Source:
*Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021)
SVSH Flow Chart for Schools 2021 v1.0
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Appendix 3

Support for Young People:

If you think that a child has been harmed or is being neglected, contact the Access and Referral Hub on 0300 300 8585, or out of hours 0300 300 8123.

The Police are also there to offer support and guidance to both alleged victims and children alleged to have caused harm, they can be contacted on 101.

- Internet Watch Foundation (to potentially remove illegal images) www.iwf.org.uk
- NSPCC – Report Abuse in Education helpline - 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/sexual-abuse-victims-schools-helpline/

National charities:

Victim Support
A national charity dedicated to helping anyone affected by crime – not just victims and witnesses, but friends, family and anyone else caught up in the aftermath.

Rape Crisis
A national charity offering confidential help, advice and a range of Rape Crisis Centres around the UK.

Galop
A national charity providing advice and support to members of the LGBT community.

Survivors UK
A national charity supporting men who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

Crimestoppers
A national charity with a free helpline for reporting crime anonymously.

Refuge
Refuge supports women, children, and men with a range of services, including refuges, independent advocacy, community outreach and culturally specific services.

Women's Aid
Women's Aid is a national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children.

Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327
Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).

Appendix 4

Useful Publications and Websites

Government Publications

- Keeping Children safe in Education - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Preventing and tackling bullying in schools - www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE: Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children, 2018 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
- DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation at school, January 2018 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation
- DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE: Statutory guidance School exclusion - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion
- DfE: Teaching Online Safety in Schools, June 2019 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools
- DfE: Behaviour and discipline in schools - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools
- DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2
- DfE: Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff, November 2014 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf
- DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools, November 2018 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2
- UKCIS: Sexting guidance for schools, 2016 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexting-in-schools-and-colleges
- UKCIS: Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online. May 2017 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-race-and-faith-targeted-bullying-face-to-face-and-online-a-guide-for-schools
- UKCIS: Education for a connected world, June 2020 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-a-connected-world
- Gov.uk: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Other useful documents

- The Safeguarding Network – Child-on-child abuse

  https://safeguarding.network/safeguarding-resources/peer-peer-abuse/

- Preventing abuse among children and young people-guidance from Stop it Now

stop_booklets_childs_play_preventing_abuse_among_children_and_young_people01_14.pdf (stopitnow.org.uk)

- What is Age appropriate?

  http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/what-is-age-appropriate

- Brook Traffic lights

  https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/using-the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool

- NSPCC-Harmful sexual behaviour

  Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour | NSPCC Learning

- NCB Harmful sexual behaviour

  Workforce perspectives on harmful sexual behaviour | National Children's Bureau (ncb.org.uk)

- NSPCC – Is this sexual abuse?

  "Is this sexual abuse?" | NSPCC Learning

- Online sexual harassment

  Project deSHAME- Digital Exploitation and Sexual Harassment Amongst Minors in Europe Understanding, Preventing, Responding

  https://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame

- Equality and Human Rights Commission: Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England

  Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England (equalityhumanrights.com)

- Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour (PDF)

  Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour - CSA Centre

- NPCC- When to call the police (PDF)

  2491596 C&YP schools guides.indd (npcc.police.uk)