

"Together, with Jesus, we can LOVE, LEARN and SUCCEED"

RIBCHESTER ST WILFRID'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Headteacher	Miss. K Isherwood
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Miss. K Isherwood
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mrs. E Taylor and Mrs. E Lester
Chair of Governors	Mrs. J Briggs
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs. J Briggs
Person Responsible for Policy	Miss. K Isherwood
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1. Aims

Ribchester St. Wilfrid's C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other children. This is known as 'child-on-child abuse' or 'peer-on-peer abuse'. The school is committed to preventing child-on-child abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that child-on-child abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". We appreciate that often there are barriers to reporting child on child abuse and as such, we understand that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

2. Definitions

- 'Staff' or 'members of staff' refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
- Child/children refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Child-on-child abuse (or peer-on-peer abuse) refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child-on-child abuse (or child on child abuse) is most likely to include (but is not limited to);
- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

- **abuse** in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- **physical abuse** 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 nude 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).

3. Purpose

This policy has been written to:

- ensure that the school, including all of those working on behalf of the school, follow all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about (name of school) works to prevent child-on-child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how (name of school) responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to child-on-child abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how the school continues to support victims of child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

4. Legislation and relevant documentation

This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns.

This policy is part of a suite of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see:

- the Behaviour and Relationship Policy
- SRE Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy

This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2021)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)

- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

The school will also refer to the government guidance documents 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges (May 2018)' when managing reports or disclosures of child-on-child abuse of a sexual nature and 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation (January 2018)' as necessary.

Rather than unnecessarily duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) in this policy, it should be understood that Ribchester St. Wilfrid's C of E Primary School will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, and volunteers working in or on behalf of Ribchester St. Wilfrid's C of E Primary School. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Role of the Governors

The governors/proprietors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

6.2 Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child-on-child abuse.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers' Standards 2012).

6.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child-on-child abuse.
- Make referrals to Children's Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers' Standards 2012).

6.4 Role of all staff

All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of child-on-child abuse or become aware of cases of child-on-child abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on child-on-child abuse and the important role they have in preventing this type of abuse.
- Be made aware that child-on-child abuse can happen in school, out of school or online.
- Be made aware that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse, it doesn't mean that it isn't happening.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".
- Be expected to challenge any inappropriate behaviours between children which are actually abusive in nature.
- Report any concerns relating to child-on-child abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and/or semi-nude images or videos. Where incidents involve sexting or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.

7. Training

The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to child-on-child abuse.

We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

8. Procedures to minimise child-on-child abuse

Our staff are committed to doing all we can to minimise opportunities for child on child abuse. We do this by:

- Always maintaining the mindset that "it could happen here". Pupil voice is at the heart of our curriculum and our staff listen carefully to what our children say
- If a child says something to any adult which causes concern, then the adult should always escalate this immediately in keeping with this policy
- Keeping Safe and Healthy Relationships are taught through both our PSHE and RSHE curriculums
- We always take supervision of our children seriously and ensure that all areas of our site, both indoors and out are well supervised by adults who are vigilant
- We regularly talk to our children about the adults who are safe for them to talk to if they have any worries

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

We address child-on-child abuse through our curriculum, in line with Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education and Health Education guidance.

9. Responding to concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse

9.1 The school takes child-on-child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse immediately.

9.2 If a member of staff has a concern about child-on-child abuse, or if a child discloses child-on-child abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

9.3 Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

9.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
- the impact on the victim;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- if are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff.

9.5 Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may:

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services via a MASH referral.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.

9.6 Supporting the victim

- The school recognises that child-on-child abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.
- Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
- If a victim of child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues

9.7 Supporting the alleged perpetrator

- The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision. Options may include (insert list of options here)
- We recognise that children who perpetrate child-on-child abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.
- A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.

- If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.

9.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.

9.9 The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of child-on-child abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction

10. Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

11. Record-keeping

Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in Ribchester St. Wilfrid's C of E Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

12. Parent/s and Carer/s

- Parent(s) and carer(s) will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm.
- Careful consideration will be given in cases where the child wishes to withhold information from their parent(s) and carer(s) and the school will operate within the law and relevant guidance at all times.
- Children will always be encouraged to speak to parent(s) and carer(s) about child-on-child abuse.

Appendix A: Further Resources

The school use a range of resources (in addition to those referenced in the main body of the policy) to support in minimising child-on-child abuse, training staff and responding to concerns or disclosures. This appendix details this additional documentation.

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015), HM Government

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: Advice for education settings working with children and young people, UKCIS

School Exclusion Statutory Guidance (including changes to the exclusion process during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Behaviour and discipline in schools (2016), Department for Education