

Child on Child Abuse Policy

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Date of next review	June 2028	Author	Safeguarding Team
Type of policy	Non-Statutory	Approval	Full Governing Board

Policy Statement

The aim of the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy is to ensure that all students within Boldon School can learn and work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of harassment and where everyone has the right to be treated with respect. All forms of child-on-child abuse are behaviour that are not tolerated at Boldon School. Specific forms of abusive behaviour, such as bullying and racism, can take place within student groups, between students and staff, and between staff. When this does occur, our school will aim for it to be dealt with promptly and effectively. Boldon School encourages openness and honesty; anyone who suspects that abusive behaviour has occurred is expected to share this concern.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse from happening.
- to make sure this behaviour is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen, and that those involved receive the support they need.
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.

Schools have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect, and self-discipline, and to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents, and students. Schools also have a legal responsibility to record incidents of specific forms of child-on-child abuse such as online abuse and racism. This policy outlines these procedures.

Prevention

Boldon School promotes a culture of safety, welcome and opportunity. The Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy is designed to promote tolerance of others and kindness to all others. We expect all students to stand up for what is right and report any incidents of abusive behaviour.

Within the curriculum we aim to, raise awareness of the nature of child-on-child abuse through a range of personal development activities and in subject areas. The personal development curriculum includes specific sessions on British Values and Citizenship and how to manage and maintain positive relationships. Specific sessions on child on child abuse and racism will be incorporated into this programme and on the protected characteristics and the Equality Act 2010.

At the end of lessons, staff supervise the movement of students in the vicinity of their classroom, in stairwells, and the movement of students into and out of the classroom. During break and lunch times students are supervised by a duty team to ensure that they are safe.

We seek to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse from occurring by the ensuring that:

- Our Student Code of Conduct is understood by all students, parents, and staff through publication on the school website. It is also a part of the visual culture of our school buildings.
- We make clear our zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse by displaying key visual aids in all school buildings.
- Providing training for staff on how to deal with child-on-child incidents.
- Ensuring our response, if this occurs, takes into account the needs of the victim, the needs of the person displaying this behaviour, others who may be affected, and the school as a whole.
- We have a broad and balanced personal development curriculum that encourages us to respect each other's differences, to have self-control and to be able to identify child-on-child abuse.

Types of child-on-child abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. It can happen both inside and outside of school as well as online. It is most likely to include but may not be limited to:

- **Online abuse:** An incident involving the use of technology. It may take the form of intimidation; harassment; defamation; exclusion; impersonation; or involve the unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information or images.
- **Verbal/emotional abuse:** An incident where words are deliberately used to threaten/frighten/insult another. It can also involve gossip or spreading unkind rumours or revealing confidences. Emotional abuse involves non-verbal actions, such as deliberate exclusion from a group.
- **Physical abuse:** Any form of physical aggression, assault, or theft. It also includes the extortion of money/possessions under threat of violence. It also includes the deliberate destruction/spoiling of another individual's possessions.
- **Sexual abuse or harassment:** Any incident with a sexual dimension. This can range from inappropriate comments to sexual assault and any harmful sexual behaviour.
- **A significant single incident:** abuse of a particularly threatening, hurtful, or malicious nature whereby the impact on a student, member of staff or their family is significant.
- **Racial / discriminatory:** An incident which involves deliberately hurtful behaviour linked to a victim's religion or ethnicity. Discrimination can be defined as any abuse involving gender, ethnicity, sexual identity or orientation, or physical characteristics, such as a disability. Racist/discriminatory behaviour will be dealt with in the same way as any other form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school.
- **Sharing of semi-nude or nude photos:** the sharing of semi-nude or nude photo/s of a child is abusive but, in some circumstances, can also be a crime.

- ***Abuse in intimate relationships:*** children who are in a relationship with another child may experience abuse behaviour within this relationship.

There are various signs and symptoms that could alert a parent or member of staff to child-on-child abuse. These include:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Not wishing to go on the school/public bus.
- Arriving at school very early or late and/or a fear of leaving school on time.
- A reluctance to leave the classroom at break or lunch time.
- An unwillingness to go to school – school phobia or truancy.
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Attempts or threatens suicide, or runs away.
- Deterioration in quality of schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions or dinner monies that go ‘missing’.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.

Any of these signs and behaviours could indicate a range of other sensitive issues. It is important to remember that an incident or concern should always be reported regardless of how trivial it may appear.

Reporting a concern about a child-on-child incident

If an incident between peers is suspected to have occurred it is important that we record this and respond quickly, making it clear that this type of behaviour is not acceptable and never tolerated.

Anyone can report an incident or concern including students, staff, parents/carers/family, or members of the community by:

(a) Visiting the school’s website and clicking on “Contact us” or emailing info@boldonschool.org.uk. This will send an email to our admin team who triage this concern to the relevant member/s of staff.

A student or parent can also report an incident by speaking directly to a member of staff such as a Tutor or Pastoral member of staff via appointment. Parental appointments can be made via the “Contact us” section of the website.

Any student who does not report instances of child-on-child abuse honestly when directly asked by a member of staff, may be sanctioned. Students should understand that this kind of behaviour helps to perpetuate child-on-child abuse. Malicious allegations will lead to a warning being issued for abusive behaviour as outlined in this policy.

If you are concerned that the incident is a safeguarding concern, please contact the Safeguarding Team by emailing info@boldonschool.org.uk and using 'FAO Safeguarding - Confidential' as the subject. If it is an allegation of a safeguarding nature involving a member of staff, then a parent should immediately contact the Safeguarding Team or Headteacher.

How will we respond to a report of an incident?

1. Investigation and communication

All incidents that are reported to school will be logged. This ensures that all suspected incidents are recorded effectively. Every reported incident will always be:

- Responded to and investigated by the Safeguarding Team and appropriate Pastoral Team. The Safeguarding Team and Senior Leadership Team will review all evidence relating to the incident before making a decision regarding the outcome. The investigation summary and any supporting evidence will be stored on CPOMS (Safeguarding records system)
- Any allegations that are substantiated will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team and the perpetrator will be suspended from school for child on child abuse. At the reintegration meeting an appropriate warning will be issued.
- A member of staff, will respond to the person who has reported the incident to ensure they know that their concern is being dealt with. This may be via email, by phone or in person.
- The alleged perpetrators' parents will be contacted as soon as possible to inform them of the allegation, ideally within 24 hours after an incident has taken place or been reported to us.
- A record is kept of the outcome of the investigation.

2. Possible outcomes of an investigation into child-on-child abuse.

Once an investigation is concluded we will record the outcome on the school's child-on-child abuse log and via ClassCharts. One of the following outcomes will be recorded:

Outcome	Sanction
Substantiated There is sufficient evidence to support the allegation of the child on child abuse.	The student will be suspended under the category of Child on Child Abuse and any other relevant category such as racism, verbal abuse, physical abuse. The perpetrator will be given a child on child abuse warning during the reintegration. The most serious of incidents of child on child abuse will lead to permanent exclusion. Additional support measures of interventions to address abusive behaviours will be agreed and put in place as appropriate.

Unsubstantiated There is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The behaviours exhibited may not be abusive but may have been unintentionally unkind.	No disciplinary action is taken against the alleged perpetrator, however further reported incidents will be monitored and a pattern of repeated reports may lead to a warning being issued. Additional support measures of interventions to address abusive behaviours will be agreed and put in place as appropriate.
Unfounded There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.	No disciplinary action is taken.
Malicious There is sufficient evidence to prove that there has been a deliberate act to cause harm to the alleged perpetrator by reporting a false allegation.	If a student has reported an allegation that is found to be malicious then the student will be suspended from school. A warning will be issued with child-on-child abuse warning as this is also a form of abusive behaviour.

3. Child-on-child abuse warnings

If an allegation is substantiated the perpetrator will be given a Child on Child Abuse warning. The type of warning will depend on any previous warnings that have been issued and the seriousness of the incident.

If a student has been abusive to a peer for the first time, they will most likely be issued a first warning. If a student is involved in a subsequent incident of child-on-child abuse, this will be dealt with at Stage 2 and then Stage 3.

Depending on the nature of the abuse, some cases may be dealt with immediately at Stage 3.

Level of warning:	Issued by:	Actions taken:
First Warning	Year Lead /	Suspension from school.

	Safeguarding Team (if appropriate)	Following the suspension, a Key Stage Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team will meet with parents/carers and the student to review the outcome of the investigation at a reintegration meeting. Agree any measures required to support the student to change their behaviour (may include working with external agencies). Record the outcome of the meeting in a formal letter sent to parent/carers which will include: A FIRST FORMAL WARNING FOR CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE.
Second Warning	Key Stage Coordinator / SLT link	Suspension from school. Following the suspension, a senior leader will meet with parents/carers and the student to review the outcome of the investigation at a reintegration meeting. Agree any measures required to support the student to change their behaviour (may include working with external agencies). Record the outcome of the meeting in a formal letter sent to parent/carers which will include: A SECOND FORMAL WARNING FOR CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE.
Final Warning	Headteacher	Suspension from school. Following the suspension, the Headteacher will meet with parents/carers and the student to review the outcome of the investigation at a reintegration meeting. Review all measures taken by KSC and SLT and recommend any other measures as appropriate. Record the outcome of the meeting in a formal letter sent to parent/carers which will include: A FINAL WARNING FOR CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE.
Breach of	Headteacher and	Suspension from school.

final warning	Behaviour Lead	Following the suspension, the Headteacher and Behaviour Lead will meet with parents/carers and the student to discuss the possibility of a permanent exclusion. In instances where a single incident or repeated incidents are extremely serious, the Headteacher will issue a PERMANENT EXCLUSION.
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4. Reporting incidents to external agencies.

There are some incidents in which we will be required to report the allegation to the police or other agencies. If an incident is being investigated by another external agency such as the police, the school may be required to suspend their own investigation to allow an external investigation to take place first.

Examples of this may include:

- Physical assault: allegations of physical assault will be reported to the police.
- Hate crime: Any incident which may be a hate crime will also be reported to the police.
- Racism: Incidents of racist behaviour will be reported to the local authority.
- Sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviors: any allegation of sexual assault or harassment will be reported to the police. Allegations of harmful sexual behaviour may lead to a referral to children's services.

5. Support for the victim and perpetrator

It is important that the victim understands the support available to them and that appropriate steps are taken to prevent the behaviour being repeated by the perpetrator which may include supportive measures being put in place for them too.

They themselves may also be a victim and this will be recognised. However, where an incident of child on-child abuse is upon investigation found to be substantiated the warning system described will be used.

An important aspect of the follow-up of a child-on-child abuse incident is for the student who has perpetrated this behaviour to seek forgiveness from the victim and seek to restore their trust in them. In this process of restoration, it may be necessary to:

- Discuss what happened.
- Establish the reasons why the person became involved.
- Establish and explain the wrongdoing and to see an expression of the need for change.
- Involve the parents to help change the attitude of the person who has expressed such behaviours.