


# Child on Child Abuse Policy



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<b>Signed Chair of Governors</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Signed Headteacher</b>	



# Child on Child Abuse Policy 2024

(Including sexual violence and sexual harassment between children)

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## 1. Context and Definition

1.1 Child on child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

1.2 All school staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children.

1.3 All school staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from child on child abuse including:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying (online bullying)).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known youth produced sexual imagery).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

1.4 This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences.
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim.

1.5 Children who harm others may have additional needs e.g.

- Significant disruption in their own lives.
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse.
- Educational under-achievement.
- Involved in crime.

1.6 Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of Sidestrand Hall School but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Deputy DSL, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

## 2. Responsibility

2.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024 states that: schools and colleges **should respond to all signs, reports and concerns** of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online (what to look out for and indicators of abuse are set out in Part one of this guidance). As set out in Part one of this



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guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**, and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

2.2 Child on child abuse is referenced in the Sidestrand Hall School Safeguarding Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer necessitate this separate policy.

2.3 At Sidestrand Hall School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the child. With full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

### 3. Purpose of Policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to explore forms of child on child abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to the issues.

3.2 At Sidestrand Hall School we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- eSafety and Data Security Policy

### 3.3 Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

## 4. Abuse and harmful behaviour

4.1 It is necessary to consider

- What abuse is and what it looks like.
- How it can be managed.
- What appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual.
- What preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.



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4.2 At Sidestrand Hall School we have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys will be boys”.

4.3 Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse as it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

4.4 Understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language. This is why we have a whole school approach including preventative education.

4.5 It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2021)
- School staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between children and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- School staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between children.
- School staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.
- School staff should be aware that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include: assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration. As well as the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs. Compounded by communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers
- School staff should be aware that children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.



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4.6 The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

### 5. Types of abuse

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

#### 5.1 Physical abuse

- This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or sanction to be undertaken.

#### 5.2 Sexual Violence

It is important that school staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence in this policy, we do so in the context of child on child sexual violence.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment must always be referred immediately to the DSL. They will follow the DfE Guidance: Sexual Violence and sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges 2022

with consideration of

- Managing internally
- EHAP referral
- Children's Services referral
- Reporting to the Police

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

For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not



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consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

### What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching.
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.
- Where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered.
- Non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim.
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

### 5.3 Sexual Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a





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child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as: deliberately brushing against someone, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, interfering with someone's clothes such as flicking bras and lifting up skirts. (school staff should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence. It is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and videos. UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (provides detailed advice for schools)
- The taking and sharing nude photographs of Under 18s is a criminal offence.
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content.
- Upskirting (is a criminal offence) where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

It is important that school staff consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

### 5.4 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual





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behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this policy. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.

When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

### 5.5 Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### 5.6 Online Bullying

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms.

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages.
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites.
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else.



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- Stealing someone's online identity.
- Spreading rumours online.
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games.
- Developing hate sites about another person.
- Prank calls or messages.
- Group bullying or exclusion online.
- Anonymous messaging.
- Encouraging a child to self-harm.
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations.

### 5.7 Sexting/Sharing nude and semi-nudes or indecent imagery

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. Upskirting: typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be a victim.

This must always be referred immediately to the DSL. They will follow the UKCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges December 2020 guidance, provided by the Government.

### 5.8 Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

### 5.9 Prejudiced Behaviour

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



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### 5.10 Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

## 6. Expected staff action/Responding to reports

6.1 It is important to understand that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. As per Part one of this guidance, if staff have **any** concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

6.2 The initial response by a school or college to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school or college responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

6.3 It is essential that **all** victims are reassured 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 or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should 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. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

6.4 It is essential that all victims are reassured 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 should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should 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 or their experience minimised.

6.5 As with all safeguarding concerns, it is important that in such instances school staff take appropriate action in accordance with Sidestrand Hall School Safeguarding Policy. They should not assume that someone else is responding to any incident or concern. If in any doubt, they should speak to the DSL (or a Deputy DSL). In such cases, the basic safeguarding principles remain the same, but it is important for school staff to understand why the victim has chosen not to make a report



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themselves. This discussion should be handled sensitively and with the support of Children's Services if required.

6.6 There may be reports where the alleged sexual violence or sexual harassment involves children from the same school but is alleged to have taken place away from the school premises, or online. There may also be reports where the children concerned attend two or more different schools. The safeguarding principles, and school's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children on roll remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be especially important.

6.7 As per Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024), if school staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

- If possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the DSL or a Deputy DSL). However, this might not always be possible.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (2018) and the UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (2020). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the Police for inspection.
- Not promising confidentiality as a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the DSL or Children's Services) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to;
- Recognising that a child is likely to disclose information to someone they trust: this could be anyone on the school staff. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child.
- Recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.
- keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Listening carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should generally be avoided, staff can



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ask children if they have been harmed and ask what the nature of that harm was.

- Considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes, especially if a second member of staff is present. However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, it is essential a written record is made.
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Schools staff should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by Children's Services and/or part of a criminal investigation.
- Informing the DSL (or Deputy DSL), as soon as practically possible, if the DSL (or Deputy DSL) is not involved in the initial report.

### 7. Recognising Child on child abuse

7.1 An assessment of an incident between children should consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved.
- The development stage of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is an alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, more confident or cognitively able. Or does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty.
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident.
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation.
- The degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) has been displayed.
- The effect on the victim. Including the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims 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. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret.
- The child or children's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred.



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- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature).
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school staff.

7.2 It is important to deal with a situation of child on child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents/carers when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

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

### 7.4 Taking Action

- Always take complaints seriously.
- Gain a statement of facts from the child(ren).
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator.
- Consider referral to Police or Children's Services.
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments.
- Convene a risk management meeting.
- Record all incidents and all action taken on CPOMS.

### 7.5 Recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Complete relevant areas on the CPOMS recording system
- 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.





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### 7.6 Gather the Facts

Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the children 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.

### 7.7 Consider the Intent

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

### 7.8 Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any child to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the DSL immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and associated policies.

If Children's Services and the Police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the child in school or they may ask for parents/carers to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

### 7.9 Informing parents/carers

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

The DSL will take into consideration where a child is 13 years plus and does not want to share with parents/carers. Using the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines at NSPCC preventing abuse – legal definition child rights and the law – Gillick competency Fraser guidelines. Although due to children at Sidestrand Hall School having learning difficulties/disabilities in the majority of cases parents/carers will be informed. In cases where referral to Children's Services is actioned parents/carers consent may be required.

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

## 8. Points to consider

### 8.1 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 a child has a learning disability their developmental age and chronological age will be taken into consideration.





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### 8.2 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?

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

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

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

Do the children 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 child's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the child have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

### 8.5 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?

## 9. Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

### 9.1 For the child who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual child. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support. 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 child continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the child may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other children, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

The school should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe the "victim". The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. School should be aware that, by



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the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s). The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.

Support can include:

- Early Help and Children Services support.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. The DSL can refer a child to the Harbour Centre based at Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). They will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the Police. Harbour Centre will work in partnership with school to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim.
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CAMHS is used as a term for all services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing. The DSL can refer a child to CAMHS.

Victims may not disclose the whole situation immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, school should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or DSL) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's (as far as reasonably possible). School should respect and support this choice.

A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While school should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, school should provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.

It may be necessary for school to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. School should be prepared for this and should work with Children's Services and other agencies as required.

It is important that the school do everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.



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Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents/ carers).

It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The DSL should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate, their parents/carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

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.

### 9.2 For the child who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important that school consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to Children's Services and/or the Police, then, as a general rule, the DSL should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required.

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator(s):

- The school should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe the "alleged perpetrator(s)" or "perpetrator(s)".
- The school will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand they need to safeguard the victim (and all other children, adult students and staff at the school) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. School should work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused a peer. It is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator(s) is entitled to, deserving of, and



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should be provided with, a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of them abusing again.

- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator(s) may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. HSB in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from Children's Services, HSB Service and the Police.
- It is important that the perpetrator(s) is also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- Advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. If the perpetrator(s) is to be excluded the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Further information about exclusions can be found in statutory guidance for schools Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and PRUs.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. It is important that if an alleged perpetrator(s) does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children, adult students and staff. The DSL should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file.

### 9.3 Discipline and the alleged perpetrator(s)

With regard to the alleged perpetrator(s), advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the Police and/or Children's Services are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly. This is a matter for the school and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should take a leading role. The school should consider if, by taking any action, it would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the Police and/or Children's Services should help the school make a determination. It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for the school to reach its own view about what happened while an independent investigation is considering the same facts.



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### 9.4 Manage internally

- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of Early Help or require referrals to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the Behaviour and Bullying Policies and by providing pastoral support.
- Whatever the school's response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- It is important to find out why the child has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child 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 support or counselling may also be necessary.
- Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an Early Help referral and the child may require additional support from family members.
- Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the child has been met, it is important that the child receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the child 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 child 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 child cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the child will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.
- It may be that the behaviour that the child 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 child and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the child and their parents/carers. This may mean additional supervision of the child or protective strategies if the child feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.
- Sidestrand Hall School may also choose a sanction as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion for a period of time to allow the child to reflect on their behaviour.

### 9.5 Early help

- The school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services 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 HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.



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- Early Help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: a school could manage internally and seek early help for both the victim and perpetrator(s).
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMS.

### 9.6 Referrals to Children's Services

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, school should make a referral to Children's Services.
- At the point of referral to Children's Services, the DSL will generally inform parents/carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parents/carers is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of Children's Services.
- If a referral is made, Children's Services will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should work alongside, and cooperate 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 alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children that require support.
- School should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Services investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) to work closely with Children's Services (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school takes does not jeopardise a statutory investigation. A risk assessment will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s), any children directly involved in the reported incident and all children at the school should be immediate.
- In some cases, Children's Services will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should consider other support mechanisms such as Early Help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMS.





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### 9.7 Reporting to the Police

- Any report to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Services.
- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this should be passed on to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten years old, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten years, the starting principle of reporting to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.
- At this stage, school will generally inform parents/carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parents/carers is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents/carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of Children's Services and any appropriate specialist agencies.
- Where a report has been made to the Police, the school should consult the Police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents/carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.
- Norfolk Police Constabulary have specialist units that investigate child abuse.
- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school continue to engage with specialist support for the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) as required.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions should be recorded on CPOMS.

### 9.8 Considering bail conditions

- The Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of Police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People released under RUI can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.
- Whatever arrangements are in place; the school will need to consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within the school.
- Particular regard should be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim when at school; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk





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management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life).

- Careful liaison between the DSL with the Police investigators should help to develop a balanced set of arrangements.

### 9.9 Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. School should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children and adult students in the school. The risk assessment will help inform any decision.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator(s), it will be important for the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) to work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the Police investigation.

### 9.10 The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school should update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children at the school and, if it has not already done so, consider any suitable action in line with the Behaviour Policy. This process should include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the perpetrator(s) remain(s) in the school, the school should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school thinks are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator(s)' timetable.
- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other children in the school. It will be important that the school ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) remain 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, the school should continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) 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 or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. School should discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.



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### 9.11 Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

- As set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), all concerns, discussions, and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified, and addressed.
- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Services may be appropriate.
- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the school Behaviour Policy.

### 9.12 After care

It is important that following the incident the child 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 child does 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 child following the incident(s) are imperative.

### 9.13 Considering confidentiality and anonymity

#### Confidentiality

School staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

Sidestrand Hall School should only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

The victim may ask the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, school staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should consider the following:

- Parents/carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Children's Services.



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- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

If the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) decide to go ahead and make a referral to Children's Services and/or a report to the Police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

### **Anonymity**

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, school will take action in accordance to anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately. In line with Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS): Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses.

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, school will do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which school staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

Sidestrand Hall School will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. This presents unique challenges regarding social media.

### **9.14 Risk Assessment**

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- Whether there may have been other victims.
- The alleged perpetrator(s).
- All the other children (and adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.



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Risk assessments should be recorded and should be kept under review. At all times, the school will be actively considering the risks posed to all the children on role and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should ensure they are engaging with Children's Services and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. The above school or college risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the schools or college's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and students and updating their own risk assessment.

### 10. Working with parents and carers

10.1 The school will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parents/carers will put a child at additional risk. School should carefully consider what information they provide to the respective parents/carers about the other child involved and when they do so. In some cases, Children's Services and/or the Police will have a very clear view and it will be important for the school to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

10.2 It is good practice for the school to meet the victim's parents/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.

10.3 It is also good practice for the school to meet with alleged perpetrator's parents/carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact an alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed.

10.4 The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

10.5 Sidestrand Hall School's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and related policies, that set out the principles of how reports of sexual violence will be managed and how victims and alleged perpetrators are likely to be supported, that parents and carers have access to, will, in some cases, help manage what are inevitably very difficult conversations.



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10.6 Parents/carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. The DSL can signpost parents/carers to organisations that can offer support.

### 11. Safeguarding other children

11.1 Consideration should be given to supporting children (and adult students) who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic and support may be required.

11.2 Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take “sides”. The school should be doing all they can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator(s), and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed.

11.3 Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fall out from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the victim or alleged perpetrator(s) online and/or become victims of harassment themselves.

11.4 School transport is a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s) following any incident or alleged incident. The school as part of its risk assessment, should consider any additional potential support needs to keep all of their children safe.

### 12. Preventative Strategies

12.1 Child on child abuse can and will occur at any school even with the most robust policies and support processes. At Sidestrand Hall School we feel it is important to develop appropriate strategies to proactively prevent Child on child abuse. Through a whole school approach to safeguarding, a culture that makes clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated, and a strong preventative education programme will help create an environment in which all children at the school are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

12.2 Sidestrand Hall School promotes an open environment where children feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive PSHE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.



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12.3 School staff will not dismiss issues as ‘banter’ or ‘growing up’ or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. School staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

12.4 Children are part of changing their circumstances and, through school council for example, we encourage children to support changes and develop ‘rules of acceptable behaviour’. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all children understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

12.5 At Sidestrand Hall School we feel it is important that the school keeps its policies, processes, and curriculum under constant review to protect all the children on school roll. Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to environmental and or systemic problems that could and should be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes, or relevant parts of the curriculum.

### 13. Statutory Framework

13.1 This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation, guidance and advice:

- DfE: Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children 2023  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)
- DfE: Statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education 2024\*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation at school, 2022  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching\\_Screening\\_and\\_Confiscation\\_guidance\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf)
- DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)
- DfE: Teaching Online Safety in Schools 2019 (updated 12/01/23)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationships\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)
- DfE: Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education 2020 (Updated 13/09/2021)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationships\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)
- DfE: Behaviour and discipline in schools 2020  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/353921/Behaviour\\_and\\_Discipline\\_in\\_Schools\\_-\\_](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/353921/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_)



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[A guide for headteachers and school staff.pdf](#)

- DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee6148fa8f54a8bb65ba9/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee6148fa8f54a8bb65ba9/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf)
- DfE: Children Missing Education, 2016  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)
- DfE: Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff 2014  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62611456e90e07168ad2b1ea/Cyberbullying\\_Advice\\_for\\_Headteachers\\_and\\_School\\_Staff\\_121114.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62611456e90e07168ad2b1ea/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)
- DfE: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England  
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