Daubeney Academy

Nurturing First Class Futures

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026-2027

Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Next review date
Summer Term 2026	L Hartwell	Summer term 2027

Introduction

This policy demonstrates how staff should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of Daubeney premises, and/or online.

At Daubeney, we expect staff to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

At Daubeney we have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The governors, senior leadership team and al staff at the school are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of Child on Child abuse both within and beyond the school. We do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to Child on Child abuse in response to alleged incidents of it.

Approach

At Daubeney, we have developed a comprehensive approach to Pastoral Care, this is central to our approach to supporting students through difficult situations. In addition, where Child-on-Child abuse occurs, our pastoral team will support students on both sides, as we acknowledge that for a student to engage in harmful sexualised behaviours, they are likely to have experienced some form of harm themselves.

In order to facilitate this approach we:

- Give all staff training and access to CPOMS
- Give INSET and CPD training for all staff on safeguarding
- Training specifically on Child on Child abuse
- Organised weekly meetings within the Safeguarding team to review cases and support
- Included of Safeguarding/safety on Student Council
- Imbedded assemblies to explain Child-on-Child abuse
- Strengthened PD curriculum including Child-on-Child abuse

What is Child on Child Abuse?

Child on Child abuse is sexual, emotional or physical abuse that happens between students of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of students and can

affect any age group. (Department for Education (DfE), 2018) It can be harmful to the students who display it as well as those who experience it. Students can experience Child on Child abuse in a wide range of settings, including:

- At school
- At home or in someone else's home
- In public spaces
- Online

As students develop healthily, it is normal for them to display certain types of behaviour. It is important that adults can identify if any behaviour has become harmful or abusive and respond proportionally to keep all the students involved safe. We recognise that Child on Child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child sexual exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in an intimate relationship
- Students who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang associated and serious violence
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

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

At Daubeney, we acknowledge that Child-on-Child abuse is multi-faceted and regardless of the scenario, we take a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviours which fall within this remit. The following list is not exhaustive but outlines some key areas of which we are alert.

Sexual Violence

When referring to sexual violence this policy relates to child-on-child violence and includes: ● Rape

- Assault by Penetration
- Sexual Assault
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Sexual Harassment

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/college. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a 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, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes.

- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence), and

- online sexual harassment.

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.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour” (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously. Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal- whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive.

When considering HSB, both 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. Further guidance on appropriate sexual development can be found in Appendix 1.

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 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

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

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

Prevention

Daubeney actively seeks to raise awareness of, and prevent all forms of peer on peer abuse by educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff, students and parents/carers about this issue. This will include training on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer on peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.

This includes:

- understanding contextual safeguarding
- the identification of specific behaviours
- understanding the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer on peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay, teasing or banter
- educating students about the nature and prevalence of peer on peer abuse via PD curriculum and the wider curriculum frequently informing students about what to do if they witness or experience such abuse,
- the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse
- ensuring that students are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its policy towards all forms of peer on peer abuse
- engaging parents/carers on this issue by asking them what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like the school to address those risks. ● Additionally, by providing them with information on the topic of peer on peer abuse in schools via the monthly newsletter and school website.
- ensuring that all peer on peer abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify students who may be in need of additional support.
- challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom)
- working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff, students and parents/carers
- to address equality issues, to promote positive values and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community
- creating conditions in which our students can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships
- creating a culture in which our students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to, and responding to cases of peer on peer abuse promptly and appropriately

Addressing Behaviours

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.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure.

Simon Hacket (2010) has proposed a continuum model of harmful sexual behaviour to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by students and young people, from those that are normal, tho those that are highly deviant.

Considerations:

- 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 our duty and responsibilities to protect other children

- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed
- the ages of the children involved
- the developmental stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children.

For example, is/are the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, confident and well known social standing? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty? ● 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 children

- importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or staff, and ● other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

When should support be sought?

Child on Child abuse cases are often complex, may involve multiple students and consent may be unclear. This is especially difficult when students may be victims but also involved in the harm of others. In some instances it may be appropriate for the school to respond internally. However in other instances, cases may require a referral to the police and/or social care.

We understand that this is not always clear. As such, we refer to the flow chart (Appendix 3) and consider the following when deciding if an incident requires referral to multi-agency services, including IFD.

There are four likely scenarios to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

1. Manage internally. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals to statutory services are not required, and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising out behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support. All discussions and decisions will be logged on CPOMS.

2. Early help. In line with managing internally, we 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. We could manage internally and seek early help for both the victim and

perpetrator(s). All discussions and decisions will be logged on CPOMS.

3. Referrals to local authority children's social care. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to local authority children's social care. At the point of referral to local authority children's social care, one of the Safeguarding Team will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Discussions and decisions will be logged on CPOMS.

4. Reporting to the Police. Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to local authority children's social care . Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this should be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator(s) is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than

a criminal justice, approach.

Responses to Child on Child abuse

The safeguarding team will take the lead using their professional judgement and be supported by other agencies as required. All Child on Child abuse will be informed by the flow charts, contiuum and by liaising with the IFD consultation line.

Incidents should be dealt with immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to ascertain what has happened and if any other students are aware or involved. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the students and the parents/carers when they become involved. Language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labeled will be avoided.

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

The usual reporting and recording procedures will be followed as set out in the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

All responses will 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. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded on CPOMS.

Risk Assessments/Safety Plans (Appendix 4)

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) 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 for a report of sexual violence 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, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at Daubeney, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms, and
- The time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Risk assessments will be recorded on the form example in Appendix 4 and uploaded to CPOMS and should be kept under review. Daubeney will be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and put adequate measures in place to protect.

Records will be reviewed via CPOMS 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, we will 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 local authority children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, Daubeney will consider any disciplinary action in line with our behaviour policy.

Safeguarding and Supporting the Victim

Regardless of the response, it is important for us to support the victim of any abuse. 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 Daubeney remains a safe space for them.

We acknowledge that sexual assault can result in a range of health needs, including physical, mental, and sexual health problems and unwanted pregnancy. Children and young people that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), additional support sources are in Appendix 2.

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. Daubeney will ensure that this is closely monitored in order to reduce any further risk to students.

Appendix 1 - Brook Appropriate Behaviours

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Appendix 2 - Sources of Support

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection command: CEOP is a law enforcement agency which aims to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report made to one of its Child Protection Advisors
- The NSPCC provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as Rape Crisis or The Survivors Trust
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance has developed guidance for schools about Sexual and sexist bullying.
- The UK Safer Internet Centre provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues Internet Watch Foundation: If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
- Childline/IWF Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice: Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).
- Thinkuknow from NCA-CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online
- LGFL 'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children

about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

- If you think that a child has been harmed or is being neglected, contact the Integrated Front Door (IFD)Safeguarding Hub on 01234 718700 EDT out of hours 0300 300 8123.
- The Police are also there to offer support and guidance to both alleged victims and students alleged to have caused harm, they can be contacted on 101.

National charities:

Victim Support

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

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

Galop

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

Survivors UK

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

Crimestoppers

A national charity with a free helpline for reporting crime anonymously. Refuge 11

Refuge supports women, students and men with a range of services, including refuges, independent advocacy, community outreach and culturally specific services. Women's Aid

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

Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327

Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).

Useful Publications and Websites

Government Publications

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Keeping Students Safe in Education

Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence

Preventing and tackling bullying

Other useful documents

Sharing nudes and semi nudes

Peer on peer abuse toolkit Farrer & Co

Anti-bullying alliance guidance on sexual bullying

Stop It Now guidance - What is age appropriate

Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool

NSPCC child abuse and neglect/harmful sexual behaviour

NSPCC Is this sexual abuse?

Project deSHAME - Digital exploitation and sexual harassment amongst minors in Europe

It's Just Everywhere - a study of sexism in schools

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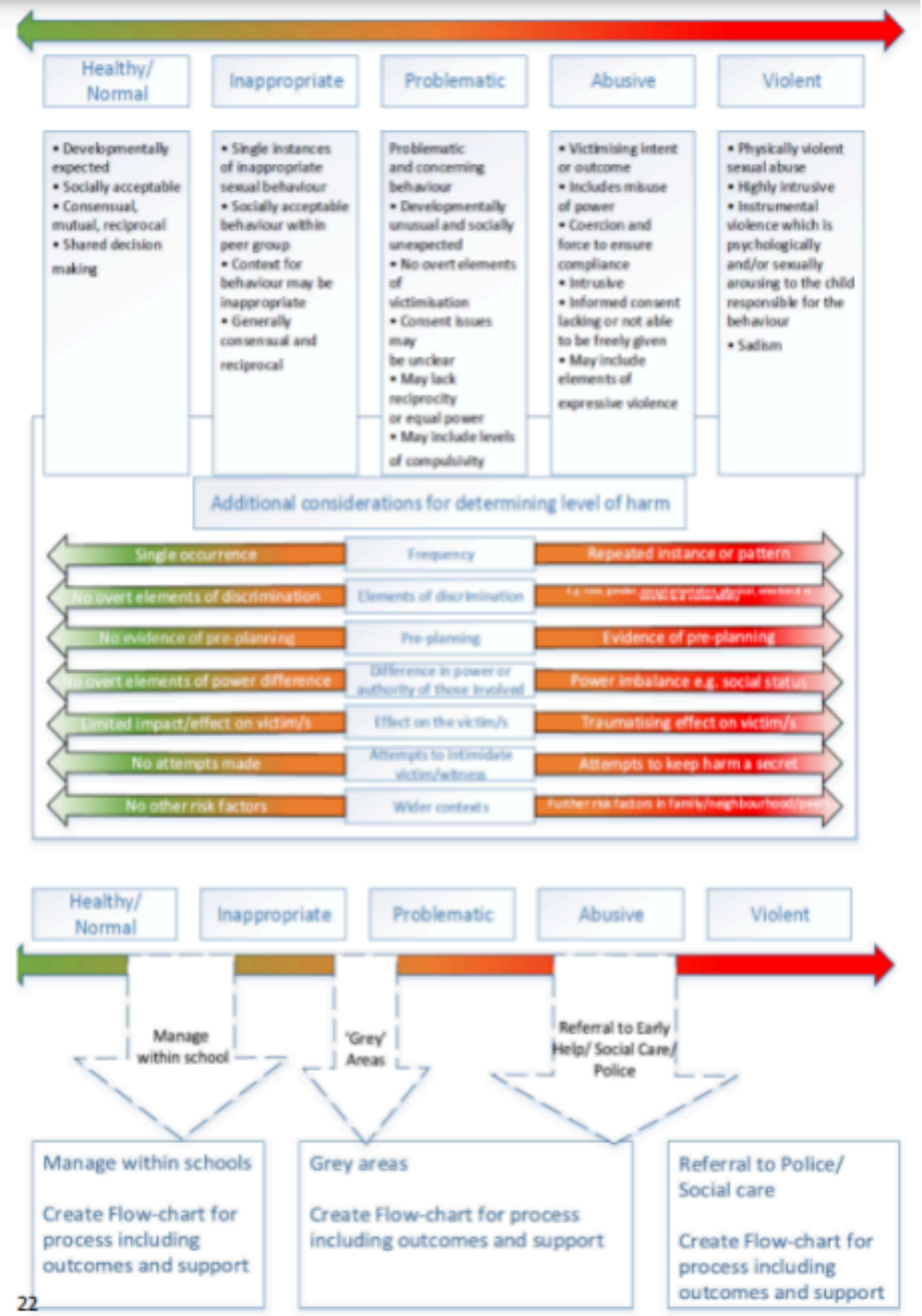

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Appendix4-RiskAssessment

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED HARM, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
• What is the incident? • Who was involved? • Where did it happen				
• Does this incident constitute a crime? Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing of indecent images of children, etc etc. As such has this been referred to the police?				
• Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.				
• Is there an actual or perceived threat from the child alleged to have caused harm to the victim and/or others?				
• Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?				
• Do they share classes?				
• Do they share break times? • Do they share peer/friendship groups?				

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CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED HARM, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
• Do they share transport to/from school?				
• Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?				
• How can such contact be limited?				
• Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?				

Further action taken by the school or college: Please complete for each child involved.

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Appendix 5 - Useful Terms

Sexual Harassment

This can be defined as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. In the context of this guidance this means in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

It 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

Nudes and semi nudes

Is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, and laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages. The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education Group has published Advice for Schools and Colleges on Sharing nudes and semi nudes.

Upskirting

This 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 now a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment. Cases of 'upskirting' have a mandatory requirement for being reported.

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 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.

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

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capacity to make that choice.

It is important to know that: -

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity, the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape

It is also important to differentiate between consensual sexual activity between students of a similar age and that which involves any power imbalance, coercion or exploitation. Due to their additional training, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be involved and leading the school or college response. If in any doubt, they should seek expert advice. It is important that schools and colleges consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise

inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Students'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 behaviour". The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or offline and can also occur simultaneously between the two. Harmful sexual behaviour should be considered in a child protection context.

The Brook Sexual behaviour traffic light tool can also be very helpful in identifying sexual behaviours by students (Appendix 1).

Initiation/hazing

Hazing or initiation ceremonies refers to the practice of rituals, challenges and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group. Hazing is seen in many different types of social groups, including gangs, sports teams and school groups. The initiation rituals can range from relatively low level pranks, to protracted patterns of behaviour that rise to the level of abuse or criminal misconduct. Hazing may include physical or psychological abuse. It may also include nudity or sexual assault.

Contextual Safeguarding

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be considering the context within which incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of students should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Legislation, Guidance and Law

Additional areas for consideration can be found in sexual violence and sexual harassment Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 Human Rights Act 1998.

It is essential to note that this guidance adheres to and encourages all persons to ensure that they are adhering to the Human Rights Act 1998, specifically the right to an education,

the right to a Fair trial and protection from discrimination.

Equalities Act 2010. This guidance is designed to ensure that the Equalities Act is adhered to at all times. The Equalities Act 2010 provides a basic framework for protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in education as well as other sectors.