

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Child on Child Abuse Policy

Autumn 2024

Mission Statement Motto: Building relationships with God and each other, working hard in faith and hope to give our best in all things.

Mission Statement

Holy Cross is a Catholic Primary School. Its religious dimension lies at its heart and is fundamental to its existence. Its ethos is based around Christian values as laid down by the person of Jesus Christ, and exemplified in His teaching.

Our Mission Statement expresses this clearly:

Holy Cross is a Catholic school which seeks to build a closer partnership with parents, the parish and the wider community.

We work hard to provide an environment which is secure, stimulating and happy and where everyone is appreciated and enabled to give of their best.

We encourage all to have respect for each individual, to be honest, tolerant, just and forgiving and to develop a closer relationship with each other and through this, a closer relationship with God.

We recognise Jean Baptiste Debrabant's vision that:

"A Christian based education is a sure hope for the future of religion and society."

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other young people. This is known as 'child on child abuse'. We are committed to preventing child on child abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that child on child abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

Definitions

Within the policy we use the terms victim and perpetrator.

'Victim' is a widely understood and recognised term, but not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. We will use any term the child feels most comfortable with when managing an incident

'Alleged perpetrator(s)' and 'perpetrator(s)' are widely used and recognised terms, but in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what is appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

Child on child abuse refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of

It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child on child abuse could include (but is not limited to);

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which 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;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.¹

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- abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse;

Purpose

This policy has been written to:

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

Legislation and relevant documentation

This policy adheres to and should be read alongside the schools' Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. It should be read alongside our policies for Behaviour, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Anti-bullying and Online Safety.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024' (KCSIE)

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2024) 'Information sharing'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview)'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- National Police Chief's Council (2020) 'When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Youth Produced Sexual Imagery Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

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- Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Cyber-security Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Governors

The governors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the schools' Safeguarding and Child Protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the schools' Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the Designated and Alternate Safeguarding Leaders about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of peer on peer abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child on child abuse.

Role of the Designated (and Alternate) Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child on child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child on child abuse.
- Make referrals to Children's Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of safeguarding concerns, decisions made, and whether or not referrals have been made, and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

Role of all staff

All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of peer on peer abuse

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or become aware of cases of child on child abuse.

- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on child on child abuse.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.
- Report any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of ‘sexting’. Where incidents involve sexting or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.

Whole School Approach

A whole-school approach to tackling child-on-child abuse

The school will continue to involve all members of the school community, including the governing board, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse.

The governing board will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including child-on-child abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the school. The school will ensure that procedures for handling child-on-child abuse are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the school community who wishes to access them.

The school will implement a contextual approach to safeguarding pupils against child-on-child abuse and will ensure that all procedures take into account incidents of child-on-child abuse that occur outside of school or online.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff receive adequate training on handling child-on-child abuse.

School culture

The school will prioritise cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils and ensure that all pupils are aware that the school will adopt a **zero-tolerance stance** on child-on-child abuse of any kind.

The school will promote respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff will model appropriate and respectful behaviour. Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as ‘boys will be boys’ or describing such behaviour as ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’, as these phrases can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and normalised abuse.

The school will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of child-on-child abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage. The school will have a clear set of values and standards that will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life and will be underpinned by the school’s policies, procedures and curriculum.

Early help

Upon receiving notice of a concern or incident, the DSL or deputy DSL will advise whether the children involved in a child-on-child abuse incident require referral or would benefit from early help. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis after thorough examination of the information available, with the aim of reducing the probability of a problem getting worse.

The rationale for the decision to introduce early help as opposed to a referral will be recorded on the Safeguarding Concern Report Form.

The school will ensure that DSLs and deputy DSLs are suitably trained on the early help process and can access further support.

The school will manage all early help and intervention for pupils that show early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Curriculum

The school maintains the position that education surrounding respectful and healthy attitudes and behaviour towards

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others is the best way to combat child-on-child abuse in the school. All staff, not just teaching staff, will be responsible for passing this knowledge on to pupils.

In order to prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. The school will also teach a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE, delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such content will be fully inclusive, age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of pupils with SEND), and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- The concepts of, the laws relating to, and how to access support for the following:
 - Sexual consent
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Abuse
 - Grooming
 - Coercion
 - Harassment
 - Rape
 - Domestic abuse
 - So called honour-based violence, e.g. forced marriage or FGM
- What constitutes as sexual violence and sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable

Pupils will be allowed an open forum to talk about concerns and sexual behaviour. They will be taught how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

The curriculum will ensure that pupils of all ages are taught about and understand the concept of consent and its importance in an age-appropriate way.

Training

We will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to child on child abuse through our annual update training as well as regular review of this policy.

We recognise the gendered nature of child on child abuse and all staff understand that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Procedures to minimise child on child abuse

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

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

- Always maintaining the mindset that “it could happen here”. Pupil voice is at the heart of our curriculum and our staff listen carefully to what our children say
- If a child says something to any adult which causes concern, then the adult should always escalate this immediately in keeping with this policy
- Keeping Safe and Healthy Relationships are taught through both our PSHE and RSHE curriculum TEN:TEN
- Our SENCO and BCCS counsellor offer advice and support to adults and to our children. Children know they can access this support if they are worried.
- We always take supervision of our children seriously and ensure that all areas of our site, both indoors and out are well supervised by adults who are vigilant
- We regularly talk to our children about the adults who are safe for them to talk to if they have any worries
- Our SENCO has a wider range of materials available, to ensure this topic is regularly talked about and children know what is safe behaviour and what is not

Responding to concerns or disclosures of child on child abuse

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School takes child on child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of child on child abuse immediately.

If a member of staff has a concern about peer on peer abuse, or if a child discloses child on child abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. Dealing with the allegation or disclosure will be given the highest priority and their immediate attention. The actions taken will be dependent on the type of child on child abuse and the severity of the incident disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing this process.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Alternate) will always consider the following;

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

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

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.

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- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services via a MASH referral.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.

Supporting the victim

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School recognises that child on child abuse has a significant impact on young people, and victims are likely to need ongoing support.

Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of child on child abuse whilst an investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.

The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.

We will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure. A named adult will be allocated to support the victim and they will ensure regular support is in place for the victim. We will agree with the victim who the adults are that they feel safe to talk to and we will ensure that regular communication is in place with the child's parents so they are fully briefed of the school's actions.

If a victim of child on child abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

Supporting the alleged perpetrator

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing their educational provision.

We recognise that children who perpetrate child on child abuse may be being abused themselves. Our school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.

A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse. The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of child on child abuse. Any actions will be determined on a case by case basis and we will follow the schools' Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.

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

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

Record-keeping

Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in Holy Cross Catholic Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

All record keeping will be carried on CPOMS.

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Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm.

Children will always be encouraged to speak to parents or carers about child on child abuse. We always encourage our children to speak out to stay safe and praise children and reinforce this on an individual basis.

Appendix A: Further Resources

Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/education/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/#tltraining>

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<https://www.brook.org.uk/training/wider-professional-training/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55>

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

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

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

Sexting: How to respond to an incident. An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges, UKCCIS

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview of Sexting Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf)

Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people UKCIS

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_293_9 SP NCA Sexting In Schools FINAL Update Jan17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_293_9_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

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