



# Wrekin View

Wrekin View Primary School and Nursery

## Child on Child Abuse Policy

Date of policy creation	December 2025
Policy Lead	Mrs. F. Atherton
Frequency of review	Bi-annually
Review due	December 2027

## Table of Contents

1. Aims .....	3
2. A safeguarding approach .....	4
3. Context and definition.....	4
4. Responsibilities.....	4
5. Purpose of the policy.....	5
6. Related policies.....	5
7. Abuse and harmful behaviour.....	5
8. Types of abuse.....	6
9. Expected staff action (what all staff must do).....	7
10. Recognising child-on-child abuse.....	7
11. Points to consider.....	8
12. Next steps: support, safety planning and follow-up.....	8
13. Prevention and culture.....	9
14. Monitoring and review.....	9
Appendix A .....	10

## 1. Aims

The aims of this Child-on-Child Abuse Policy are to ensure that Wrekin View Primary School provides a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which all children are protected from harm and supported to thrive.

In particular, this policy aims to:

- Safeguard all children by preventing, identifying and responding promptly and effectively to child-on-child abuse in all its forms, including bullying, sexual harassment, online abuse and discriminatory behaviour.
- Embed a shared understanding that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue and that harmful behaviour between children will never be minimised, normalised or dismissed as banter, falling out or part of growing up.
- Align safeguarding and behaviour practice by ensuring that responses to harmful behaviour sit coherently within the school's Behaviour for Learning framework, recognising behaviour as a taught curriculum and applying a clear, graduated and proportionate response.
- Promote a culture of respect, dignity and safety, underpinned by the school's ethos of *Happy, Successful, Curious Communicators*, where positive relationships, inclusion and mutual respect are explicitly taught and consistently reinforced.
- Ensure the voice of the child is central to all safeguarding decision-making, with children listened to, taken seriously and supported in ways that are appropriate to their age, understanding and needs.
- Provide clarity for staff by setting out clear roles, responsibilities and procedures so that all adults know how to act when child-on-child abuse is suspected, disclosed or observed.
- Support all children involved, recognising that children who experience harm and children who display harmful behaviour may both have safeguarding needs and require appropriate, timely and compassionate support.
- Promote equity, inclusion and reasonable adjustment, ensuring that responses are fair, proportionate and responsive to the needs of pupils with SEND, vulnerabilities or protected characteristics.
- Strengthen prevention through a curriculum-led approach, effective supervision, consistent adult practice, restorative approaches where safe and appropriate, and strong partnership with parents, carers and external agencies.

Through these aims, Wrekin View Primary School seeks to ensure that all children feel safe, valued and protected, and that safeguarding and behaviour practice operate together in the best interests of every pupil.

## 2. A safeguarding approach

Wrekin View Primary School, as part of the Learning Community Trust (LCT), is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All children have the right to feel safe, respected and protected from harm, and all adults working within the school share a collective duty of care to ensure this.

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where all pupils can learn and thrive. Safeguarding is central to the school's ethos, behaviour culture and daily practice. Robust systems are in place to prevent, identify and respond to abuse and neglect, including child-on-child abuse.

All staff build positive, professional relationships with pupils and families and remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding information is clearly displayed across the school, and all staff

receive regular training. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs undertake enhanced training to ensure concerns are managed effectively and proportionately.

The school works closely with the Learning Community Trust, the local authority and external agencies to safeguard children. Accurate and confidential records are maintained for all safeguarding concerns, and swift action is taken to protect and support children.

Pupil voice is actively promoted. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, identify trusted adults and feel confident to speak up. Concerns are taken seriously and acted upon, whether they occur in school, online or in the wider community.

### **3. Context and definition**

Child-on-child abuse (sometimes referred to as peer-on-peer abuse) is defined as behaviour by an individual child or group of children that intentionally or unintentionally causes physical, sexual or emotional harm to another child. This abuse can occur face-to-face, online, inside or outside of school.

All staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Child-on-child abuse must never be dismissed as banter, rough play or part of growing up.

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and online harassment
- physical abuse (hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling, etc.)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sharing of sexual images or videos (youth-produced sexual imagery)
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour
- discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour

Such behaviour may be motivated by perceived differences, including race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics, and can have serious and long-lasting impacts. Children who harm others may themselves have unmet or additional needs, including exposure to trauma, abuse, neglect or instability. Safeguarding responses must therefore consider the needs and welfare of all children involved.

### **4. Responsibilities:**

#### **Governing body and trust**

The governing body, through the Learning Community Trust, ensures:

- statutory safeguarding duties are met
- robust policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly
- safeguarding training is provided for staff and governors
- systems exist to hear and value the voice of the child

#### **Headteacher and senior leaders**

The Headteacher and senior leadership team:

- ensure policies are implemented consistently
- promote a strong safeguarding and behaviour culture
- ensure staff are trained and supported
- work closely with the DSL on safeguarding concerns

## **Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**

The DSL:

- has overall responsibility for managing child-on-child abuse concerns
- liaises with external agencies as required
- keeps detailed safeguarding records
- ensures appropriate support and safety planning is in place

## **All staff**

All staff:

- maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- challenge inappropriate behaviour promptly
- report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL
- follow safeguarding and behaviour procedures consistently

## **5. Purpose of the policy**

This policy provides clear guidance on the prevention, identification and management of child-on-child abuse at Wrekin View Primary School. It is fully aligned with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy (including Anti-Bullying) and should be read as part of a single, coherent behaviour–safeguarding framework.

The policy ensures that:

- safeguarding considerations underpin all behaviour decisions
- behaviour is understood and addressed as a taught curriculum, not merely a set of sanctions
- responses to harmful behaviour are graduated, proportionate, restorative and educational
- all children are supported through an inclusive and equitable lens, including reasonable adjustments for SEND or vulnerability

Child-on-child abuse is positioned as a safeguarding escalation within the behaviour system, rather than a separate or parallel process.

## **6. Related policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy and statement of behaviour principles
- Anti-bullying policy
- Online safety policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Health and safety policy

## **7. Abuse and harmful behaviour**

At Wrekin View Primary School, behaviour and safeguarding are inseparable. All behaviour concerns are considered through a safeguarding lens, in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or minimised as banter, rough play or part of growing up. Staff must not apply high thresholds before acting.

Where behaviour falls below safeguarding thresholds, it will be addressed through the behaviour curriculum and graduated response:

- teach the expected behaviour explicitly
- re-teach and practise routines or social behaviours
- reinforce through consistent adult responses
- restore relationships through structured reflection and restorative practice (where safe and appropriate).

Where behaviour is:

- repeated or persistent
- involves a power imbalance
- discriminatory or prejudiced
- sexually harmful or aggressive
- causes fear, distress or physical harm

it may constitute child-on-child abuse and must be escalated immediately to the DSL.

Technology and online contexts are recognised as significant environments for harmful behaviour and abuse, and are treated with equal seriousness.

## **8. Types of abuse**

The forms of abuse below align directly with the definitions of low-level, high-level and safeguarding behaviour set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **8.1 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, biting, pushing or other actions that cause physical harm. Safeguarding procedures will be followed, and the context and intent of behaviour carefully considered.

### **8.2 Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

All concerns relating to sexual violence or sexual harassment must be reported immediately to the DSL. These behaviours are never acceptable and will not be minimised.

The DSL will determine appropriate action, which may include early help, referral to children's social care or police involvement.

### **8.3 Bullying**

Bullying involves repeated behaviour and a power imbalance. It may be physical, verbal, emotional or online. Bullying is managed in line with the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies, with safeguarding oversight where required.

### **8.4 Online bullying**

Online bullying includes harassment, threats or abuse via digital platforms. Online incidents are treated with equal seriousness and managed in line with safeguarding and online safety procedures.

### **8.5 Sharing sexual images**

The sharing of sexual images is a serious safeguarding concern. Staff must follow statutory guidance and the safeguarding policy when responding.

### **8.6 Discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour**

Any abuse linked to protected characteristics is unacceptable and will be addressed robustly.

## 9. Expected staff action (what all staff must do)

All staff will:

- act immediately: stop the behaviour, secure the environment and seek urgent support if a child is at immediate risk.
- not investigate: staff should not attempt to interview children, take statements, or promise confidentiality.
- report without delay: log and pass concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL as soon as possible and always the same day.
- record accurately: use the school's safeguarding recording system to capture *what was seen/heard/disclosed*, the time/date, location, those involved, and actions taken.
- challenge and disrupt harmful attitudes and behaviours in-the-moment, using the school's behaviour curriculum language and a calm, professional approach.
- maintain professional curiosity and an 'it could happen here' mindset.
- consider inclusion and equality: recognise heightened vulnerability for some pupils and respond in a way that is fair, reasonable and proportionate.
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Where the behaviour is bullying-like (repeated/power imbalance) or lower-level harmful behaviour, staff will still report and record, and the school will respond through a graduated response (teach → practise → reinforce → restore), while applying safeguarding oversight.

## 10. Recognising child-on-child abuse

Staff will be alert to indicators which may include (non-exhaustive):

- changes in attendance, punctuality or engagement
- anxiety, distress, withdrawal, low mood, self-esteem changes
- unexplained injuries, damaged clothing or missing possessions
- reluctance to use particular areas of school, fear of certain peers
- online indicators: distress after device use, secrecy, sudden account changes, harmful messages
- sexually inappropriate language/behaviour not aligned to developmental stage

### 10.1 Taking action

When child-on-child abuse is suspected, seen or disclosed, the priority is safety. The DSL (or Deputy DSL) will triage risk and determine next steps.

### 10.2 Recording sexualised or harmful behaviour

Where the concern involves sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, or youth-produced sexual imagery, staff must:

- report immediately to the DSL/Deputy DSL
- record factually and securely
- preserve evidence where relevant (e.g., do not delete messages/images; follow DSL direction)

### 10.3 Gathering the facts (DSL-led)

The DSL will ensure proportionate fact-finding, which may include:

- speaking separately to children involved (where appropriate and safe)
- identifying witnesses and supervision context
- reviewing CCTV (if applicable) and online evidence
- considering whether the behaviour was one-off or patterned
- assessing power imbalance, coercion, intimidation, vulnerability, and contextual risks

#### **10.4 Considering intent and impact**

Decision-making will be based on impact on the child harmed, risk, context, and needs, recognising that intent may be complex. The school will avoid language that blames the child harmed and will not minimise harmful behaviours as banter.

#### **10.5 Deciding on the next course of action (DSL-led)**

The DSL will determine whether to:

- manage internally with safeguarding oversight
- initiate Early Help
- refer to Children's Social Care
- report to the police (in line with statutory guidance)

Where behaviour is addressed internally, the school will apply a graduated response aligned to our behaviour curriculum:

- teach the expected behaviour explicitly
- practise through supported routines and structured rehearsal
- reinforce through consistent adult responses and supervision plans
- restore through carefully facilitated restorative work (only when safe and appropriate)

Sanctions, where required, will sit alongside safeguarding support and will be applied in line with the Behaviour Policy, ensuring equity and reasonable adjustments.

#### **10.6 Informing parents and carers**

Parents/carers will usually be informed in a timely way by the DSL/Headteacher (or delegated senior leader), unless doing so would place a child at increased risk or compromise a safeguarding process.

### **11. Points to consider**

The DSL will consider:

- age and stage of children involved
- location/context (classroom, playground, toilets, online, off-site)
- accounts and evidence (including witness statements and digital evidence)
- understanding and developmental appropriateness
- frequency/pattern (single incident vs repetition/persistence)
- power imbalance, coercion, threats, humiliation or exploitation
- protected characteristics and discriminatory abuse
- SEND and communication needs (how the child communicates distress/consent; barriers to disclosure)
- reasonable adjustments required to ensure safety, access and fairness

### **12. Next steps: support, safety planning and follow-up**

#### **12.1 Support for the child who has been harmed**

The school will:

- provide a trusted adult/keyworker
- implement a **safety plan** (e.g., supervision, safe spaces, arrival/dismissal adjustments)
- consider timetable/seating/line-up adaptations
- provide pastoral support and (where appropriate) access to external services
- ensure ongoing access to learning and attendance support

- keep the child informed (in a developmentally appropriate way) about what will happen next

## **12.2 Support for the child who has displayed harmful behaviour**

The school will:

- assess safeguarding need and vulnerability
- plan targeted support (pastoral, SEND/inclusion, mentoring, behaviour support)
- use a graduated response and teaching of replacement behaviours
- implement a risk management plan where needed
- consider external agency involvement (Early Help/CSC/Police) where thresholds are met

## **12.3 Aftercare and ongoing monitoring**

The DSL will:

- review safety plans at agreed intervals
- monitor patterns via behaviour/safeguarding logs
- hotspot-map supervision where relevant
- ensure staff who need to know are briefed appropriately and confidentially

## **13. Prevention and culture**

Prevention is embedded through:

- a behaviour curriculum which explicitly teaches routines, relationships, boundaries and respectful conduct
- whole-school expectations consistently reinforced by all adults
- PSHE/RSE and online safety education, including consent, privacy, equality and respectful relationships
- visible safeguarding and trusted adult culture
- strong supervision, hotspot awareness and rapid response to low-level concerns
- restorative practice where safe and appropriate, to rebuild trust and community
- partnership with families and external agencies

## **14. Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body in line with the Learning Community Trust cycle, and updated sooner if statutory guidance, local arrangements or school learning indicates this is required.

The DSL and senior leaders will evaluate implementation through:

- safeguarding and behaviour trend analysis
- pupil voice and parent/carer feedback
- staff training audits
- case reviews and learning conversations

## Appendix a: Flowchart – what staff do when child-on-child abuse is suspected

Start:

**A concern is seen/heard/disclosed (in school, online, or in the community)**

**1. Immediate safety first**

- Stop the behaviour; separate children if needed; call for help.
- Provide reassurance to the child harmed; do not promise confidentiality.



**2. Report and record (same day, without delay)**

- Inform DSL/Deputy DSL immediately.
- Record factually (what happened, who, when, where, actions taken).



**3. DSL triage and risk assessment**

- Is there immediate risk of harm?
- **Yes** → urgent safeguarding action; consider CSC/police; implement safety plan now.
- **No** → proceed to step 4.



**4. DSL-led fact-finding and decision-making**

- Consider context, power imbalance, vulnerability, SEND/communication needs, repetition, online evidence.
- Determine route:
  - **Manage internally with safeguarding oversight**
  - **Early Help**
  - **Children's Social Care**
  - **Police (where required)**



**5. Implement action plan (graduated + restorative where appropriate)**

- Teach/practise/reinforce expected behaviour (behaviour curriculum).
- Apply sanctions proportionately (Behaviour Policy) alongside safeguarding support.
- Facilitate restorative work **only when safe and appropriate**.



**6. Communicate and support**

- Inform parents/carers unless this increases risk or compromises safeguarding.
- Support child harmed: key adult, safety plan, pastoral support, access to learning.
- Support child who harmed: assess need, targeted intervention, risk management.



**7. Monitor, review, and learn**

- DSL reviews safety plan and logs; hotspot supervision adjustments.
- Leadership oversight and pattern analysis; update prevention/teaching as required.