



The Welbeck Federation

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Executive Head Teacher Signature:	<i>L Jordan</i>
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Introduction

At The Welbeck Federation of Schools, we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). We recognise that children can abuse other children and that this can happen inside or outside of school and online.

We believe that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as:

-  banter
-  having a laugh
-  part of growing up
-  boys being boys
-  harmless fun

We will respond to all signs, reports and concerns relating to child-on-child abuse, whether they occur on school premises, outside school or online.

We maintain an attitude of "it could happen here", even where there are no reported incidents. We understand that some children may experience barriers to disclosure because of vulnerability, disability, SEND, communication needs, sex, ethnicity, family circumstances or sexual orientation.

We recognise that children who display harmful behaviours may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma, neglect or exploitation and may require safeguarding support.

In all cases, our response will:

-  prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children involved
-  consider the wishes, feelings and lived experiences of the child
-  reflect children's ages, developmental stages and vulnerabilities
-  consider power imbalance, coercion, discrimination and peer-group dynamics
-  provide appropriate support alongside disciplinary responses
-  involve safeguarding partners and specialist services where necessary

We are committed to a whole-school approach to preventing, identifying and responding to child-on-child abuse.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (2026) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from staff and governors.

This policy should be read alongside:

-  Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
-  Behaviour Policy
-  Anti-Bullying Policy
-  Online Safety Policy
-  RSHE Policy
-  Equality Policy
-  Staff Code of Conduct

The policy is available:

-  on the school website: [The Welbeck Federation - Federation Policies](#)

- from the school office upon request

This policy is reviewed annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with children must maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" when considering child-on-child abuse.

The Headteacher, Lisa Jordan, has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has operational responsibility for:

- managing concerns and referrals
- assessing risk
- coordinating support
- liaising with statutory agencies
- maintaining safeguarding records

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies in the Federation are: Lisa Jordan, Matt Walker, Joanne Turner and Caroline Goodall.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and monitored.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Definitions

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). This may also be an indicator of wider exploitation

such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and/or County Lines.

Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

Recognising

The Welbeck Federation of Schools recognises that child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum of behaviour.

Some behaviours may be inappropriate but not abusive. Others may be problematic, harmful, abusive or violent.

Staff will use professional curiosity and age-appropriate understanding when considering concerns.

Particular consideration will be given to:

-  age and developmental stage
-  frequency and persistence
-  intent
-  coercion or manipulation
-  power imbalance
-  vulnerability
-  previous concerns
-  online and offline context

Any concerns must be shared with the DSL.

Staff must not attempt to make specialist assessments.

Reporting and Responding

At The Welbeck Federation of Schools we want pupils, parents, staff and visitors to feel confident reporting concerns.

We recognise that our response to an initial report is crucial and can encourage or discourage future disclosures.

All reports will be taken seriously and managed on a case-by-case basis by the DSL.

We will support:

-  the child who has experienced harm
-  the child alleged to have caused harm
-  witnesses
-  any other children affected

Children

We recognise that children may not always disclose abuse directly.

Children may:

-  tell an adult
-  tell another child
-  show behavioural indicators
-  communicate concerns through actions or drawings
-  report concerns online

Children are regularly reminded about trusted adults and routes for seeking help.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure will:

-  listen carefully
-  reassure the child
-  avoid leading questions
-  explain that the information may need to be shared
-  record the concern
-  report immediately to the DSL

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers who have concerns regarding child-on-child abuse should contact the DSL immediately.

The school will:

-  listen carefully to concerns
-  record information appropriately
-  take safeguarding advice where needed
-  ensure concerns are investigated through the correct safeguarding processes

We ask parents not to discuss safeguarding concerns through social media or community networks.

Staff

Any member of staff who:

-  witnesses abuse
-  receives a disclosure
-  has a concern about a child
-  notices changes in behaviour

must report concerns immediately to the DSL and record them in line with safeguarding procedures.

Visitors

Visitors must report any concerns before leaving the school site wherever possible.

Concerns must be shared directly with a DSL or senior leader.

Recording and Evaluating

The Federation will ensure that:

-  all concerns are recorded promptly
-  safeguarding records are factual and accurate
-  actions and decisions are documented
-  risk assessments are recorded

- 🌐 support plans are reviewed regularly

Records may form part of statutory safeguarding investigations and therefore must be completed carefully and professionally.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum ranging from developmentally expected through to harmful or abusive behaviour.

When considering HSB, the DSL will consider:

- 🌐 age and developmental stage
- 🌐 nature and severity
- 🌐 frequency
- 🌐 consent
- 🌐 coercion
- 🌐 power imbalance
- 🌐 impact on others
- 🌐 escalation
- 🌐 trauma history
- 🌐 SEND and communication needs
- 🌐 online and offline context
- 🌐 wider safeguarding concerns

Staff must not make specialist assessments outside their professional role.
All concerns must be referred to the DSL immediately.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

This may include:

- 🌐 sexual comments
- 🌐 sexual jokes
- 🌐 sexual stories
- 🌐 sexualised name calling
- 🌐 remarks about appearance
- 🌐 physical sexual behaviour
- 🌐 displaying sexual images
- 🌐 upskirting
- 🌐 online sexual harassment
- 🌐 sexualised online bullying
- 🌐 coercion into sharing sexual content

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including:

- 🌐 rape
- 🌐 assault by penetration
- 🌐 sexual assault
- 🌐 causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

The Federation recognises that:

-  a child under 13 cannot consent to sexual activity
-  the age of consent is 16
-  sexual activity without consent is a criminal offence

All allegations of sexual violence will be treated as safeguarding concerns and referred in accordance with local procedures.

Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Nudes and semi-nudes refers to the creation, possession, sharing or distribution of nude or semi-nude images or videos by children.

This includes:

-  photographs
-  videos
-  screenshots
-  livestreams
-  digitally altered images
-  AI-generated images
-  deepfakes
-  deep nudes

Responding to Harmful Digital Material

Staff must:

-  not intentionally view images where avoidable
-  not copy, print, save or forward images
-  not ask a child to share images
-  not investigate independently
-  report immediately to the DSL

Where harmful material is accidentally viewed:

-  the image must not be shared
-  the DSL must be informed immediately
-  a safeguarding record must be made
-  local procedures and UKCIS guidance will be followed

The DSL will determine whether police involvement is required.

Initial Safeguarding Response

Upon receiving a report, the DSL will consider:

-  immediate safety
-  wishes and feelings of all children involved
-  need for medical assistance
-  risks to others
-  preservation of evidence
-  parental involvement
-  contextual safeguarding risks
-  need for specialist support
-  need for referral to Children's Social Care
-  need for police involvement

The school will not conduct criminal investigations.

Where external agencies become involved, the school will work alongside them and ensure school actions do not compromise investigations.

Risk and Needs Assessment

Where appropriate, the DSL will complete a risk and needs assessment.

This may consider:

-  the child who has experienced harm
-  the child alleged to have caused harm
-  risks to other pupils
-  shared lessons and spaces
-  transport arrangements
-  online interactions
-  friendship groups
-  likelihood of recurrence
-  environmental risks
-  required protective measures

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and whenever circumstances change.

Support

Supporting Children Who Have Experienced Harm

Support may include:

-  a trusted adult
-  pastoral support
-  safety planning
-  timetable adjustments
-  emotional wellbeing support
-  therapeutic intervention
-  attendance support
-  regular safeguarding reviews

No child should be made to feel responsible for protective arrangements.

Supporting Children Who Have Caused Harm

The Federation recognises that children who cause harm may also require safeguarding support. Support may include:

-  assessment of need
-  pastoral intervention
-  education regarding behaviour and impact
-  family support
-  external services
-  safeguarding plans
-  proportionate disciplinary action

Safeguarding responses and behaviour sanctions may operate alongside one another.

Supporting Other Children

Support will also be considered for:

-  witnesses
-  friendship groups
-  siblings

-  other affected pupils

Strategies for Prevention

The Welbeck Federation of Schools actively seeks to prevent child-on-child abuse through:
Staff Training

All staff receive training on:

-  safeguarding
-  child-on-child abuse
-  harmful sexual behaviour
-  sexual harassment and violence
-  online safety
-  contextual safeguarding
-  technology-assisted abuse

Information for Children

Children are taught:

-  respectful relationships
-  consent and boundaries
-  equality and diversity
-  recognising abuse
-  reporting concerns
-  online safety

Information for Parents and Carers

We work with parents through:

-  policy consultation
-  newsletters
-  safeguarding communications
-  online safety information
-  parent workshops where appropriate

PSHE Curriculum

Our PSHE curriculum promotes:

-  healthy relationships
-  respect
-  kindness
-  consent
-  online safety
-  equality
-  understanding abusive behaviour
-  reporting concerns

Learning is age-appropriate and adapted to meet children's needs.

Breaches and Complaints

Breaches of this policy will be managed through relevant school procedures.

Parents and carers who are dissatisfied with the school's response should follow the Federation's Complaints Policy.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

-  [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
-  [Behaviour Policy](#)
-  [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
-  [Online Safety Policy](#)
-  [Equality Policy](#)
-  [PSHE Policy](#)
-  [Complaints Policy](#)
-  [Staff Code of Conduct](#)