

Kingsland CE Primary School

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children Policy



Let your light shine

“Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine on our vision:

As God’s children, overflowing with His light, we will shine before others to inspire, nurture and bring joy so all may embrace life in its fullness to the glory of God.

September 2025

Kingsland CE Primary School

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children Policy

Date for full implementation:
Review date:

September 2025
September 2026



This policy is written with reference to [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025’](#) (KCSIE 2025) Part 5, and [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#).

Reference should also be made to the school’s [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

Aim and purpose of the policy

This policy aims to provide guidance about managing reports of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

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. Pre-planning, effective training and effective policies will provide staff with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

What do we mean by sexual violence and sexual harassment between children?

1. 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.
2. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.
3. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and school staff are supported and protected as appropriate.
4. Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.
5. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:
 - Rape
 - Assault by penetration
 - Sexual assault
6. Sexual harassment refers to ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. 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 and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. It may include:
- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos. ([Sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#) provides detailed advice for schools and colleges);
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

This policy highlights the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”;
- challenging behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them; and
- understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language.

Responding to a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

The school’s initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. 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.

Cases will be investigated on a case-by-case basis. However, effective safeguarding practice includes:

- not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or children’s social care) 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 a child is likely to disclose 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;
- listening carefully to the child, 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;
- 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 during the report (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 and colleges should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation;
- where the report includes an online element, being aware of [sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#) advice (for schools and colleges). 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.
- if possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or deputy). However, this might not always be possible; and
- informing the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Risk Assessments

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 should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- the alleged perpetrator; and
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Staff will carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the school or college's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- 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;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff

Options to manage the report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Staff will consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be

made to children's social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, the school should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school or college taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required. There are four likely scenarios for schools and colleges 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, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention 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 sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded
- The [Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#) can help in identifying age appropriate behaviours

2. 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 harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded

3. Referrals to children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the school should make a referral to local children's social care.
- At the referral to children's social care stage, the school will generally 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). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.
- If a referral is made, children's social care 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 designated safeguarding lead or deputy will 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 and any other children that require support.
- The school should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school or college. It will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school or college takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school should be immediate.
- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The designated safeguarding lead or deputy 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 designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) 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 sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded

4. Reporting to the Police

- Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to children's social care
- It is important that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) is clear about the local process for referrals and follow that process.
- 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, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.
- At this stage, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or 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 social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.
- Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college should consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.
- All police forces in England have specialist units that investigate child abuse. The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. It will be important that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) is aware of their local arrangements.
- 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 or college continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

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;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the SENCO.

Ongoing support

Kingsland CE Primary School will ensure that appropriate support will be given to the victim, alleged perpetrator, and other children and staff following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. This will be provided on a case by case basis, depending on circumstances and the age/developmental stage of the people involved.