

Procedure for managing allegations of child-on-child abuse

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Introduction

Casterton Primary Academy is committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse both within and beyond the school. Section 22 of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines the school's definitions and approach to child-on-child abuse.

When managing allegations of child-on-child abuse, in addition to this procedure, the school will also consider recommendations / guidelines and actions from:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#), particularly Part 5 (from page 112)

Where the allegation includes the use of digital devices, images/videos or online content the following school policies and procedures will also be adhered to:

- Online Safety Policy
- Electronic Devices Searching and Deletion Policy
- Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

This document avoids the term 'victim' and / or 'perpetrator'. This is because the school takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in allegations of or concerns about child-on-child abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused and those who are alleged to have abused their peers, in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required for the latter.

Action

The 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 child-on-child abuse, or if a child discloses child-on-child abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately verbally (either in person or via telephone) and then formally in written form via CPOMS.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

When managing an allegation of child-on-child abuse the DSL will consider:

- The wishes of the young person that has been harmed in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The nature of the alleged incident.
- The ages of the young people involved.



- The development stages of the young people involved.
- Any power imbalance between the young people.
- Is the incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks to the young person that has been harmed, other young people or school staff?
- Contextual safeguarding issues.

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

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the young person that has been harmed and/or the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour to local services for Early Help.
- Make an advice call to Children's Social Care and/or submit a referral.
- Liaise with social workers or family support workers working with the young people involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the Police.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the young person that has been harmed, alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour, adults and other young people.

Following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering:

- the young person that has been harmed
- the alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour
- all other young people (and if appropriate, staff)

Risk assessments will use the Lancashire Risk Management template and be recorded on CPOMS. Risk assessments will be kept under review as a minimum half-termly.



Supporting the young person that has been harmed

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse has a significant impact on young people and young people that have been harmed are likely to need ongoing support. Appropriate support will be put in place whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. This will, in the first instance be from the school's Wellbeing Leaders and Counsellors. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the young person that has been harmed is receiving appropriate care.

The school will do everything possible to maintain the young person's normal routine and to protect them from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.

If a young person that has experienced child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting (i.e. a transition to high school, or move out of area), the DSL will share the necessary information with the DSL at the new school to ensure that support for the young person continues.

Supporting the alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision.

The school recognises that young people who perpetrate child-on-child abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard these young people and provide them with support.

A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.

If the alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour moves to another setting, the DSL will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other young people at the new setting.

The school may choose to impose a sanction or consequence on the alleged young person who has displayed harmful behaviour following an incident of child-on-child abuse. In this case, the school's Behaviour Policy will be followed in determining the level and severity of sanction.

Where a young person is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of child-on-child abuse, the school will update the risk assessment accordingly and work with the relevant agencies to further support both the young person that has been harmed and the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour appropriately.



Record-keeping

All allegations and incidents of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, along with relevant actions (including the creation and review of risk assessments and referrals to agencies), on CPOMS and tagged in the category, '*Child-on-child Abuse*'.

Incidents of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the Local Academy Council via the Principal's report.

Parents and Carers

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

Young people will always be encouraged to speak to parents or carers about child-on-child abuse. If the young person wishes to withhold information from their parents or carers, competency will be assessed using the [Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines](#) (where applicable).

Review of Circumstances

Following any incident of harm, the school will conduct a review to consider if anything could have been done differently and what has been learned from the incident this will include a review of policies and systems to ensure that the school is effectively keeping young people safe.

