Long Whatton C of E Primary

Child on Child Abuse Policy and Procedures



'Live, Learn, Grow and be Thankful''

Date of policy: November 2026

Date adopted by Governors: November 2026

Date of review: November 2027

1. Purpose and principles

Long Whatton C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding every child. Child-on-child abuse is never acceptable, is not an inevitable part of growing up and must never be dismissed as banter, horseplay or children being children. Abuse can occur inside or outside school, in person or online. All reports and concerns will be taken seriously, acted upon promptly and managed in a child-centred, proportionate and non-discriminatory manner.

This policy supplements, rather than replaces, the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Attendance Policy and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures. Where guidance or law changes, current statutory guidance takes precedence.

2. Statutory and guidance framework

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2026), especially Parts One, Two and Five.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026); Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004; Education Act 2002.

Equality Act 2010; Human Rights Act 1998; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

DfE guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people; current statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance.

Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local children's social care referral pathways.

3. What constitutes child-on-child abuse?

Child-on-child abuse can involve one or more children harming another child. Children of any age, including primary-aged pupils, can experience or display harmful behaviour. It may include:

Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, and repeated intimidation or exclusion.

Physical abuse, including hitting, kicking, biting, hair-pulling or other physical harm.

Sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual comments, jokes, messages, touching or coercion; causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos, including AI-generated or manipulated intimate imagery; pressure to create or share images.

Upskirting and other intrusive image-taking; online sexual harassment and abuse.

Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children; coercive and controlling behaviour.

Initiation or hazing-type violence or humiliation; threatening, exploitative or discriminatory conduct.

Prejudice-based harm may relate to race, religion or belief, disability, SEND, sex, sexual orientation or other characteristics. Staff must recognise and challenge racist, faith-based and other discriminatory abuse. A child may be harmed even where behaviour is described by others as a joke or where there is no repeated pattern.

4. Recognition and additional vulnerability

Staff must remain alert to signs including fear of peers, injuries, changes in attendance, withdrawal, distress, online threats, sexualised language or behaviour, and disclosures made directly or indirectly. Absence of a report does not mean abuse is not occurring. Children with SEND, disabilities, communication difficulties, children experiencing discrimination or mental health difficulties, and children who are isolated may face additional barriers to reporting. Staff must provide accessible, developmentally appropriate opportunities to be heard and avoid assuming signs are attributable solely to SEND or other needs.

5. Immediate response by all staff

Ensure immediate safety; separate children where necessary without assigning blame; seek medical help and call 999 where there is immediate danger.

Listen calmly, take the child seriously, reassure them they have done the right thing and explain that information must be shared with safeguarding staff. Do not promise secrecy.

Use open, non-leading prompts only to establish what is needed for immediate safeguarding. Do not investigate, interview children repeatedly, confront the child reported to have caused harm or attempt mediation.

Record the child's words as accurately as possible, factual observations, time, date and immediate action on CPOMS as soon as practicable. Notify the DSL or deputy immediately; CPOMS entry alone does not replace urgent direct contact.

Preserve relevant evidence safely. Do not view, copy, print, forward or ask children to send nude/semi-nude images; consult the DSL and current image-sharing guidance.

If the DSL/deputy is unavailable, take appropriate action yourself, including referral to children's social care or police where needed, and inform safeguarding leadership as soon as possible.

6. DSL assessment, referrals and decision-making

The DSL or deputy will consider the child's wishes and feelings, ages and developmental stages, SEND and communication needs, power imbalance, coercion, frequency, context, any prior incidents, immediate and ongoing risk, and whether the behaviour may indicate abuse or exploitation of the child who displayed it. The DSL will record decisions, rationale, consultation, referrals, actions and outcomes.

Responses may include school safeguarding and behaviour support, early help, referral to local authority children's social care, and/or police. Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm, a prompt referral to children's social care is required. Where a crime may have occurred, the DSL will consider police involvement and liaise with statutory agencies; do not delay urgent safeguarding action pending an internal investigation. Staff may make a referral directly when necessary. Escalate professional disagreement through local procedures.

For reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL will follow Part Five of KCSIE 2026, including consideration of whether to manage internally, offer early help, refer to children's social care and/or report to police. The school will not automatically treat every incident as a criminal matter, nor automatically exclude police involvement.

7. Safety planning and risk assessment

The DSL will decide whether a written, regularly reviewed risk and needs assessment is required, particularly for sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour or ongoing threats. Consider supervision, transitions, toilets, playground, classrooms, transport, online contact, separation where proportionate, trusted adults, timetable arrangements and any wider peer group risks. Plans should protect the child reporting harm while avoiding unnecessary disruption to their education. Record ownership, review dates and contributions from agencies and parents where appropriate.

8. Support for children affected and children displaying harmful behaviour

Every child involved is entitled to a safe, respectful and proportionate response. The child who has experienced harm should be offered a trusted adult, regular check-ins, access to pastoral or specialist support, reasonable adjustments, protection against retaliation and ongoing review. Their wishes and feelings should inform decisions, without making them responsible for safeguarding decisions.

The child who has displayed harmful behaviour may also have unmet needs or be experiencing abuse. Provide safeguarding assessment, appropriate pastoral/SEND support, family engagement and specialist intervention as indicated. Behaviour consequences must be lawful, proportionate and consistent with school policy; suspension or permanent exclusion is not automatic and must comply with current DfE guidance. Restorative approaches must never be imposed on a child who has experienced sexual violence or harassment and should only be considered when safe and appropriate.

9. Parents and carers

The DSL will normally inform parents/carers of children involved at an appropriate stage, while considering the child's safety, wishes and circumstances. Where informing a parent may place a child at additional risk, or compromise police or social care enquiries, the DSL will seek agency advice first. Share only information necessary and lawful to share, respecting other children's confidentiality.

10. Online incidents and intimate imagery

Online abuse will be addressed even where it occurs outside school if it affects children's safety or welfare. Staff must report threats, harassment, coercion, impersonation, sexual image-sharing and AI-generated sexualised content. The DSL will follow current DfE/UKCIS guidance for incidents involving nude or semi-nude imagery, assess immediate risk, avoid unnecessary viewing and preserve evidence through safe procedures. The school will not make blanket claims that every incident must automatically be reported to police; decisions follow guidance and safeguarding risk.

11. Prevention, curriculum and school culture

Through the Long Whatton Way, the school's Christian vision and values, age-appropriate PSHE/RSHE, online safety, anti-bullying work and pupil voice, children are taught about respect, personal boundaries, consent in age-appropriate language, healthy friendships, equality, reporting concerns and seeking help. Staff challenge harmful sexual language, sexism, racism and other discriminatory conduct. Supervision, site risk assessment and safeguarding monitoring will respond to emerging patterns and hotspots.

12. Recording, confidentiality and monitoring

All concerns, disclosures, actions, professional discussions, referrals, decisions, reasons and follow-up outcomes must be recorded securely on CPOMS, in line with the safeguarding and records retention procedures. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis for safeguarding; data protection law does not prevent necessary and proportionate sharing to protect children. The DSL will monitor patterns, repeated concerns, locations, online trends and the effectiveness of interventions, reporting anonymised themes to governors as appropriate.

13. Staff training and accountability

All staff must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full and receive safeguarding training and updates appropriate to their role. Staff must know the DSL/deputies, referral routes and the process for concerns about children and adults. The governing body will oversee implementation, staff awareness and annual policy review, with earlier review after significant incidents or statutory changes.

14. Operational checklist following a report

Protect children and address immediate danger or medical needs.

Listen, reassure, avoid leading questions and preserve evidence appropriately.

Contact DSL/deputy without delay and record on CPOMS.

DSL assesses risks, considers referrals and documents rationale.

Put proportionate safety/support arrangements in place for all affected children.

Consult/inform parents appropriately and coordinate with agencies.

Review wellbeing, attendance, recurrence and the effectiveness of the plan; close only with documented rationale.

15. References and approval

DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

DfE: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2