



Child-On-Child Abuse Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body September 2023
To be reviewed: September 2025

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

This policy also incorporates the Anti-Bullying policy

(including new expectations around Peer-on-Peer Abuse – KCSIE paragraphs 24,29,46,47,48 and 50 2023)

Through training Coldfall Primary School ensures that all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. The senior leadership team and governing body are responsible for ensuring that procedures exist to minimise the risk of Child on Child abuse and consider how allegations of Child on Child abuse will be investigated and dealt with. There is a clear procedure on how victims of Child on Child abuse will be supported.

All staff are aware of Child on Child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to, bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying), sex-based violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment, upskirting, which can include taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, (which is now a criminal offence), physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pulling hair, sexting and initiating /instigating violence and rituals. These issues will be addressed through our school curriculum (Ourselves and Others), workshops and assemblies throughout the year.

All staff are aware that technology can be a significant component of Child-on-Child Abuse and that pupils are at risk of online abuse as well as face to face. Staff are aware that children can abuse their peers online through: abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages; non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups and sharing of abusive images and pornography.

All staff are expected to refer to HM Government guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Advise for practitioners' for further help in identifying signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Staff understand the indicators of Child-on-Child abuse, know how to identify it and respond to reports. Staff also recognise that Child-on-Child abuse may be taking place, even if it is not reported. Inappropriate behaviour between peers is challenged and a safe environment is created leading to a culture that does not normalise abuse. This guidance can be found in Appendix A. Staff members who are concerned that a child might have been / being abused by another child should follow safeguarding and child protection procedures and report to the DSL.

In respect of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, Coldfall School takes a proactive approach to prevent such incidents from taking place. Throughout school, safeguarding is taught as part of our curriculum. We appreciate that whilst adults in school are working hard to keep children safe, children also play a large part in keeping themselves and their peers safe from abuse and neglect. An age-appropriate curriculum is rolled out in school to build capacity amongst our pupils in their understanding of particular issues, and what actions they can take to be safe.

We incorporate healthy relationships, people who help us and British values into our curriculum time in an age appropriate way for the year groups in school. Also from September 2021 we have included Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education in the school timetable, in line with DfE guidance and the national

curriculum. These lessons are delivered using resources from Lifewise and also National Online Safety.

Students are taught to understand the issue and meaning of consent as delivered in the RSE curriculum (at an age-appropriate level) which includes causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Reporting Incidents or Concerns

Pupils are taught through our curriculum about Safeguarding and how to stay safe. Students will be made aware of what constitutes unreasonable pressure from peers to engage in risk-taking or inappropriate behaviour. Pupils can report incidents or concerns to any member of staff that they feel comfortable talking to (their Coldfall 'Give me 5'). All staff are fully trained to support any reports or concerns and will support pupils.

Allegations of abuse by a peer will be treated as seriously as allegations of abuse from an adult, it should never be dismissed as normal behaviour. All concerns are taken seriously and support will be given. Staff are aware that children should not be given the impression that they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed that they are making a report. Each report of an incident or concern will be discussed immediately with members of the headship team and relevant action taken.

Robust systems have been established in school for dealing with safeguarding concerns. All allegations of abuse and neglect, whether suspected or known will be treated seriously and in confidentiality. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We will respond and manage any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment in line with guidance added to KCSIE 2022. The DSL team will follow the SDSE approach (in line with NSPCC guidance): Stop, Define, State school rule, Enforce and Redirect. The school will take care with the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' and may instead use the terms 'harmed' and those who 'displayed' harmful behaviours. The school will rate the behaviour as Red, Amber or Green in the first instance.

Children with SEND

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to Child-on-Child abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face Child on Child abuse than other children. Coldfall work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by:

- Providing children with speech and language needs alternative ways to communicate what has happened to them.
- Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.
- Coldfall have adapted the RSE curriculum and follows the Dfe guidance, so that all children can access it at their own level. LGBTQ+ children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBTQ+, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBTQ+ children. The school's response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual

violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

Responding to reports of Child-on-Child abuse, sexual violence/harassment

All Coldfall staff are confident in responding to any reports on Child-on-Child abuse and/or sexual violence or harassment.

There are four likely scenarios for schools 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, Coldfall 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 their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support. Coldfall's response is underpinned by the principle that Child-on-Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and reported to the DSL (Emily Gazzard).

2. Early help

In line with 1 above, the Coldfall may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions, but may benefit from 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. Referrals will be made to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). Early Help will work best when placed alongside our school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL (Emily Gazzard).

3. Referrals to MASH/Social Care/Police

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, Coldfall will make a referral to MASH/Social Care and/or the Police. At the referral stage, Coldfall will 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 MASH/Social Care and/or the Police. If a referral is made, enquires will then be made to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, Coldfall DSL will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker or other outside agency. Collaborative working will help ensure that 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.

Coldfall will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a MASH/Social Care and/or Police investigation before protecting the victim and other children. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will work closely with MASH (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions it takes does 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 Coldfall will be immediate. In some cases, MASH/Social Care and/or the Police will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. Coldfall, led by the designated safeguarding lead, will be prepared to refer again if 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) will 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 Child-on-Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL.

4. Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will be in parallel with a referral to MASH (as above). All staff are clear about Coldfall's processes for referrals and follow that process.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that 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, Coldfall will 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, the DSL will continue to support the child in any decision which are made. This will be with the support of MASH and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where a report has been made to the police, Coldfall will consult with 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. All staff at Coldfall are 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, Coldfall will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that Child-on-Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded and passed to the DSL.

After recent government action to tackle the issues raised by testimonies given on the Everyone's Invited website, NSPCC has been commissioned to run the helpline which we will publicise in school and on our website – 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. This number is for children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse, adult victims, parents and carers of victims and professionals working with children and young people. It is to report or share incidents which have happened both in and outside of educational settings.

When incidents of Child-on-Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment occur, Coldfall's response is ultimately decided on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) taking the lead role, using their professional judgement. Incidents of Child-on-Child abuse may need to be dealt with in various ways. Incidents of bullying will be dealt with via the schools anti-bullying policy and/or behaviour policy. Incidents which take place outside of school may need to be addressed in school however Coldfall are clear that where professional advice needs to be sought from external partners, it will be. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult MASH on matters relating to the safety and welfare of a child and will consult the police in respect of matters relating to a possible crime. Coldfall will put a proportionate and supportive package of care in place for those affected.

Online Safety (KCSIE 2021 paragraph 123-135)

All staff are trained in Online Safety which is renewed annually. This training is integrated and aligned and considered as part of our whole school safeguarding approach. Coldfall ensures that parents are informed of any local contexts that become apparent, with links to further information on Coldfall's website. Coldfall provides parent information, fact sheets and support with firewalls for parents. All parents are able to access (from Sep 2022) the resources from National Online Safety. At Coldfall, we have an appropriate level of security to protect all users and their data. This is reviewed annually .

Anti-Bullying

Sexual harassment and sexual violence

"These are never acceptable, and will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst-case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not reporting it." (KCSIE, 2022)

At Coldfall Primary, sexual harassment and sexual violence are not tolerated. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. All allegations of sexual harassment or sexual violence must be reported immediately to the DSL and logged on My Concern. DSL will contact parents of both parties and, where appropriate, a referral to Children's Services will be made in the first instance.

** Protected characteristics: age, gender reassignment, being married or in civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex*

Bullying at Coldfall

Statement of Intent

At Coldfall we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding Policy and the school's Vision, Aims and Values.

Aims:

- To ensure a safe environment for all students at Coldfall
- To emphasise the fundamental importance of establishing and maintaining a positive, caring ethos within the school
- To establish an atmosphere where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, to raise general awareness so that the whole school community can play its part in recognising bullying and to take action when it occurs by preventing or responding appropriately to it.
- In line with the Equality Act 2010 it is essential that our school eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Objectives

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or

schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.

- Emotional: losing interest in school, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- Behavioural: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy

Definitions

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. Bullying is distinct from issues children may experience navigating normal difficulties and disputes within social relationships.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies 2014. DFE What Is Bullying?

We may define bullying as the following occurring over a period-of-time:

- Physical – hitting, pushing or any act that invades personal space.
- Verbal – Name-calling, teasing and taunting. Racial and sexual harassment.
- Social – Exclusion by groups or individuals. Discrimination on grounds of religion, culture, race, gender, disability or sexuality.
- Cyber – Intimidation and abuse via electronic means (text, e-mail, social networking sites)

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

At Coldfall we recognise our responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Bullying What happened to you? (Bruce D. Perry, Oprah Winfrey)

1. All bullying allegations will be logged on My Concern and shared with the Behaviour Lead.
2. Behaviour Lead will contact parents of victim to explain that the allegation will be explored.
3. All children involved will meet with the Behaviour Lead to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.
4. If bullying is identified, then a plan will be put in place to support both the victim and the perpetrator. Support for the victim could be: time to talk with Give me 5 adults, time with school Learning Mentor, restorative activities with the 'bully' e.g. helping in a younger class.

Support for the perpetrator could be: time to talk with Give Me 5 adults, time with school Learning Mentor, restorative activities with the 'bully' e.g. helping in a younger class, working as a mentor with PE teacher for younger classes, helping in homework club, referral to external agencies if appropriate (e.g. Early Help, MASH, CAMHS). A Behaviour Support Plan may be put in place.

5. Pupils will be reminded of their Coldfall 'Give Me 5' adults they can talk to.
6. Behaviour Lead will update parents of both sides.
7. Behaviour Lead and class teacher will monitor behaviour closely.

Outcomes

If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

Where appropriate, parents and pupils will be directed to specific resources on the National Online Safety site.

Prevention

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies, as well as PSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. An annual 'Anti-bullying Week' is held to further raise awareness. E-safety is an important part of the Curriculum and information for parents is included in newsletters and on the School's website. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied. We will use these methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Discussing the 7 Golden Rules
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly (e.g Friendship Terrace)
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- using strategies and approaches from the Girls on Board materials

This policy is based on guidance provided by Kidscape.

Guidance documents

Appendix A

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSI_E_2021_September_guidance.pdf

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, May 2018](#)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working together to safeguard children inter agency guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>