



Joseph Leckie
Academy

Anti-Child on Child Abuse and Bullying Policy

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Introduction

At Joseph Leckie Academy, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all students feel protected and valued. Bullying and child-on-child abuse are a range of harmful behaviours that can occur between children and young people, including physical, emotional, sexual, and online abuse.

This policy outlines our approach to identifying, preventing, and responding to such incidents in line with statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. We recognise that bullying and child-on-child abuse can have a profound impact on a young person's wellbeing, education, and future, and we are committed to ensuring that all concerns are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and addressed with sensitivity and care.

1 Context and Definition

1.1 Child on child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

1.2 All Academy staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children.

1.3 All Academy staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from child-on-child abuse, including:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying and online bullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known youth youth-produced sexual imagery).
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals.

1.4 This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences, e.g. on grounds of protected characteristics such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences.
- Result in significant, long-lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the child who has been harmed.

1.5 Children who harm others may have additional needs, e.g.

- Significant disruption in their own lives.
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse.
- Educational under-achievement.

- Involved in crime.

1.6 Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the priority of Joseph Leckie Academy, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical bullying. Academy staff, alongside the DSL/DDSLs, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help:

2 Responsibility

2.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education states that schools and colleges should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and/ or online (what to look out for and indicators of abuse). All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude that ***it could happen here***, and this is especially important when considering bullying and child-on-child abuse.

2.2 Child-on-child abuse is referenced in the Joseph Leckie Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The sensitive nature and the specific issues involved with child-on-child require this separate policy.

2.3 At Joseph Leckie Academy, we continue to ensure that any form of bullying and abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the child. With full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

3 Purpose of Policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to explore forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to these issues.

3.2 At Joseph Leckie Academy, we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Online Safety Policy

3.3 Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989, and the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#) which highlights that every assessment of a child must be informed by gaining the views of the child. This is echoed by KCSiE, ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

4 Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

4.1 It is necessary to consider

- What abuse is and what it looks like.
- How can it be managed?

- What appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual?
- What preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risks of harm?

4.2 At Joseph Leckie Academy, we have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as ***banter or just having a laugh, part of growing up, or boys will be boys.***

4.3 Failing to recognise, acknowledge or understand the scale of harassment and abuse, or downplaying behaviours related to bullying and abuse, can foster a culture where such behaviour is seen as acceptable. This creates an unsafe environment and, in the worst cases, normalises bullying and abuse, causing children to accept it as normal and refrain from reporting it.

4.4 Understanding that all of the above can be driven by the wider societal factors beyond the school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and sexist language. This is why we have a whole school approach, including preventative education.

4.5 It is important to consider the forms of abuse that may take and the subsequent actions required:

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include but is not limited to: abuse within intimate partner relationships, bullying, including cyberbullying, sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, pulling hair or otherwise causing physical harm, sexting and initiation/ page hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE 2021)
- Academy staff should not dismiss bullying and abusive behaviour as normal between children
- Academy staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between children.
- Academy staff should be aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising bullying and abuse in SEND children. These can include: assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury related to the child's disability, without further exploration. As well as the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs. Compounded by communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Academy staff should be aware that children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. The fact that a child or young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. Risks can be compounded when children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

4.6 The child who has harmed (alleged perpetrator) is likely to have considerable unmet needs, as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering significant harm and require protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the child who has harmed must address their needs.

5 Types of Abuse

Many forms of abuse may occur between children, and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail, followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

5.1 Physical Abuse

This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another, and it is important to understand why a child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action or sanction to be undertaken.

5.2 Sexual Violence

Academy staff must be aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence in this policy, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment must always be referred immediately to the DSL/DDSL. They will follow the Guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools, available within [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), with consideration of

- Managing internally
- Children's Services referral
- Reporting to the Police

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. For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual violence, we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour, so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent can still constitute sexual assault.)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

What is Consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching.
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.
- Where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered.
- Non-consensual sex is rape, whatever the age of the child who has been harmed.
- If the child who has been harmed is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or if the child who has been harmed or their family have been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given genuine consent, and therefore offences may have been committed.

5.3 Sexual Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual harassment, we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. 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 (potentially criminal in nature), such as: deliberately brushing against someone, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, interfering with someone’s clothes, such as flicking bras and lifting up skirts. (Academy staff should consider when any behaviours cross into sexual violence. It is important to talk to and consider the experience of the child who has been harmed.
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos. *"Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people"* is still in use and was most recently updated in **March 2024**. It remains a key non-statutory resource for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and senior leadership teams in schools and colleges across England.
 - The taking and sharing of nude photographs of under-18s is a criminal offence.
 - Sharing of unwanted explicit content.
 - Upskirting (is a criminal offence) where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, intending to view their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification or cause the child who has been harmed humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be the child who has been harmed.
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
- Sexual exploitation, coercion and threats.

Academy staff must consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

5.4 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children’s sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour” (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this policy. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face, and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.

When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years’ difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power

over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

5.5 Bullying

Bullying – including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory (including misogyny/misandry). Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

Misogyny is commonly defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against girls and women. It is a form of prejudice that is rooted in gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles. It can manifest in many ways, including the expression of ideas that girls and women are inferior to boys and men, dismissive attitudes about consent, the child who has harmed-blaming narratives, as well as overt forms of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Misogyny, as promoted by online groups, can hold a powerful influence over children and young people, to the extent that it has been identified in some cases as a form of radicalisation. Sometimes referred to as ‘incel’ or ‘involuntary celibate’ culture.

Misandry is commonly defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against boys and men.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Children who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason, e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

5.6 Online Bullying

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse where an element might be facilitated by digital technology, for example, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/ or videos (sometimes called ‘sexting’), online abuse, coercion and exploitation, child-on child grooming, misogyny/misandry, threatening and hate speech delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content (which might be youth-produced, commercial pornography or pseudo sexual images), and harassment.

Online bullying can take many forms.

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages.

- Posting abusive comments on social media sites.
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else.
- Stealing someone's online identity.
- Spreading rumours online.
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games.
- Developing hate sites about another person.
- Prank calls or messages.
- Group bullying or exclusion online.
- Anonymous messaging.
- Encouraging a child to self-harm.
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engage in sexual conversations.

5.7 Sexting/Sharing nude and semi-nude or indecent imagery

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.

Upskirting: typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, to view their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the child who has been harmed humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be the child who has been harmed. This must always be referred immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

5.8 Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation, such as a school, sports team, etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

5.9 Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. Which might be due to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender,

home life (for example, concerning issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

Racism – occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, or cultural group. Racist behaviour can include verbal abuse, physical attacks, exclusion from activities or opportunities, which can be conscious and unconscious. It can occur in person or online.

5.10 Teenage Relationship Abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation, which may also include an online element.

6. Expected staff action/Responding to reports

6.1 It is important to understand that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the child who has been harmed may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a member of Academy staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed, or a child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. As part of this guidance, if staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

6.2 Students are taught to report any form of bullying, whether it occurs on Academy premises, off-site, or online. This includes situations where they are the child being bullied or harmed, or if they witness another child being bullied or harmed. In cases of cyberbullying, students should keep evidence (such as screenshots or saved messages) and share these with a member of staff to enable a thorough investigation.

6.3 Reports can be made verbally to any member of staff or confidentially via the SHARP system, which is the Academy's secure, anonymous online reporting tool. Students can use this system to report concerns about themselves or others, whether inside or outside school. Reports are monitored by the DSL/DDSL and addressed swiftly.

It can be accessed via **QUICKLINKS** on the Academy website:

<https://www.josephleckieAcademy.co.uk/page/?title=The+Sharp+System&pid=101>

6.4 The initial response by a member of staff to take a report from a child is incredibly important. How the staff responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future children who have been harmed to report or come forward.

6.5 It is essential that the child who has been harmed is reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Bullying and/or abuse that occurs online or outside of the Academy should not be

downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. The child who has been harmed should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should the child who has been harmed ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

6.6 As with all safeguarding concerns, it is important that in such instances, staff take appropriate action following Joseph Leckie Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff should not assume that someone else is responding to any incident or concern. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL (or a Deputy DSL). In such cases, the basic safeguarding principles remain the same, but Academy staff need to understand why the child who has been harmed has chosen not to make a report themselves. This discussion should be handled sensitively and with the support of Children's Services if required.

6.7 There may be reports where the alleged sexual violence or sexual harassment involves children from the same school but is alleged to have taken place away from the Academy premises, or online. There may also be reports where the children concerned attend two or more different schools. The safeguarding principles, and the Academy's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children on roll, remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be especially important.

6.8 As per Keeping Children Safe in Education, if Academy staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

- If possible, managing reports with two members of staff present (preferably one of them being the DSL or a Deputy DSL). However, this might not always be possible.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (2018) and *"Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people"*. The key consideration is **for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child**. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the Police for inspection.
- Not promising confidentiality as a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the DSL/DDSL or Children's Services) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it. The child who has been harmed must understand what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- Recognising that a child is likely to disclose information to someone they trust: this could be any member of Academy staff. The person to whom the child discloses must recognise that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child.
- Recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident, and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.

- Keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Listening carefully to the child, reflecting, using the child's language, 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. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should generally be avoided, staff can ask a child if they have been harmed and ask what the nature of that harm was.
- 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, 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, a written record must be made.
- Only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Academy staff should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by Children's Services and/or part of a criminal investigation.
- Informing the DSL (or Deputy DSL), as soon as practically possible, if the DSL (or Deputy DSL) is not involved in the initial report.

7 Recognising Child on Child Abuse

7.1 An assessment of an incident between children should consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved.
- The development stage of the children who are involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the child who has allegedly harmed significantly older, more mature, more confident or cognitively able? Or does the child who has been harmed have a disability or learning difficulty?
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident.
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation.
- The degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) has been displayed.
- The effect on the child who has been harmed. Include their wishes and explore how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. The child who has been harmed 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. This

will, however, need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident are kept a secret.
- The child or children's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred.
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse (sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse, and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Other related issues and wider context, including any links to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- Are there ongoing risks to the child who has been harmed, other children, adult students or Academy staff?

7.2 It is important to deal with a situation of bullying and child-on-child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents/carers when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. We have avoided using the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. Instead, we have referred to the victim as the child who has been harmed, and the alleged perpetrator as the child who has allegedly harmed.

7.3 Academy staff should talk to the children calmly and consistently. Academy staff should not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

7.4 **Taking Action**

- Always take complaints seriously.
- Gain a statement of facts from the child(ren).
- Assess needs of the child who has been harmed and the child who has been harmed.
- Consider referral to Police or Children's Services.
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments.
- Convene a risk management meeting.
- Record all incidents and all actions taken on **MyConcern**.

7.5 **Recording Sexualised Behaviour**

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse details

- Complete relevant areas on **MyConcern** recording system
- Use proper names for body parts, but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

7.6 **Gather the Facts**

Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the children to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene? Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

7.7 **Consider the Intent**

Has this been a deliberate or manufactured situation for a child to be able to harm another?

7.8 **Decide on your next course of action**

If you believe any child to be at risk of significant harm, you must report to the DSL/DDSL immediately, who will follow the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated policies. If Children's Services and the Police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the child in school, or they may ask for parents/carers to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

7.9 **Informing parents/carers**

The best way to inform parents/carers is face-to-face. Although this may be time-consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a child may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers, whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

The DSL/DDSL will take into consideration where a child is 13 years plus and does not want to share with parents/carers. Using the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines at NSPCC. In cases where referral to Children's Services is actioned, parents/carers' consent may be required. In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident, the Academy should encourage the child to share the information with their parents/carers (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

8 **Points to consider**

8.1 What is the age of the children involved? How old are the young people involved in the incident, and is there any age difference between those involved? Concerning sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills, may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked. Where a child has a learning disability, their developmental age and chronological age will be taken into consideration.

8.2 **Where did the incident or incidents take place?**

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

8.3 What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the children give the same explanation of the incident, and also what is the effect on the child involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying, for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one child different from another, and why?

8.4 What is each of the children's understanding of what occurred?

Do the children know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they know body parts, about privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the child's explanation concerning something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the child have an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

8.5 Repetition:

Has the behaviour been repeated towards an individual on more than one occasion? Similarly, it should be considered whether the behaviour has persisted towards an individual after the issue has already been discussed, addressed, and appropriately resolved.

9 Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established, it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

9.1 For the child who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual child. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one-to-one support. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with the support of family and friends; in which case, this child must continue to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the child may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other children, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

The Academy should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe "the child who has been harmed". Their needs and wishes should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important that they feel as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the child who has harmed, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the child who has been harmed daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

Consider the age and the developmental stage of the child who has been harmed, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. Staff should be aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the child who has been harmed and the child who has harmed. The child who has been harmed

should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report, or made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape.

Support can include:

- Family Help and Children Services support.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors provide emotional and practical support for the child who has been harmed by sexual violence. The DSL/DDSL can refer a child to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). They will help the child understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the Police. SARC will work in partnership with the Academy to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child who has been harmed.
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CAMHS is used as a term for all services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing.

The child who has been harmed may not disclose the whole situation immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. Dialogue must be kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, the Academy should ask the child who has been harmed if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor/HOY or DSL/DDSL) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be actioned as far as reasonably possible.

The child who has been harmed by sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While the Academy should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the child, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the child may find it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the child wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, the Academy should provide a physical space for the child to withdraw to.

It may be necessary to maintain arrangements to protect and support the child who has been harmed for a long time. The Academy should be prepared for this and should work with Children's Services and other agencies as required. The Academy must do everything it reasonably can to protect the child from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.

Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school, if the trauma results in the child being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive a suitable education. This should only be at the request of the child who has been harmed (and following discussion with their parents/ carers).

It is important that if the child does move to another educational provision (for any reason), the new education provision is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The DSL/DDSL should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the child and, where appropriate, their parents/carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group, for example, a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse, etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

9.2 For the child who has displayed harmful behaviour

The Academy must consider every report on a case-by-case basis. When to inform the child who displayed the alleged harmful behaviour will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to Children's Services and/or the Police, then, as a general rule, the DSL/DDSL should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged child will be informed of the allegation. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school from taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required.

The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the child who has been harmed and the child who has allegedly caused the harm.

- The Academy should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe “the child who has harmed” or “perpetrator”.
- The Academy will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand, they need to safeguard the child who has been harmed (and all other children, adult students and staff) and on the other hand provide the child who has caused the harm with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- A child abusing another child may be a sign that they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. The Academy should work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused a peer. It is important to remember that, as a child, any child who has caused the harmful behaviour is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of abuse in the future.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The child who has harmed may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases, these may be considerable), as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. HSB in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of either their abuse or exposure to abusive

practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from Children's Services, HSB Service and the Police.

- It is important that the child who caused the harmful behaviour is also given the correct support to try to stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- Advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline students whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. If the child who caused the harmful behaviour is to be excluded, the decision must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Further information about exclusions can be found in the statutory guidance for schools, Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and PRUs.
- School can be a significant protective factor for children who have displayed HSB, and continued access to school, with a comprehensive safeguarding management plan in place, is an important factor to consider before final decisions are made. It is important that if the child who caused the harmful behaviour does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children, adult students and staff. The DSL should take responsibility to ensure this happens, as well as transferring the child protection file.

9.3 Discipline and the child who caused the harmful behaviour

Concerning the child who caused the harmful behaviour, advice on behaviour and discipline in schools is clear that teachers can discipline students whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the Police and/or Children's Services are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly. This is a matter for the Academy and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should take a leading role. The school should consider whether, by taking any action, it would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the Police and/or Children's Services should help the Academy decide. It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for the Academy to reach its view about what happened while an independent investigation is considering the same facts.

9.4 Manage internally

- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned do not need Family Help or require referrals to be made to statutory services and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and by providing pastoral support.
- Whatever the Academy's response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

- It is important to find out why the child has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child is experiencing their difficulties and may even have been similarly harmed themselves. In such cases, support such as one-to-one support or counselling may also be necessary.
- Particular support from identified services may be necessary through Family Help, and the child may require additional support from family members.
- Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the child has been met, it is important that the child receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice, e.g. making amends with the child they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour, it may be a requirement for the child to engage in one-to-one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed, this may be through the Police or Youth Offending Service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing, it may be that this child cannot be educated on-site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the child will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.
- It may be that the behaviour that the child has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the child and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved, including the child and their parents/carers. This may mean additional supervision of the child or protective strategies if the child feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.
- Joseph Leckie Academy may also choose a sanction as a consequence, such as exclusion or internal exclusion for a period of time to allow the child to reflect on their behaviour.

9.5 Family Help

- The school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from Family Help. Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing Family Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Family Help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Family Help and the option to manage a report internally do not need to be mutually exclusive: an Academy could manage internally and seek Family Help for both the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour.

- Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded on **MyConcern**.

9.6 Referrals to Children's Services

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the Academy should make a referral to Children's Services.

- At the point of referral to Children's Services, the DSL/DDSL will generally inform parents/carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing parents/carers is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of Children's Services.
- If a referral is made, Children's Services will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved require protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should 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 child who has been harmed and, where appropriate, the child who caused the harmful behaviour and any other children who require support.
- The Academy should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Children's Services investigation before protecting the child who has been harmed and other children. It will be important for the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) to work closely with Children's Services (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the Academy takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. A risk assessment will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the child who has been harmed, the child who caused the harmful behaviour, any children directly involved in the reported incident, and all children at the Academy should be immediate.
- In some cases, Children's Services will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) 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 DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should consider other support mechanisms such as Family Help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions should be recorded on **MyConcern**.

9.7 Reporting to the Police

- Any report to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Services.
- 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 years old, if the child who caused the harmful behaviour is under ten years, the starting principle of reporting to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.
- At this stage, the Academy will generally inform parents/carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing parents/carers is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents/carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the Academy supports the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of Children's Services and any appropriate specialist agencies.

- Where a report has been made to the Police, the Academy should consult the Police and agree on what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the child who caused the harmful behaviour and their parents/carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the child who has been harmed and their anonymity.
- Bloxwich Police have a specialist unit that investigates child abuse.
- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, the Academy must continue to engage with specialist support for the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour as required.
- Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions should be recorded on **MyConcern**.

9.8 Considering bail conditions

- The Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of Police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court, or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- Alternatively, the person suspected of an offence could be 'released under investigation' (RUI). People released under RUI can have no conditions attached to their release from custody, and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.
- Whatever arrangements are in place, the Academy will need to consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within the Academy.
- Particular regard should be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to the child who has been harmed when at school; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the child who has been harmed or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. privacy rights, family life).
- Careful liaison between the DSL/DDSL with the Police investigators should help to develop a balanced set of arrangements.

9.9 Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. The Academy should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Police investigation before protecting the child who has been harmed, the child who caused the harmful behaviour and other children and adult students. The risk assessment will help inform any decision.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the child who caused the harmful behaviour, it will be important for the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) to work closely with the

Police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the Academy takes do not jeopardise the Police investigation.

9.10 The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the Academy should update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children at the Academy, and, if it has not already done so, consider any suitable action in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy. This process should include a review of the necessary actions to keep all parties safe and meet their needs. If the child who caused the harmful behaviour in the school, it should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator(s) now that they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school thinks are reasonable and proportionate concerning the child who caused the harmful behaviour ' timetable.
- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other children in the Academy. It will be important that the Academy ensure both the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the Academy should continue to offer support to the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the child who has been harmed. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The Academy should discuss any decisions with the child who has been harmed in this light and continue to offer support. The child who caused the harmful behaviour is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

9.9 Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. The Academy should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a Police investigation before protecting the child who has been harmed, the child who caused the harmful behaviour and other children and adult students. The risk assessment will help inform any decision.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the child who caused the harmful behaviour, it will be important for the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) to work closely with the Police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the Academy takes do not jeopardise the Police investigation.

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and meet their needs. If the child who caused the harmful behaviour remains in the school, the school should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the child who caused the harmful behaviour now that they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the Academy thinks are reasonable and proportionate concerning the child who caused the harmful behaviour' timetable.

- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other children in the school. It will be important that the Academy ensure both the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as “no further action” (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the Academy should continue to offer support to the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the child who has been harmed. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The Academy should discuss any decisions with the child who has been harmed in this light and continue to offer support. The child who caused the harmful behaviour is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

9.11 Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

- As set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, all concerns, discussions, and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.
- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL/DDSL should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation requires help or may have been abused by someone else, and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Children's Services may be appropriate.
- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Academy should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it, as per the Academy's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

9.12 After care

It is important that, following the incident, the child involved continues to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the child does not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the child following the incident(s) are imperative.

[‘Shore’](#) is a brilliant new resource, where teenagers can go if they are worried about sexual behaviour. It has a really good library of articles and a helpline (5-8 pm).

9.13 **Considering confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality

The Academy staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality, as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the child who has been harmed to seek advice and guidance from others to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

Joseph Leckie Academy should only engage with staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

The child who has been harmed may ask the Academy not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when the child who has been harmed makes this request. If the child who has been harmed does not give consent to share information, Academy staff may still lawfully share it if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should consider the following:

- Parents/carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the child who has been harmed at greater risk).
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Children's Services.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the child who caused the harmful behaviour is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains. The Police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) should have to balance the child who has been harmed wishes against their duty to protect them and other children.

If the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) decide to go ahead and make a referral to Children's Services and/or a report to the Police against the child who has been harmed wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the child who has been harmed, and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

Anonymity

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, the Academy will take action in accordance with anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general, so it can offer support and act appropriately. In line with the Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS): Safeguarding Children as the victim and Witnesses.

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, the Academy will do all it reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which

Academy staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

Joseph Leckie Academy will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing the children who have been harmed. This presents unique challenges regarding social media.

9.14 Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) 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 child who has been harmed, especially their protection and support.
- Whether there may have been other children who have been harmed.
- The child who caused the harmful behaviour.
- All the other children (and adult students and staff), especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the child who caused the harmful behaviour or future harm.

Risk assessments should be recorded and should be kept under review. At all times, the Academy will consider the risks posed to all the children on its roll and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) will engage with Children's Services and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. The Academy risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the Academy's approach to supporting and protecting its students and updating their risk assessment.

10 Working with parents and carers

10.1 The Academy will, in most instances, engage with both the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour, parents/carers, when there has been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing parents/carers will put a child at additional risk. The Academy should carefully consider what information it provides to the respective parents/carers about the other child involved and when they do so. In some cases, Children's Services and/or the Police will have a very clear view, and it will be important for the Academy to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

10.2 It is good practice for the Academy to meet the child who has been harmed parents/carers with the child present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the child

who has harmed and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

10.3 It is also good practice for the Academy to meet with the child who caused the harmful behaviour, parents/carers, to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the child who caused the harmful behaviour, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the child who has been harmed and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the child who caused the harmful behaviour should be discussed.

10.4 The DSL (or a Deputy DSL) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

10.5 Joseph Leckie Academy Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, which set out the principles of how reports of sexual violence will be managed and how the child who has been harmed and the child who caused the harmful behaviour are likely to be supported to help manage what are inevitably very difficult conversations.

10.6 Parents/carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been harmed or is the child alleged to have assaulted another child. The DSL can signpost parents/carers to organisations that can offer support.

11 Safeguarding other children

11.1 Consideration should be given to supporting children (and adult students) who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic, and support may be required.

11.2 Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take “sides”. The Academy should be doing all it can to ensure both the child who has been harmed and the child who has allegedly caused the harm, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed.

11.3 Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fallout from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between the child who has been harmed and the child who has allegedly caused the harm, and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the child who has been harmed or the child who has allegedly caused the harm online and/or become susceptible to harassment themselves.

11.4 Transport is a potentially vulnerable place for a child who has been harmed or the child who has allegedly caused the harm. As part of its risk assessment, the Academy should consider any additional potential support needs to keep all of its children safe.

12 Preventive Strategies

12.1 Bullying and child-on-child abuse can and will occur at any school, even with the most robust policies and support processes. At Joseph Leckie Academy, we feel it is important to develop appropriate strategies to prevent child-on-child abuse. Through a whole school approach to safeguarding, foster a culture that clearly states there is a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and

sexual violence and sexual harassment, emphasising that it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. Implement a preventative education programme that helps create an environment where all children are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

12.2 Joseph Leckie Academy promotes an open environment where children feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive RSHE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one-on-one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

12.3 Regular messages will be delivered through form time for students to discuss topical issues and engage in group activities that foster positive relationships.

12.4 Assemblies will regularly include content on bullying awareness, linked to SMSC themes such as:

- respect for religion or belief (including no belief)
- ethnicity
- disability
- sexual difference
- challenging derogatory language
- and harmful stereotypes.

External speakers, performances, and drama productions may be used to reinforce these messages and promote an inclusive culture.

12.5 Anti-bullying messages, along with principles of respect and tolerance, will be embedded across curriculum areas. Staff will actively discuss these themes to ensure students understand the importance of nurturing respect for others. Teamwork, respect, and courtesy will be reinforced through subjects such as PE, educational trips, Activities Week, and House competitions.

12.6 Joseph Leckie Academy staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Academy staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

12.7 Children are part of changing their circumstances and, through the school council, for example, we encourage children to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'. We involve students in a positive ethos, one where all children understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

12.8 At Joseph Leckie Academy, we feel it is important that we keep our policies, processes, and curriculum under constant review to protect all the children on roll. Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to environmental and or systemic problems that could and should be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes, or relevant parts of the curriculum.

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy - Parent Leaflet

Introduction

At Joseph Leckie Academy, the safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, we have introduced a Child-on-Child Abuse Policy. This policy helps us respond effectively and sensitively to any incidents where a child may be harmed by another child, whether in person or online.

Why We Developed This Policy

This policy is a proactive step in line with national safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education. It ensures that all staff are trained to recognise signs of harmful behaviour, respond appropriately, and support all students involved. It is not a response to any specific incident, but part of our wider safeguarding strategy.

How You Can Support the Academy

1. Talk regularly with your child about respectful relationships, both in person and online.
2. Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
3. Reassure them that the academy is a safe space where concerns will be taken seriously and handled with care.
4. Stay informed about online safety and digital behaviour.

Further Resources

NSPCC ? Talking about difficult topics:

[How to talk to children about difficult topics | NSPCC](#)

Thinkuknow

Parents and Carers: <https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/>

Peer-on-peer abuse:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/peer-on-peer-abuse/>

Contact our Safeguarding Team at the Academy for more support