

The Federation of St Martin's and
Seabrook CEP School's
Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
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Feeling safe and happy at school

At The Federation of St Martin's and Seabrook CEP School's, we want to make sure that you feel looked after, safe and happy when you are in and out of school.

Sometimes we don't know if something bad is happening, so you need to tell us.

This policy looks at child-on-child abuse, and what you can do when you feel you are being abused, or when you notice someone else being abused.

We can help you by:

- Teaching you what child-on-child abuse is.
- Teaching you what to do if you feel like you are being abused, or if someone else is being abused.
- Making sure you know who you can speak to if you are worried.



1

What is child-on-child abuse?

A **peer** is someone who might be your friend, a child at school with you, or another child you may know. You may sometimes hear child-on-child abuse referred to as **child-on-child abuse**.

Child-on-child abuse is abuse by one or more children towards another child or children. It can include physical, emotional or sexual harm, coercion, exploitation, intimidation or controlling behaviour. It can happen between children of any age and can happen online or face to face, inside or outside school.

Child-on-child abuse can happen inside and outside of school – it can happen online or in-person, and it is important to let an adult know if you think you or someone else is being affected by child-on-child abuse.

Remember to **ask a teacher** if you are unsure about what child-on-child abuse looks like.

It is not always easy to identify abuse when it is coming from a peer, such as a friend or a classmate, but it is really **important** to look out for the signs of child-on-child abuse and **report it** so that we can make sure it stops.

2

Bullying

Bullying is a type of abuse that takes place when someone tries to hurt another person on purpose. People can be bullied in many different ways, which may include the following:

Emotional bullying includes hurting someone's feelings, for example by leaving them out or bossing them about. People can sometimes use emotional bullying to take advantage of you to get their own way by making threats or making you feel like you have to do something for them.

Physical bullying can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, and hair pulling or purposely hurting someone.

Verbal bullying can include insulting someone because of how they look or because of their personality, and can often go beyond that. People can also use verbal bullying to be **racist**, **sexist** or **homophobic**.

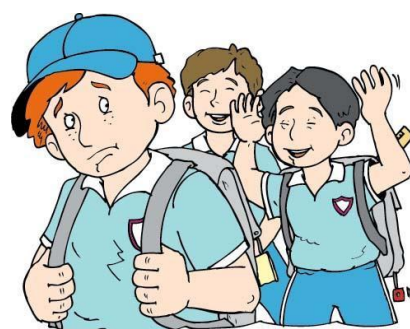
Racist bullying is bullying someone because of their race, skin colour, the country they are from or the religion they believe in.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying means bullying someone because of their sexuality or gender; calling someone gay or lesbian to hurt their feelings would be homophobic. Transphobic bullying may include mocking a person's gender identity, for example pestering someone about whether they are a boy or a girl.



Sexist bullying is bullying someone because of their sex – this is different to transphobic bullying and is typically targeted against girls. Sexist bullying may include thinking that boys are better than girls or stereotyping. Ask your teacher if you are unsure about the difference between sex and gender identity.

Cyberbullying includes any kind of bullying, which takes place online; cyberbullies send insulting messages over the internet and sometimes share secret information online to hurt someone's feelings.



Bullying is not always done by one person and can often involve a group of people 'ganging up' on someone – if you ever see someone being bullied, **never** join in and **always** tell a teacher.

3

Sexting

Sharing or asking for nude or sexual images or videos of children is sometimes called "sexting" or "sharing nudes". It is never appropriate for children to ask, pressure, threaten or persuade another child to create or share sexual images.

Pressuring someone into sending these pictures, videos and messages is **abuse**.

Sexual images of anyone under 18 are treated as child sexual abuse material in law. Even where a child says they consented to an image being created or shared, this does not make the behaviour safe or lawful.

Consent means that someone has given another person permission to do something.

If an image has been shared without permission, this is a safeguarding concern and

must be reported to a trusted adult. Never forward, save, copy or show the image to anyone else.

If you receive a sexual image of a child, do not forward, download, save or show it to anyone else. Tell a trusted adult immediately so that the school can follow its safeguarding procedures.

4

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

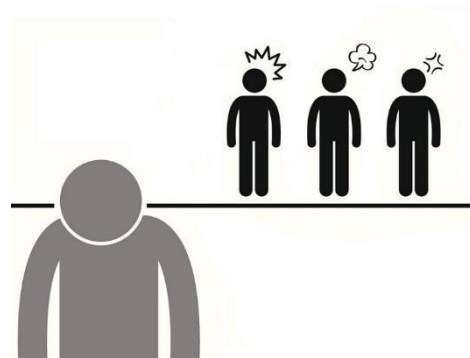
Sometimes, people can **act sexually towards others**, and it might make them feel uncomfortable.

This can happen **online** and **face-to-face** (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable at any age.

It might make someone feel **scared, embarrassed, uncomfortable** or **upset**.

It could be:

- Someone making **sexual comments**, like telling sexual stories, saying **rude things**, or saying sexual things about someone's **appearance** or clothes.
- Calling someone **sexual names**.
- **Sexual jokes** or teasing.
- Being physical, like **touching** which makes someone feel uncomfortable or messing with their clothes.
- **Showing pictures** or **drawings**, which are of a sexual nature.
- Being sexual online, like **sharing sexual pictures** and **videos**, or posting sexual comments on social media.
- **Sexual threats** or pushing someone to do something sexually that they don't want to or aren't ready for.



It is important to remember that our school has a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment – it will never be acceptable and will **never** be passed off as “banter” or “just having a laugh”. Everyone at our school **must recognise** that sexual violence and harassment is not normal.

If you ever feel like you have been affected by sexual harassment, make sure that you tell a responsible adult, and they will listen to what happened and support you with any worries that you will be likely to have.



Relationships

Any relationship you have should be **positive** and make you feel **safe, happy and comfortable**.

A negative relationship might make someone feel **scared, confused, worried** and even **unsafe**.

It is really important that you know the **difference** between a positive relationship and a negative relationship.

Positive relationships

- You are **comfortable** around that person.
- You can be **honest** with that person.
- You can say how you **feel** and what you are **thinking**, and you **listen** to each other.
- You **support** each other and treat each other **well**.
- You feel **safe**.
- You **trust** that person.
- You do **helpful things for each other**.
- You are **never pressured** to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- You feel **looked after**.



Negative relationships

- The person might **push** you, **hit** you or **break** your things.
- The person might **tell you what to do**, what to wear or who you can see.
- You might feel **scared** – they might say they will hurt you if you don't do something.
- They might **make threats** or do harmful things if you do something they did not want you to do.
- The person might **call you names**, make you feel bad in front of other people and make you **feel bad about yourself**.
- The person might get **angry easily** and you may not know what will make them angry – it might make you feel **nervous**.
- The person might **pressure** you to do things **you don't want to do** or are not ready for.



- The person **might not take no for answer** when you say you don't want to do something.

6

How do I know if someone is being abused?

It might be hard for you to know if you are being abused and you **might not really understand** it is happening. It is important you can **recognise** when behaviour isn't appropriate.

It's also important that you can notice when **someone else** might be being abused.

Some signs might be:

- Not going to school.
- Having injuries, like bruises.
- Feeling sad and down.
- Feeling like they can't cope.
- Feeling withdrawn or shy.
- Getting headaches or stomach aches.
- Feeling nervous.
- Not being able to sleep, sleeping too much or getting nightmares.
- Feeling panicked.
- Changing their looks to look much older.
- Being abusive to someone else.



Remember: you can feel all of these things too. Listen to how you feel, and know that these signs can mean you are being abused.

7

What do I do if someone else is being abused?

If you think that someone is being abused, it is important that you tell a trusted adult. You should not try to investigate what has happened or put yourself at risk.

You should not ignore the problem. Tell a trusted adult as soon as you can. If you are worried that someone may be in immediate danger, tell an adult straight away.

Do not confront the person or put yourself in danger. A trusted adult will decide what needs to happen and how everyone can be kept safe.

Tell a responsible adult, such as a teacher, as soon as you've seen someone being abused.

A responsible adult can **stop the abuse** and give their support to the person who is being abused.

You should **never feel scared** to tell someone about abuse.

Sometimes, you might not **see someone being abused**, but you might be worried about them. You might think they are being abused by **someone you don't know**, or someone they have told you about. It's really important you **tell someone** even if you are worried, but haven't **seen** any abuse.

8

What do I do if I am being abused?

The first thing you should do is tell someone you trust. This could be a family member, a friend or a teacher. You do not need to be certain that what is happening is abuse before you tell someone.

You can also **tell the person abusing you** to leave you alone. If telling them to leave you alone would make you feel too scared or worried that they might hurt you, make sure you **tell someone** so they can help.

You do not have to deal with this on your own. Try not to:

- Do anything that makes you feel unsafe or pressured.
- Blame yourself for what has happened.
- Get into a physical fight or try to deal with the situation yourself.

Always remember that if you are being abused, it is **not your fault** and you are **never alone**.

Who can I talk to?



It is important you **tell someone** as soon as you think that you are being abused, or you think that someone else being abused.

Speaking to someone like your parent, carer or teacher will mean that we can make sure the **abuse stops** and doesn't happen again.

Every member of staff in our school is able and ready to help you so please speak to whichever teacher or Teaching Assistant you feel most comfortable speaking to as they will be sure to help you or the person you are concerned about!



How can I help stop abuse from happening?

We can all help stop abuse at our school by:

- Making sure, we **understand** how we should **treat** others.
- **Helping** others when they are in need.
- Being **kind, friendly** and **respectful** to others.
- Thinking about people's **feelings** before we say or do something.
- Looking back at this booklet and pay attention to school activities such as assemblies, which talk about child-on-child abuse.
- **Talking to someone** when we are worried.



You should know that abuse is never OK and it is serious. It is not funny, or part of growing up. If you abuse someone, you will get into trouble.

Let's make sure that our School is ALWAYS a happy place, for EVERYONE!



Additional safeguarding information – KCSIE 2026 alignment

This policy is designed to support the Federation's safeguarding arrangements and should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Relationships and Health Education arrangements and procedures for allegations and low-level concerns. KCSIE 2026 comes into force on 1 September 2026 and requires schools to maintain a child-centred approach, with an attitude that "it could happen here".

What child-on-child abuse can include

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including bullying and cyberbullying; physical violence or threats; sexual violence and sexual harassment; harmful sexual behaviour; sharing or pressuring someone to share sexual images; abuse within friendships or intimate relationships; coercive or controlling behaviour; initiation or hazing rituals; exploitation; and discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia.

Harmful sexual behaviour can range from developmentally inappropriate or concerning sexual behaviour through to sexual harassment and sexual violence. It can happen between two or more children, in groups, face to face or online. The school will not dismiss sexual behaviour as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

The school will also take seriously misogynistic, sexist or degrading behaviour. Early identification and challenge are important because such behaviour can contribute to the normalisation or escalation of harmful sexual behaviour.

Child-on-child abuse may be connected to other safeguarding risks, including child sexual or criminal exploitation, online harm, domestic abuse and abuse within a child's own intimate relationship. The school will consider the wider context and the possibility of multiple or overlapping harms.

Responding to concerns

All reports and concerns will be taken seriously and acted on promptly. Staff must follow the Federation's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL. Staff should not investigate the matter themselves or make assumptions about what has happened.

The school will use a child-centred approach and consider the needs, wishes and safety of the child who has experienced harm, while also considering the safeguarding and support needs of any child who may have caused harm. Appropriate supervision, risk assessment, pastoral support, education and safeguarding action will be considered.

Where appropriate, the school may involve parents or carers, children's social care, the police, the local authority or specialist services. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

Online and digital abuse

Child-on-child abuse can happen through phones, gaming, social media, messaging apps and other online platforms. This includes bullying, threats, sexual harassment, coercion, image-based abuse, impersonation and manipulated or AI-generated sexual images. The school will consider incidents occurring outside school where they may affect a child's safety, wellbeing or relationships within the school community.

If a child receives a sexual image of another child, they should not forward, download, save, copy or show the image to anyone else. They should tell a trusted adult immediately. Staff should follow the school's safeguarding procedures and should not ask children to send or forward images.

Reporting and support

Children do not need to prove that abuse has happened before asking for help. A worry, a feeling that something is not right or a "nagging doubt" is enough to tell a trusted adult. The school will make sure children know how to report concerns and will take steps to reduce barriers to disclosure.

Even where there are no reports, the school will remain alert to the possibility that child-on-child abuse may be occurring. The absence of reports does not mean that abuse is not happening.

KCSIE 2026 reference

This policy has been reviewed with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, particularly the safeguarding expectations in Part 1 and the provisions relating to child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. It should be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change to statutory guidance or local safeguarding procedures.