

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

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Version	Date	Updates
V2	September 2025	Various updates throughout policy, changes highlighted in yellow.

Associated Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusion and Suspension Policy
- Learning for All-Equal Opportunities Policy
- Online safety and Acceptable use Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1	Policy Statement of Aims
1.1	<p>NSG is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We acknowledge that abuse can be perpetrated by children and young people against their peers. This policy refers to such incidents as <i>child-on-child abuse</i>, in line with KCSIE 2025.</p> <p>This form of abuse must never be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up”, or “just having a laugh”. Our school maintains a proactive and preventative approach, underpinned by a culture of vigilance and the belief that “it could happen here”.</p> <p>This policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure NSG follows all statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse; • Provide clear guidance for staff, students and families on prevention, identification, reporting and response; • Detail how we support both victims and alleged perpetrators of abuse; • Embed gender-aware and inclusive safeguarding practices relevant to our setting as a girls' school with a co-educational Sixth Form.
2.	Policy and Statutory Requirements
2.1	<p>This policy aligns with the following legislation and guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2025 • Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) • Children Acts 1989 and 2004 • Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2017) • Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR <p>This policy must be read alongside NSG’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Where a safeguarding concern arises, this is the primary reference point for action and escalation.</p> <p>In addition, the policy is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (2021) • Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools (2018) • Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022) • Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures <p>Rather than duplicating KCSIE 2025 content, this policy assumes KCSIE is the benchmark for all practice and is updated accordingly.</p>
3.	Definitions
3.1	<p>Child-on-child abuse includes any form of physical, sexual, emotional or online abuse by one child towards another. This can involve students of different ages or the same age group, and may take place face-to-face or digitally.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying, including online abuse • Physical violence, such as hitting, kicking, or biting; • Sexual violence and harassment (in line with KCSIE Part 5) • Upskirting or down-blousing • Sharing or coercing the sharing of sexual imagery (e.g. sexting) • Initiation/hazing-type violence, involving harmful rituals • Discriminatory or gender-based targeting

4.	Roles and Responsibilities
4.1	<p>Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>All staff, governors, contractors and volunteers at NSG share responsibility for safeguarding, and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise signs of abuse and take them seriously • Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) • Complete all required safeguarding training • Uphold all aspects of NSG's safeguarding policies <p>Governors:</p> <p>It is the overarching responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure that NSG's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and systems work effectively.</p> <p>They must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a Safeguarding Governor. • Undertake regular safeguarding training. • Read and confirm understanding of KCSIE (Part 1 and Annex A) <p>Headteacher:</p> <p>The Headteacher, as delegated by the Governing Body, is accountable for the safeguarding of children at NSG and responsible for the implementation of this policy across the school. This will be undertaken through the support of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>The Headteacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure this policy is followed and up to date. • Work with the DSL on safeguarding matters • Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff. as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers' Standards 2012). • Report safeguarding matters to the Governing Body. • Ensure students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe. • Promote a safe school environment <p>DSL:</p> <p>The DSL must uphold all responsibilities under NSG's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. The current iteration of KCSIE and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.</p> <p>They will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff with safeguarding concerns. • Manage disclosures and reports of child-on-child abuse. • Refer to Children's Services or police when needed. • Keep this policy known and understood across the school. • Use tools like the Brook Traffic Light Tool to assess behaviours. <p>All staff must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what child-on-child abuse looks like. • Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) straight away. • Understand that abuse is never acceptable. • Follow all safeguarding policies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete safeguarding training, including how to respond to sexting. • Never view or share inappropriate images unless the police specifically request it in exceptional cases.
5.	Procedures to Prevent Child-on-Child Abuse
5.1	<p>All schools have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for child-on-child abuse. This can be achieved by:</p> <p>Creating a safe school culture by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage good behaviour and respect. • Supporting student wellbeing and mental health. • Making it clear who students can speak to. • Using Protective Behaviours approaches. • Challenging all forms of inappropriate behaviour <p>Securing processes and systems by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Using behaviour policies consistently. • Dealing with issues in a timely way and before they escalate. • Ensuring staff supervision and site safety. • Identifying early signs of concern. • Providing staff with training and awareness. • Keeping robust records and monitoring trends. <p>Ensuring the Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches about consent and respectful relationships. • Delivers effective PSHE, RSHE and online safety education. • Promote gender equality and respect <p>Supporting Vulnerable Students</p> <p>Some children are more at risk of child-on-child abuse, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with SEND • Looked After Children • LGBTQ+ or gender-questioning children • Children with protected characteristics <p>We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities in an age appropriate and inclusive way.</p>
5.2	<p>Responding to concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse</p> <p>If a child discloses abuse, or if a staff member has a concern, they must contact the DSL immediately. All reports are recorded on CPOMS as child-on-child abuse.</p> <p>The DSL will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the victim's wishes. • Assess the nature and seriousness of the report. • Consider the children's ages and any power imbalances. • Check if the incident is isolated or part of a pattern. • Consider risks to others.

	<p>The DSL may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather more information. • Create a risk assessment. • Decide to handle the matter internally. • Arrange support through Early Help. • Refer to Children's Services or the police. • Inform the Headteacher or Behaviour Lead for sanctions
5.3	<p>Supporting the Victim</p> <p>NSG recognises that child-on-child abuse can have a profound and lasting impact on the wellbeing, confidence and safety of victims. We are committed to providing compassionate, tailored and sustained support to every child who experiences harm.</p> <p>Support will begin as soon as a concern is raised and will continue for as long as it is needed, recognising that recovery is non-linear and may extend beyond the conclusion of any investigation or intervention.</p> <p>Our approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising the emotional and physical safety of the child at all times. • Working with the victim to understand their views, wishes and preferred outcomes, and incorporating these into support planning where possible. • Taking all necessary steps to minimise disruption and preserve a sense of normality, including maintaining routines, access to trusted adults, and supportive peer relationships. • Putting in place protective measures to prevent re-victimisation, bullying, or retaliation. This may include timetabling adjustments, risk assessments, safe spaces and supervision arrangements. • Liaising with specialist services (e.g. counselling, therapeutic support, health or Early Help teams) where additional needs are identified. • Ensuring any transitions (including school moves) are managed safely and supportively, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead transferring relevant safeguarding records and ensuring continuity of care and intervention at the receiving school. • The school's safeguarding response is always child-centred, trauma-informed, and guided by the principles of dignity, safety, empowerment and accountability.
5.4	<p>Supporting the alleged perpetrator</p> <p>NSG recognises its responsibility to safeguard and support all students, including those who are alleged to have caused harm. In line with statutory guidance, NSG is committed to ensuring that any student subject to allegations of child-on-child abuse continues to access a suitable education, within a framework that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.</p> <p>NSG acknowledges that alleged perpetrators may themselves have experienced trauma or face vulnerabilities that require a safeguarding response. Our approach seeks to support their needs while upholding a clear standard of behaviour and accountability.</p> <p>Support for alleged perpetrators may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring continued access to education, which may involve supervised learning, alternative timetabling, or provision in a different setting, as appropriate to risk and need. • Creating a risk-reduction plan, which outlines protective measures, boundaries, and expectations to safeguard all involved. • Monitoring wellbeing, reviewing risk assessments regularly, and adapting support as the situation develops.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with parents/carers and relevant agencies (e.g. Youth Justice Services, CAMHS, Early Help) to ensure a coordinated and proportionate response. • Sharing relevant safeguarding information with any receiving school or provider, in line with legal duties, if the student moves setting. • Implementing sanctions, where necessary, in accordance with NSG's Behaviour Policy. These will be proportionate, clearly explained, and designed to educate and reduce future risk. • Where a child is convicted or cautioned, following the statutory processes outlined in Part 5 of <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)</i>, including any required multi-agency involvement. <p>NSG is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive school culture. Our response will always be rooted in the principles of fairness, education, and safeguarding for all.</p>
5.5	<p>Local Arrangements and Making Referrals</p> <p>NSG follows the procedures and protocols set out by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection, including cases of child-on-child abuse.</p> <p>All safeguarding concerns, including disclosures, observations, or patterns of behaviour, must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy. The DSL is responsible for assessing concerns and determining the appropriate course of action in line with local threshold guidance.</p> <p>Where necessary, referrals will be made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care, • Northamptonshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), • Northamptonshire Police, in cases where a criminal offence may have occurred, • Early Help services, where targeted, preventative support is appropriate. <p>In situations where a child involved in a child-on-child abuse concern is subject to multiple vulnerabilities, such as SEND, looked-after status, or protected characteristics, NSG will ensure that referrals take account of their full safeguarding profile and needs.</p> <p>All staff should refer to NSG's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for detailed procedures, referral pathways, and local contact details.</p>
6.	Training
6.1	<p>Training and Professional Development</p> <p>NSG will ensure that all staff are trained to recognise, respond to, and report concerns relating to child-on-child abuse. Training will be comprehensive, up to date, and aligned with statutory guidance and emerging safeguarding risks.</p> <p>Staff development will include a range of opportunities, such as annual whole-school safeguarding training, regular updates throughout the year, and targeted sessions on specific issues such as sexual harassment, online harm, and harmful sexual behaviour.</p> <p>Specialist training will also be provided for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and members of the safeguarding team, ensuring they are equipped to lead on complex cases, assess risk, and coordinate multi-agency responses.</p> <p>NSG will review and refresh training regularly to reflect changes in statutory guidance, local trends, and the evolving needs of the school community.</p>
7.	Parents/Carers

7.1	<p>NSG is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to promote the safety and wellbeing of all students. Wherever possible, parents and carers will be informed of incidents involving child-on-child abuse, unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm.</p> <p>If a student expresses a wish not to share information with their parent or carer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the student's capacity to make that decision, using the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines where appropriate.</p> <p>Children will always be encouraged to speak to their parents or carers about any concerns relating to child-on-child abuse. Staff will provide support and guidance to help students feel safe and confident in doing so.</p>
8.	<p>Sources of Support</p>
8.1	<p>Students and their parents or carers are encouraged to speak to the school in the first instance if they have any concerns about child-on-child abuse. Staff at NSG are available to listen, support, and take appropriate action.</p> <p>Additional information and guidance can be found on the NSG website, including details of how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support services available through the school.</p> <p>External sources of help and advice include:</p> <p>www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk www.childline.org.uk http://www.kidscape.org.uk http://www.nspcc.org.uk www.bullying.co.uk www.ceop.police.uk</p> <p>For immediate concerns or disclosures related to sexual abuse in education settings, support is available via the NSPCC's dedicated helpline:</p> <p>Report Abuse in Education Helpline: Everyone's Invited Tel: 0800 136 663 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk</p>