Child-on-Child Abuse (Including Harassment, Violence and Prejudice-Related Incidents) (A4)

Scope:	Whole School (Including Boarding)
Release date:	September 2026 *linked to updated KCSIE released September 2026*
Author:	Senior Deputy Head Senior School
Reviewer:	Senior Deputy Head Prep School
Approval body:	Board of Directors *(Ratified at Michaelmas Term Board Meeting)*
Review date	September 2027

Summary of Updates

Page	Updates/Changes
Throughout document	Addition of harassment and violence added to Child-on-Child Abuse
1	RSE and PSHE policies separated Addition of Mobile Phone Policy
4	Addition of further categories of COCA
6	Addition of need for behaviours to be challenged
9	Addition of Challenge to what the school will do (Prejudice-related incidents)
10	Will replaces should in terms of challenging behaviour

Linked documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following published documents

- SEND Policy (A2)
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Behaviour Policy (A4)
- PSHE Policy (A5)
- RSE Policy
- Safeguarding and Child protection Policy (A6)
- Online Safety Policy (A8)
- Complaints Policy (A14)
- Teachers' Guide
- Who to Talk To (document for pupils)

Definition

- A prejudice-related incident: *any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be prejudiced towards an individual, due to one or more of the protected characteristics*.
- Staff Every member of Staff, whether paid or unpaid, including volunteers, agency or supply staff, Directors and Advisory Committee members.
- Quad Senior Leadership Team;
  This Team consists of Headmaster, Bursar, Senior Deputy Head (Senior School), Senior Deputy Head (Prep School) and Deputy Head Academic.

Acronyms

N/A

Availability

This Policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the School website, and a printed copy may be requested from the School Office/Pupil Services Team.

Introduction

Our aim is to minimise the risk of any form of child-on-child abuse (in accordance with the DfE (Preventing and Bullying 2017 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024) in order to ensure the safe passage of every pupil through the school.

The school will not tolerate child-on-child abuse and therefore takes a zero-tolerance approach regarding it. This message is periodically reinforced in whole school and section assemblies, PSHCE schemes of work and form periods, to foster the positive qualities of altruism and community spirit. The content of lessons such as drama, English and history, also affords opportunities to discuss and to promote measures for recognising and dealing with child-on-child abuse. Our Prefect Teams and Peer Mentors also play an important part in promoting positive behaviour and reporting any child-on-child abuse. Staff attend child-on-child abuse and safeguarding courses when appropriate. All pupils are reminded to behave safely in unstructured times, i.e., show proper consideration and respect towards others and be aware of different age groups, their needs, and the feelings of others. All staff, particularly those on duty, are aware of the need to be vigilant and proactive, especially in places such as locker areas. Staff duty areas and timings are clearly identified on the Staff Duty Rota.

Definition of Child-on-child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying),
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment, both online and in the real world
- The sending of consensual and non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and or videos (sexting or youth produced sexual imagery),
- School's response to sending of nudes, both consensual and otherwise,
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between peers/children,
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (these may include harassment abuse or humiliation),
- Physical abuse (which includes hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm),
- Serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent (such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party) and
- Upskirting (part of the Voyerism (Offences) Act, April 2019) which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- The consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation

- Hate incidents and hate crime
- Racism

The School recognises that there is a gendered nature of child-on-child abuse, with girls more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators. However, all forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, it is recognised that child-on-child abuse can be a safeguarding issue and will be treated as such.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is one of the broadest examples of child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. We define bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, which may be repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying is serious and can cause psychological damage and even suicide.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying), for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. The school recognises its responsibility that bullying can manifest itself physically, but that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

All forms of bullying will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, taken seriously and not tolerated.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online or both. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay or ‘boys being boys’ it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

The School recognises that early intervention can help to set clear expectations of behaviour that is and isn’t acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyber-bullying: the rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories

as people forward on content at a click. The school recognises that Cyber-bullying can be even more invidious because of the potential to extend to home and personal space, and the opportunities it offers perpetrators for anonymity. Cyber-bullying can be via websites, mobile phones, text messages, photos, and email. The school has an IT security system in place to detect any misuse of IT facilities within the school. Pupils are regularly reminded of the regulations regarding the proper use of IT in school and how to behave appropriately online.

Dealing with Child-on-Child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

The whole school community has a role to play in preventing child-on-child abuse in our School.

The School has a responsibility to ensure Staff challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive and respond promptly and effectively to issues of child-on-child abuse. There are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and both physical and sexual violence.

Staff must understand that abuse is abuse, Instances of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment should never be dismissed as banter, just having a laugh, 'boys being boys' or an inevitable part of growing up, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

The School uses its existing pastoral structure to log, identify, monitor and deal with all forms of child-on-child abuse.

If staff have any safeguarding concerns due to discovering evidence of child-on-child abuse they should report this on www.MyConcern.education or by (completing a safeguarding 'log of concern' in the case of support staff who are not pupil-facing) as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Any report of child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously and investigated; a persistent child-on-child abuse log is kept in the school shared drive to enable possible patterns to be identified. An opportunity will be given to all involved to give their perspective. Where appropriate, a meeting might be arranged as a form of mediation or reconciliation between the two parties involved.

When disciplinary measures are applied, this is done to show that such behaviour is wrong. These are applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably considering any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. Staff also need to consider the motivations behind pupils' behaviour and have an awareness and concern for the safety of the perpetrator.

Applying the appropriate School (Prep or Senior) behaviour policy effectively. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but s/he/they is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred. We sanction the behaviour not the pupil.

Appropriate action will be taken against child-on-child abuse, depending on its seriousness and persistence; this is outlined in the School's Behaviour Policies (Prep and Senior).

Investigating Child-on-Child Abuse

Senior School

Once reported to the Head of Section Form Tutors (in the case of Boarders, The Head of Boarding may also be involved) will normally investigate the initial concern and then refer upwards to the appropriate Head of Section/Deputy Head of Section, who will ensure that the Senior Deputy Head Senior School or appropriate Senior Team member is fully informed.

Prep School (including EYFS)

Once reported, the Class Teacher will normally investigate the initial concern and then refer upwards to the Assistant Deputy Head Prep School, who will ensure that the Senior Deputy Head or appropriate Senior Team member is fully informed.

Serious and/or Persistent Child-on-Child Abuse

In cases of serious and/or persistent child-on-child abuse the Senior Deputy Head and Head would be involved. If necessary, the school will consider the involvement of external agencies such as Early Help, Children's Social Care or the Police. In the event of a safeguarding concern this will be referred to the Integrated Front Door (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Help/Targeted support) for the county in which the child is resident by the Designated Safeguarding Team. In the case of Boarders Cambridgeshire MASH will be contacted.

Pupil response to Child-on-Child Abuse

All pupil concerns should be reported to the Form Tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Prep School) in the first instance although pupils are encouraged to approach any member of staff they wish. Pupils may refer to the "Who to Talk to" document posted on notice boards for advice on who to speak to. External agencies can help and advice pupils, such as, Childline (0800 1111), the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Kidscape. Pupils should report incidents as soon as they feel able to, the sooner the better to enable the matter to be dealt with effectively. Pupils are also encouraged to report COCA involving their friends and any other members of the school community. The school also has an anonymous logging service available through the school website Talk to us | Prep School Cambridgeshire | Wisbech Grammar School

Parent response to Child-on-Child Abuse

Parents can either encourage their child to come forward and report issues to a trusted member of staff, or they can report concerns by contacting their child's Head of Section, who will also be a member of the DST.

Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents

At Wisbech Grammar School we want to provide every opportunity for children to learn to respect one another. We are aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. We celebrate the wide range of ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and religious beliefs that are to be found in our school community and beyond. We seek to be welcoming to all different types of people and families and equally inclusive of people who have a disability and those who do not. This forms part of our wider work within school in promoting the British Values of mutual respect and tolerance.

We recognise that prejudice-related incidents do happen, and we take them extremely seriously, recognising that they can cause harm to all those involved, as well as to our wider school community. By effectively tackling prejudice-related incidents, we seek to create a positive school environment for everyone and to safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils and staff. In doing so, we aim to fully meet our obligations under the 2010 Equality Act, as well as best prepare our children for life in modern Britain and to thrive in a diverse, globalised world.

Defining Prejudice Related Incidents

We define a prejudice-related incident as:

> *any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be prejudiced towards an individual, due to one or more of the protected characteristics*.

We recognise the following protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010:

> *age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation*.

We will challenge, investigate, record, and report all incidents, including those that are reported to be unintentional. We recognise that just because someone did not intend to offend, it does not mean that the incident did not cause harm. Our response will always aim to educate so that everyone understands the potential harm which can result from such behaviour. Intention is important when considering the actions that need to be taken with the perpetrator, but a lack of intent does not prevent an incident from being considered prejudice related.

We recognise that prejudice-related incidents may take a range of forms, which include but are not limited to:

- use of prejudicial language,
- ridicule and jokes,
- verbal abuse,
- physical assault,
- graffiti or damage to property,
- discriminatory behaviour e.g., refusing to work with a person,
- incitement to behave in a prejudicial manner,
- bullying, including cyber bullying.
- derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence or conflict.

Prejudice-Related Incidents and Bullying

All incidents of prejudice-related bullying in schools constitute a prejudice-related incident.

We know that experiencing bullying can have a significant, negative, and lasting impact on a child's emotional and mental wellbeing. We also recognise the negative impact that engaging in bullying behaviours or witnessing the bullying of another can have. We define all incidents of prejudice-related bullying as child-on-child abuse.

The Role of Preventative Education

We recognise that effective preventative education can reduce the chance of prejudice-related behaviour occurring. We know that children learn about building respectful relationships in a wide variety of ways, not only through planned lessons, but through their everyday experiences at school and at home. Our school ethos, wider enrichment opportunities and the interventions and support offered all contribute to the development of these skills. All members of staff understand their role in supporting our strong inclusive culture.

Our preventive education fulfils the following relevant sections of the DfE statutory requirements for Relationships Education and Health Education (2020).

The school's PSHCE policy is available on the school website.

Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents

All prejudiced language or behaviour will be challenged and how that challenge is made will depend on the circumstances and severity of the incident, and on any previous similar incidents involving either the victim or perpetrator. The terms victim and perpetrator are used within this policy as they are terms that are easily understood; however care should be taken not to use these terms in front of involved parties.

When dealing with any possible prejudice-related incident, members of staff will:

- treat every issue seriously incidents should never be dismissed or ignored,
- respond immediately – acknowledging that the incident has happened and offering support to the victim of the incident,
- reinforce the school's position on discrimination and prejudice,
- focus on the perpetrator's behaviour, rather than the person,
- ensure that everyone understands what behaviour was not acceptable and why.

Recording and Reporting Prejudice-Related Incidents

All Prejudice-related incidents must be reported to the Head of Section as soon as possible and recorded in detail on MyConcern. If deemed to be prejudice-related bullying, they will be dealt with as child-on-child abuse in line with guidance within this policy.