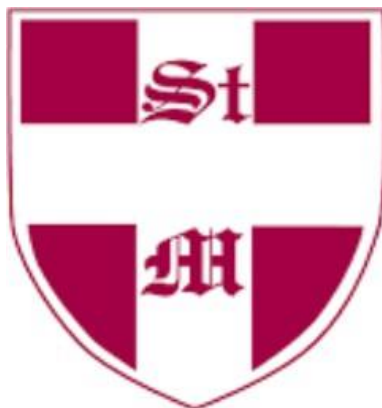


St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Child on Child Abuse Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Introduction

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) requires governing bodies and proprietors to ensure a whole-school and child-centred approach to safeguarding, placing the best interests of the child at the heart of all systems, processes and policy development.

Schools must maintain transparent, clear and accessible safeguarding systems which enable children to confidently report concerns, abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm. Children should know that their concerns will be taken seriously, that they will be listened to and supported, and that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff have a vital role in identifying concerns, sharing information appropriately and taking prompt action to protect children and secure the right support at the right time. Schools form part of a wider safeguarding system and should work effectively with children, families and partner agencies. They should act immediately on concerns and ensure children receive the right help at the right time.

All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (child-on-child abuse), both inside and outside school and online. Staff understand the importance of recognising the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify concerns and respond appropriately, including when incidents have not yet been reported.

All concerns relating to child-on-child abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay. Victims will always be reassured that they are being taken seriously, will be supported and kept safe. No child will ever be made to feel ashamed, responsible for the abuse they have experienced, or that they are creating a problem by reporting concerns, sexual violence, sexual harassment or any other form of abuse.

St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School recognises that a culture of safeguarding requires vigilance, professional curiosity, effective information sharing and strong partnerships with children, families and external agencies. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where all children are protected, valued and able to flourish.

Child-on-Child Abuse: Definition and Types

Child-on-child abuse may include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse (including any online element facilitating or encouraging physical abuse)
- Sexual violence (including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault)

- Sexual harassment
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals (including online elements)

Purpose and Aim

This policy sets out our preventative, early identification and response approach to child-on-child abuse.

It should be read alongside:

- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy (including filtering and monitoring)
- Data Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy – Children Missing Education
- Behaviour (Relationships) Policy – including positive handling and searching and confiscation
- Mental Health Policy/Procedure

Framework and Legislation

This policy reflects:

- The Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

Preventative Strategies and School Culture

We operate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, harm or bullying between children and make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, never "banter" and never "part of growing up". All staff challenge unacceptable behaviour, including language, and record and report concerns promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

We recognise that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that abuse may occur concurrently online and offline. Children can abuse other children online through abusive messages, non-consensual sharing of indecent images (including in chat groups), and sharing pornography and other harmful content.

A culture that tolerates inappropriate behaviour, language or attitudes can normalise abuse and make it more difficult for children to report concerns. We therefore promote a culture of respect, inclusion and accountability where all children understand the importance of treating others with dignity and kindness.

All staff receive safeguarding training, including training on recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse. Staff understand that even if there are no reports in school, this does not mean abuse is not taking place and should maintain professional curiosity and vigilance at all times.

Safe Environment and Curriculum

We provide an open environment where children feel safe to share concerns. Our PSHE, RHE and wider curriculum addresses prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviour and equips children to talk openly.

We tailor the curriculum to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including victims of abuse and children with SEND or certain health conditions.

Children are taught about:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Consent and personal boundaries
- Online safety and digital resilience
- Recognising inappropriate behaviour
- Seeking support when worried about themselves or others
- Respecting difference and diversity
- Challenging stereotypes and prejudice

- The importance of reporting concerns

We promote safeguarding through the curriculum, collective worship, assemblies, pastoral support, pupil leadership opportunities and wider school experiences.

Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring, and Mobile Phones

In line with KCSIE and DfE digital standards, we maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems. The DSL has lead responsibility for understanding and overseeing these systems and ensures staff receive induction and ongoing training covering roles and responsibilities for filtering and monitoring.

Technology can be a significant safeguarding factor. Children may experience abuse, bullying, exploitation or harassment online as well as face-to-face. The school recognises the importance of teaching children how to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully.

Consistent with DfE guidance, the school prohibits use of mobile phones during the school day, including breaks and lunchtimes, with reasonable adjustments where required. Our approach is reflected in the Behaviour Policy and communicated clearly to pupils, staff and parents.

Where concerns involve online behaviour, staff will take immediate action to secure evidence, protect children from further harm and consult the DSL without delay.

Involving Parents and Signposting

We engage parents and carers openly about child-on-child abuse, our expectations and how concerns will be managed, creating a joined-up approach.

Children are signposted to internal and external sources of support if they prefer not to raise concerns directly with staff.

Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to promote positive relationships, safe online behaviour and respectful conduct. Wherever appropriate, parents and carers will be informed of concerns and involved in planning support for their child.

Pupil Voice and Partnership Working

We encourage pupil voice, for example through the School Council, to shape our culture and procedures.

Children are encouraged to contribute to safeguarding practices within school. We value their views and seek regular feedback about how safe they feel and what improvements can be made.

We work with multi-agency partners and will actively refer concerns and allegations to Children's Social Care and the police where appropriate, recognising the complexity of child-on-child abuse and the need for effective partnership working.

Early Help, social care involvement and police intervention will be considered where necessary to safeguard children and reduce future risk.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or Certain Health Conditions

We recognise additional safeguarding challenges for some children, including assumptions about behaviour, increased risk of isolation or bullying, disproportionate impact without outward signs, and communication barriers.

We consider extra pastoral support when investigating any form of child-on-child abuse.

Some children with SEND may experience difficulties in recognising abuse, communicating concerns or understanding social situations. Staff remain alert to these additional vulnerabilities and ensure that children receive support that meets their individual needs.

Additional consideration will be given to communication needs, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support throughout any safeguarding process.

Language

We use the term "victim" for clarity while recognising some children may not identify with it.

We use the term "alleged perpetrator" to avoid unfair labelling prior to a full investigation.

Our language is factual, accurate and sensitive to minimise distress and support rehabilitation.

Staff avoid language which minimises abuse or implies responsibility on the part of the victim. All concerns are taken seriously and responded to in a child-centred and trauma-informed manner.

Specific Forms of Abuse and Key Notes

- **Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice or perceived differences.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves. Bullying can occur face-to-face or online and may include verbal, physical, social, emotional or discriminatory behaviour.

All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

- **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology, including mobile phones, social media, gaming platforms, messaging services and online forums.

Cyberbullying may involve:

- Abusive messages
- Threats or intimidation
- Sharing images without consent
- Excluding individuals from online groups
- Impersonation
- Spreading rumours
- Public humiliation

Online abuse can have a significant emotional impact and may constitute criminal behaviour. The school will work with parents, external agencies and the police where necessary.

- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex and may occur through a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Sexual violence includes:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault

Sexual harassment includes:

- Sexual comments

- Sexual jokes or taunting
- Physical behaviour of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment
- Unwanted sexualised language
- Sharing sexual images without consent

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be dismissed as banter, harmless fun, part of growing up or just having a laugh.

Victims will be supported and protected. Staff must challenge any behaviour or language which seeks to minimise, dismiss or normalise sexual violence or sexual harassment.

The wishes of the victim will be considered alongside the school's duty to safeguard all children.

- [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes](#)

The sharing of nude or semi-nude images by children is a safeguarding matter.

The school follows current national guidance when responding to concerns involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including risk assessment, support for children involved, recording concerns and engaging other agencies where appropriate.

Staff will:

- Not view or share imagery unnecessarily
- Not print, save or forward images
- Immediately report concerns to the DSL
- Follow safeguarding procedures and advice from external agencies

Each incident will be considered individually and proportionately, taking account of age, vulnerability, coercion, consent and risk.

- [Upskirting](#)

Upskirting is a criminal offence and involves taking a photograph or video underneath a person's clothing without their knowledge or consent.

Upskirting will always be treated as a serious safeguarding concern and, where appropriate, reported to the police.

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum from developmentally expected behaviour to problematic, abusive or violent behaviour.

When considering concerns involving sexual behaviour, staff will take account of:

- The age and developmental stage of the child
- Power imbalances
- Use of coercion, force or intimidation
- Frequency of behaviour
- Impact on others
- Additional vulnerabilities
- Contextual safeguarding concerns

Early identification and intervention are vital in preventing harmful sexual behaviour from escalating.

The school will work closely with families, Children's Social Care and other agencies as required to ensure that both victims and children displaying harmful behaviour receive appropriate support.

Expected Action for All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to respond appropriately to concerns of child-on-child abuse.

Staff should:

- Remain calm and supportive
- Listen carefully
- Take disclosures seriously
- Avoid expressing shock or disbelief
- Use non-judgemental language
- Avoid leading questions
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking out

- Explain what will happen next
- Record concerns accurately and promptly
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL

Where reports involve sexual violence or sexual harassment, wherever possible two members of staff, one of whom should be the DSL or Deputy DSL, should be involved in managing the report.

Staff must never promise confidentiality and should explain that information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to keep children safe.

Staff must not view, forward or share illegal images. Devices should be secured and advice sought from the DSL immediately.

Gathering the Facts

Concerns will be investigated sensitively and proportionately.

Professionals should:

- Speak to children separately where appropriate
- Use open questions
- Record information accurately
- Listen to the child's own words
- Avoid leading or suggestive questioning
- Consider the impact of trauma on memory and recall

Children should not be expected to provide a complete account immediately. Some children may need time, reassurance and support before they feel able to disclose fully.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, the welfare and safety of all children involved will remain the primary consideration.

Deciding Next Steps and Referrals

Where significant harm is suspected, an immediate referral will be made to Children's Social Care and, where appropriate, the police.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider:

- The nature and seriousness of the concern
- The wishes and feelings of the victim
- The ages and developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance
- Any ongoing risk to the victim, other children or staff
- Whether a crime may have been committed
- The need for Early Help or specialist intervention

Where concerns meet the threshold for statutory intervention, referrals will be made without delay.

The school will work closely with Children's Social Care, the police, health professionals and other agencies to ensure children receive the support and protection they need.

Parents and carers will normally be informed unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm.

The welfare of the child will remain the paramount consideration throughout all decision-making.

Confidentiality, Anonymity and Informing Parents

Staff must never promise confidentiality.

Children should be informed that information may need to be shared with appropriate professionals in order to keep them safe.

Information sharing decisions will always be made in line with safeguarding responsibilities, data protection legislation and the best interests of the child.

The DSL will carefully balance:

- The wishes of the victim
- The rights of all children involved
- The need to safeguard children
- The school's legal responsibilities

Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed of concerns and involved in planning support.

Where a child is particularly anxious about information being shared, their concerns will be listened to carefully and considered sensitively whilst ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Risk Assessment Considerations

All decisions relating to child-on-child abuse should be informed by an effective risk assessment.

Factors considered may include:

- The wishes and feelings of the victim
- The nature and seriousness of the incident
- Whether a criminal offence may have occurred
- The ages and developmental stages of those involved
- Any actual or perceived power imbalance
- Additional vulnerabilities, including SEND or health conditions
- The frequency of incidents
- The likelihood of repeated behaviour
- The impact on the victim
- Contextual safeguarding concerns
- The safety of all children within the school community

Risk assessments are dynamic documents and will be reviewed regularly as circumstances change.

Outcomes, Safety Planning and Aftercare

Outcomes will be determined according to the nature and severity of the concern and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Early Help support

- Internal behaviour and safeguarding intervention
- Referral to Children's Social Care
- Police involvement
- Ongoing pastoral support
- Specialist external support

Support will be provided to all children involved.

Victims will be offered appropriate emotional, practical and safeguarding support.

Children who have displayed harmful behaviour will also be supported to understand the impact of their actions and to make positive changes in behaviour.

Safety plans may be implemented where appropriate and may include:

- Named trusted adults
- Safe spaces within school
- Adjustments to supervision arrangements
- Changes to seating plans, classes or routines
- Agreed strategies to manage concerns
- Access to counselling or specialist support

Safety plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

The school recognises that the impact of abuse may continue long after an incident has concluded and will ensure ongoing support is available where needed.

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken alongside safeguarding support.

When considering disciplinary measures, the school will balance its duty to safeguard all children with the need to provide education, support and intervention.

Decisions will take account of:

- The seriousness of the behaviour

- The age and understanding of the child
- Any safeguarding factors
- Any identified additional needs
- The impact on victims and the wider school community

Consequences will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where necessary, suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered in line with Department for Education guidance.

The school does not operate a "no exclusion" policy and recognises that exclusion may be an appropriate response in exceptional circumstances where required to safeguard others.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, or sooner if changes in legislation, guidance or local safeguarding arrangements require it.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Safeguarding records
- Behaviour records
- Pupil voice
- Staff training and feedback
- Governors' safeguarding monitoring
- Reviews following any significant safeguarding incidents

The school is committed to continually improving safeguarding practice to ensure all children feel safe, supported and able to learn.

This Policy Should Be Read Alongside

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour (Relationships) Policy

- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Mental Health Policy/Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools
- UKCIS: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes
- Behaviour in Schools
- Mobile Phones in Schools
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019