

**SHENFIELD
HIGH SCHOOL**



ANTI-BULLYING AND CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Approved by: Governing Body

Date: October 2025

Last reviewed on: October 2025

Next review due by: October 2026

1. Statement of intent

Shenfield High School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students, so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Child on child abuse of any kind is unacceptable at our school, though we recognise it could happen here. If child on child abuse does occur, all students can talk to someone, secure in the knowledge that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Our approach as outlined in this policy is influenced by the values of Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP). These are: Trust, Openness, Support, Relatedness and Respect.

Our commitment is to educate our students effectively aiding them to realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. Preventative education is the most effective way to prepare students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This is reflected in our school values. We aim to create a culture in which the voice of our students is central, where students feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, will not be judged and will be involved in all the next steps, whatever they may be.

In this policy we use the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'.

2. What is child on child abuse?

Child on child abuse can take the form of verbal, online or physical behaviour and may incorporate one or more of the following:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence (see appendix) and sexual harassment (see appendix)
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery): the policy should include the school or college's approach to it.
- 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
- upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

We monitor occurrences in relation to any of the above across each protected characteristic as referenced in the Equality Act 2010 these include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Any incident that is linked to protected characteristics is dealt with robustly and in consultation with external agencies as appropriate.

3. Curriculum

We use the Social Science curriculum, alongside the tutor programme and assemblies to deliver our Relationships, Sex and Health Education, PSHE and SMSC elements to students in an age-appropriate way (see policies for this). Abusive behaviour that is bullying or related to protected characteristics is included in this curriculum and explored in other curriculum areas. The exploration of what harmful sexual behaviour is, including by peers is always taught with the concept of consent at the fore in an age-appropriate way. We teach students the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and the importance of 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, e.g. 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 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

We also teach about the importance of making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a student is abused, it is never their fault.

These will be underpinned by the school/college's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum

4. Why is it important to respond to child on child abuse?

No-one deserves to be a victim of child on child abuse. Everybody has the right to come to school, feel safe, enjoy their learning and be treated with respect. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of child-on-child abuse of all kinds. In our school we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It is never passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". We recognise that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them. Allegations in relation to child-on-child abuse of sexualised nature are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures, including seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

The Governing body ensures its school makes every effort to minimise the risk of child on child abuse, is clear about how child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with; and that there are clear processes about how victims, perpetrators and any other child/young person affected by child on child abuse will be supported.

5. Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- displaying sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for the age of the child
- sexual behaviour that is a compulsive habit or frequent in nature
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- any sexualised behaviour involving force, aggression or pressure
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- asking for sexualised images to be sent to you
- sexual behaviour that is harmful to oneself
- sexual interest in adults or children of very different age to oneself
- use of pornography that is extreme, abusive or illegal
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling
- misogynistic, derogatory and abusive language, such as 'fat shaming', references to girls' moods being due to menstruation and threats to rape or cause sexual harm

Our school also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

Young people can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities.

6. Reporting a concern

We understand our students may not always feel able to talk to adults about bullying, discrimination, child on child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour. To help them, we will encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions, respond to their concerns, and respect and listen to them. We want our community to feel confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately. In order to achieve this, we provide the following vehicles for reporting concerns:

- Highlight trained staff, including opportunities for daily contact with form tutor and pastoral managers. All staff have safeguarding training and know to refer to the DSL
- Student council
- There is always a member of the Safeguarding team on duty throughout the school day.
- There is also a "report a concern" element available on the school website should students wish to raise something anonymously or feel more comfortable reporting in a way that is not face-to-face

7. Parents and carers support

It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by abuse and reinforce key messages from school at home. We work in partnership with parents to support our students and want to help them keep their child/ren safe from all forms of abuse.

Parents and carers should understand:

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour (see appendix)
- the effects of any abuse on children
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place
- what to do if it is suspected abuse, including sexual in nature, has occurred

8. Staff

Our staff undertake at least annual safeguarding training where the different types of abuse and neglect are discussed; this includes information about harmful sexual behaviour and our expectations for staff vigilance about this and other potential types of abuse. Staff also receive updates on safeguarding issues throughout the school year, including about the nature and prevalence of discriminatory abuse, bullying and harmful sexual behaviour, where appropriate.

Training also ensures that our staff know what to do if they receive a report that harmful sexual behaviour may have occurred, including how to support students and refer key information to the DSL via CPOMS. All staff receive training on how to use CPOMS.

9. Our response to an incident / allegation

The wellbeing of our students is always central to our response to an allegation or incident of abuse. Any student reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; no member of our community will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or made to feel ashamed. We will reassure them that they will be listened to, will not be judged and will be involved in the next steps.

Our staff will never promise confidentiality, as a concern of this nature will always need to be shared further. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident and the details or relevant information should be recorded on CPOMS.

In general, we work to the following principles:

- The needs of both the victim and alleged perpetrator are considered immediately to ensure that both are safeguarded and protected

- Our responses are proportionate to the need and risk presented, working within the most up-to-date guidelines available
- We will respond to all reports of HSB appropriately, whether it has occurred online or offline and including those that happened outside of the setting
- We will aim to respond in the way that is least intrusive to effectively address the behaviour and safeguard those involved
- The wishes of the victim and how they wish to proceed will always be important considerations within our response. We will offer as much control as is reasonably possible over the decisions regarding the support provided to them and the progression of any investigation. However, this will always be balanced carefully with our duty and responsibility to protect and safeguard all the children in our care

9.1. Working in Partnership

If the abuse reported is criminal in nature or involves harmful sexual behaviour, the details may also need to be shared with other agencies who will support the school in managing these cases, where appropriate. These may include Children's Social Care, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing for the Local Authority, the police and other specialist agencies. We have in place effective working relationships with our safeguarding partners, which are essential to ensuring that concerns are appropriately managed.

We will explain next steps to the student so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed. Where, appropriate, the parents of the child will be informed. For students who already have Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child in Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

Where an incident includes an online element, we will always work in accordance with appropriate guidance, taking advice from other partners as necessary. Our staff will not view an indecent image of a student unless absolutely necessary, nor forward it for any reason.

We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises, and where applicable, on transport to and from the school whilst the matter is investigated and then as part of a safety plan and risk assessment moving forwards.

9.2. Record Keeping

It is essential that any information relating to allegations that occur within our school are reported, as with any other child protection concern – and in line with our Child Protection Policy. The record may form part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care or by another agency.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this, will record it as soon as possible on CPOMS, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. The facts will be recorded as the young person presents them. There is a body map available to use on CPOMS.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, the disclosure should be passed onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) in person, who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

There is a specific section for child on child abuse on CPOMS which is reviewed termly for analysis and trends with any subsequent actions highlighted and completed.

9.3. Investigation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead alongside other Senior Leaders will be responsible for leading investigations into abuse, and for liaising with Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads and other agencies as appropriate, for example Children's Social Care and the police. In each case a named person in school will be available for parents and students as necessary. The Designated Lead will ensure there are accurate records of each stage of the investigation and that any supporting information is included in the Child Protection files.

In most incidents of child on child disclosures, students will be asked to complete a written statement of the alleged incident as part of the investigation, which will be scanned and added to CPOMS.

9.4. Principle of response

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount. We will use a proportionate approach, basing our actions on the principle that any form of abuse is neither acceptable or tolerated.

Our approach will help us to ensure that all students are protected and supported appropriately. The following principles will guide us:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will 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
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed
- the ages of the children involved
- the developmental stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is/are the alleged perpetrator(s) significantly older, more mature, confident and well-known social standing? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- 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 children
- importance of understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents

- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff, and
- other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

There are four potential responses the school will explore regarding any incident of child on child abuse. These are as follows:

- 9.4.1. **Manage internally** – this links to our key principle of the need to educate students. For example, for a one-off incident, we may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals to statutory services are not required, and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, through utilising our behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support. This decision is still underpinned by our zero-tolerance to all forms of child on child abuse.
- 9.4.2. **Early Help** - Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. To support these key staff within school regularly attend training and link with local services to ensure we are up-to-date on avenues to seek support and guidance for the children we support.
- 9.4.3. **Referral to local authority children's social care** - Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we would always make a referral to local authority children's social care. We would also look to this avenue should we become aware of a historic incident. At the point of referral to local authority children's social care, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). This decision would be made following consultation with local authority children's social care. If a referral is made, local authority children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services. This referral process operates in tandem with any internal support and care planning for the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s).
- 9.4.4. **Reporting to the police** - Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to local authority children's social care (as above). 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. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach. Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. It is important to understand that when the investigation of an incident meets the threshold to be referred to the police, they then become the leading agency in that investigation. The school will take advice on the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. The school will continue to link and liaise with police during the course of any investigation. Referrals to police for child on child

disclosures will be made after consultation with the DSL or in their absence, the Headteacher.

10. Risk Assessment

We will risk assess following a report of abuse, considering all students involved in an incident. We will also consider all other students at our school and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them.

The risk assessment may require a safety/care plan to be put in place; this may involve separating victims and perpetrators (or alleged perpetrators) in designated areas on school site and whilst travelling to and from school. This is monitored closely and reviewed with the students and parents at least termly.

Safety plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Where appropriate, the affected student and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and review of the risk assessment.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with new guidance in KCSIE and/or as needed in relation to learning points from incidents.

Appendix 1 - definitions

Sexual Violence

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. (NOTE- Schools and colleges 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. (NOTE – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Sexual Harassment

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/college. 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, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim.
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence), and
- 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/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence.
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content ○ sexualised online bullying
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media

- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and ○ coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging 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 advice. 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.

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic and concerning behaviours • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May include levels of compulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by victim • May include elements of expressive violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator • Sadism

Source: Hackett, S, 'Children, young people and sexual violence' in 'Children behaving badly? Exploring peer violence between children and young people', 2010.

Appendix 2: Care / Safety Plan proforma

Individual Student Care Plan

**This care plan should be used for individual Students
where risk to themselves or others is a possibility.**

THIS IS A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

Name of Student:	
Date care plan started:	<i>Date of parent meeting</i>
Date of review:	<i>Date to be added into all our calendars after parent meeting</i>

Reason for care plan:			
Aim for care plan:			
<i>For example: Student to be able to attend school safely whilst mental health support is put into place</i>			
Date of birth:	Attendance: <i>% present PLUS authorised % and unauthorised %</i>		Form:
Risk	Control Measure		Other info
Key Staff:			
<i>Ideally no more or less than three / Safeguarding team or Pastoral managers / Possibly PIC staff / Possibly ELA or NWA</i>			
Consequences if care plan is not followed:			
<i>For example:</i>			
<i>Staff will follow the School's behaviour policy guidelines for students not following expectations.</i>			
<i>DSL will review with the relevant Senior School Staff and medical professionals if they are safe to attend school whilst not following the care plan.</i>			
Checklist	Date	By who	Signature
Shared with student			

Shared with parent			
Shared with relevant staff			