



Child on Child Abuse Policy

St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy

September 2026 – September 2027

Document Provenance

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Document review and editorial updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if statutory guidance, local procedures or school arrangements change. It replaces the March 2021 peer on peer model policy used previously by the school.

1. PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

We lead our children to be like Jesus... wise, caring, honest and fair, today and every day. At St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy, every child is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves dignity, respect and safety. We foster a culture in which children can speak to a trusted adult, know they will be heard and understand that abuse between children is never accepted as an inevitable part of growing up.

This policy explains how we prevent, recognise and respond to child on child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence. It applies to pupils in school, at wraparound provision, on trips, during travel and when behaviour outside school or online affects their safety or school life. A child means a person under 18. All staff, volunteers, governors and relevant contractors must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

This policy should be read with our Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Online Safety, SEND, Equality and Relationships, Sex and Health Education policies, and with current Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 take precedence if guidance changes.

2. WHAT CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE INCLUDES

Children can abuse other children, including children of any age or sex. Abuse can be a single incident or a pattern, in person or online. It may include:

- bullying, including online, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disability related bullying;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, biting or other violence;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual comments or touching, and harmful sexual behaviour;
- pressuring or coercing a child to share nude or semi nude images, sharing such images, or threatening to share them;

- upskirting or other non consensual image taking, including altered or fabricated sexual imagery;
- abuse within an intimate relationship between children;
- initiation or hazing, coercion, exploitation and serious violence.

Staff must not dismiss abusive behaviour as banter, flirting or children being children. The absence of a report does not mean abuse is not happening. A child may not describe what happened as abuse or may communicate distress through behaviour. A one off incident still needs a proportionate response even if it does not meet the definition of bullying.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a developmental spectrum. The DSL will consider age, development, context, consent, coercion, power imbalance, repetition and impact. Problematic or harmful behaviour requires safeguarding assessment; the school will not rely on a label or tool alone to decide risk. The DSL may use appropriate recognised assessment frameworks with trained professionals and local safeguarding advice.

3. RISK AND VULNERABILITY

Any child may be affected. Some children may face additional barriers to reporting or greater risk, including pupils with SEND, children who are looked after or previously looked after, children experiencing domestic abuse or exploitation, children with social or communication needs, and those targeted because of an actual or perceived protected characteristic. Staff must take care not to assume that behaviour or distress is simply related to SEND or another known circumstance.

Girls are more likely to report sexual harassment and sexual violence, but any child may experience abuse or display harmful behaviour. The school will respond to the individual child and circumstances without stereotypes. Children who have caused harm may themselves need support or protection; this does not reduce our duty to safeguard the child harmed.

4. PREVENTING ABUSE

Our Catholic ethos and the school values of being wise, caring, honest and fair are reflected in everyday relationships, supervision, behaviour expectations and the curriculum. Age appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education, PSHE, Religious Education and online safety teaching cover respect, boundaries, consent in an age appropriate way, bodily autonomy, healthy friendships, prejudice, asking for help and safe online conduct. Teaching is inclusive and adapted for pupils' developmental and communication needs.

Staff reinforce that children can tell a trusted adult, that they will be listened to, and that reporting a concern is responsible behaviour. We review patterns in incident records and consider where pupils may be less safe, including toilets, corridors, playgrounds, trips, transport and digital spaces. Training helps staff recognise harmful behaviour and make timely referrals.

5. REPORTING AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

A member of staff who sees, hears about or receives a report of child on child abuse must respond calmly, listen without judgment, reassure the child, explain that information must be shared with the DSL, and report promptly under the school's safeguarding procedures. Do not promise confidentiality, investigate by asking repeated or leading questions, or bring the children together

to resolve an allegation. Record the child's words as accurately as possible, with the date, time, context and actions taken, on the school's safeguarding system (CPOMS).

If a child is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical care, call emergency services and take steps to protect them. If the DSL is unavailable, contact a deputy or follow the safeguarding policy's escalation route; any person may make a direct referral to Children's Social Care. Staff must not delay a referral while trying to establish whether an allegation is true.

The DSL will make an initial assessment, consider the wishes and needs of the child reporting, the safety of all children involved, and whether a crime may have been committed. The DSL will consult or refer to Children's Social Care and the police in line with KCSIE and local thresholds. Where an investigation by statutory agencies is likely, school questioning will be limited to what is needed to establish immediate safety.

Nude and Semi Nude Images

Staff must report any incident immediately to the DSL. They must not view, copy, print, store, share or ask a child to download imagery, nor ask a child to delete it. If imagery is seen accidentally, tell the DSL. The DSL will follow the current UK Council for Internet Safety advice and decide whether any exceptional viewing is necessary, recording the rationale. Adults creating or sharing sexual imagery of children must be reported urgently to the police as child sexual abuse.

6. ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING

The DSL, with senior leaders as appropriate, will consider the child's account and wishes; the nature of the allegation; age and development; any power imbalance, coercion, disability or vulnerability; whether it is a single incident or pattern; online reach; the risk to siblings or other pupils; and whether the children can safely continue to share spaces. The child's wishes matter but cannot override duties to protect them or others.

Depending on the assessment, the response may be managed internally with safeguarding and pastoral support; supported through early help or family help; referred to Children's Social Care; and/or reported to the police. The DSL will follow local procedures and record the reasons for the chosen route. A decision not to refer must also be recorded and reviewed if new information emerges.

Parents and carers will normally be informed at an appropriate stage. The DSL will consider with statutory agencies whether contacting a family could increase risk to a child or prejudice an investigation. Information is shared only with those who need it to protect children and fulfil their role.

7. SAFETY AND SUPPORT PLANS

The school will put immediate, proportionate measures in place to protect children while facts are established. These may include different seating or groups, supervision, separate movement or play arrangements, named adults, changes to transport or access to online systems, and a written safety and support plan. Measures are reviewed and adjusted with children and families where appropriate. They are protective and do not determine whether an allegation is proven.

The child who has experienced harm will be offered a trusted adult, regular check ins and access to appropriate pastoral, health or specialist support. We will avoid making the child carry the burden of arrangements, for example by moving them from lessons unnecessarily. Children who have displayed harmful behaviour will receive an individual response addressing risk, accountability, learning and support. Other affected children, including witnesses, may also need support.

Where sexual violence is reported, the DSL will carefully manage contact between the children and seek advice from statutory agencies. The school will not use mediation or restorative meetings where this would place a child at risk or undermine an investigation. Any later restorative work requires an assessment of safety and suitability and the informed agreement of those involved.

8. BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE

Safeguarding and behaviour responses may run alongside each other. The Headteacher may apply proportionate consequences under the Behaviour Policy, including suspension or permanent exclusion where the legal threshold and statutory process are met. A police investigation or criminal outcome is not required before school action, but the school will liaise with police and Children's Social Care so it does not interfere with their work. Consequences alone do not replace support, risk management or monitoring.

For prejudice based incidents, the school will challenge the behaviour, support the child targeted and consider whether a safeguarding or hate crime referral is needed. The DSL will seek police advice where a criminal offence may have occurred; not every discriminatory incident is automatically a crime.

9. INCIDENTS OUTSIDE SCHOOL AND ONLINE

Reports about conduct away from school, on transport or online will be considered under safeguarding procedures. Where behaviour affects a child's welfare, relationships or the orderly running of the school, we may take action under the Behaviour Policy. The DSL will consider contextual risks and liaise with families, other schools and relevant agencies as appropriate.

10. RECORDING, INFORMATION SHARING AND REVIEW

The DSL will maintain a clear safeguarding record of reports, the child's account, evidence known to the school, risk assessments, consultations, referrals, decisions and reasons, parent communication, support, actions, review dates and outcomes. Records will be kept securely on CPOMS and shared in line with the safeguarding policy, data protection law and the need to protect children. Staff must not circulate sensitive allegations beyond those who need to know.

The DSL and senior leaders will monitor safety plans and review patterns, including locations, repeated incidents and the experience of groups of pupils. The safeguarding governor and governing body will receive appropriate anonymised information to oversee culture, training and the effectiveness of this policy. Governors will not undertake case investigations or compromise any later disciplinary or complaints process.

11. ROLES AND TRAINING

All staff and volunteers must know how to recognise and report concerns. The DSL leads assessment, referrals, safety planning and coordination with outside agencies; deputies act when

the DSL is unavailable. The Headteacher oversees the school response and behaviour decisions. The governing body ensures effective safeguarding arrangements, appropriate training and annual policy review. Named DSLs and deputies are listed in the current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and displayed in school.

12. SOURCES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, especially Parts One and Five.
- Department for Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance effective September 2026.
- UK Council for Internet Safety, Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings, updated 2024.
- Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local referral thresholds.

13. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Reviewed: September 2026. Next review: September 2027. Approved by: Senior Leadership Team.
Date approved: 29/09/2026.