Hall Orchard Barrow CE Primary (Academy)

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Adopted: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Introduction

At Hall Orchard CE Primary School, we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). We believe that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys." We will respond to all signs, reports, and concerns of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises, and/or online. We recognise that children are vulnerable to, and capable of abusing their peers; we take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. We recognise that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. We acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable. We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

In cases where child-on-child abuse is suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures, taking a contextual, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation including the victim and alleged perpetrator.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with children maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here,' and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The Head teacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), and outside agencies.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all. However, all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. Our DSL (Nadine Roodhouse) and Deputy DSLs (Steve Dunn and Rebecca Harrison) can be contacted at dsl@hall-orchard.leics.sch.uk or by calling the school office on 01509 412188.

Our Safeguarding governor (Kayt Hennessey) can be contacted via the school office by phone or email – reception@hall-orchard.leics.sch.uk.

Definitions

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

• Upskirting, 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

• Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). This may also be an indicator of wider exploitation such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and/or County Lines.

Recognising

At our school we recognise that behaviours associated with child-on-child abuse take place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on this spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

We recognise that all children grow and develop at their own pace. We will use our professional judgement and knowledge of child development when responding to child-on-child abuse.

Prevention

Hall Orchard actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child on child abuse by educating its community about the issues. This includes teaching about the nature, prevalence and effect of child on child abuse, and how it can be prevented, identified and responded to. This includes:

- Understanding contextual safeguarding
- The identification of specific behaviours
- Understanding the importance of taking seriously all forms of child on child abuse and ensuring that no form of child on child abuse in ever dismissed as teasing or banter.
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child on child abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum.
- Informing pupils about what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
- Ensuring that all child on child issues are fed back to the school's designated safeguarding lead so that they can address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may need additional support.
- Challenging the attitudes that underpin such abuse.
- Working with Governors, staff, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community.
- Creating conditions in which our pupils an aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships.
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment, and have them listened to.
- Responding to cases of child on child abuse promptly.

The Context

Child on child abuse take place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on the spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. It is essential that responses in incidents are proportionate and contextual. In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between normal, problematic and harmful sexual behaviour.

Simon Hackett (2010) created a continuum model of harmful sexual behaviour to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
-Developmentally expected. -Socially acceptable -Consensual, mutual, reciprocal -Shared decision making	-Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour -Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group -Context for behaviour may be appropriate -Generally consensual and reciprocal -Age appropriate developmental behaviours	-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	-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	-Physically violent sexual abuse -Highly intrusive -Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator. -Sadism

Source: Hackett Continuum (2010)

The school may also refer to the Brook Traffic Light System (2012) as an audit tool for any reported incidents. (See Appendix 1)

Determining the level of incidents

While determining the level of incidents is not always clear-cut, we use this tools as a guide. In addition, we will consider the following:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional and intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- The degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration.

When do we seek support?

Cases of child on child abuse are often complex, may involve multiple children, and consent may be unclear. In some situations, it may be appropriate for the school to respond internally. However, in other situations, cases may require a referral to the Police and/or social care.

We refer to the flow chart (Appendix 2) and consider the following when deciding if an incident requires a referral to a multi-agency service.

Cases that may be best responded to in school sit between 'Normal/Healthy' and 'Inappropriate' e.g.

- Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group
- Context for behaviour may be inappropriate
- Generally consensual and reciprocal

Incidences assessed as 'Violent' and 'Abusive' will always require a referral to Police/Social Care.

Advice will be sought from the safeguarding team at the local authority wherever necessary.

Response to Child on Child Abuse

The designated safeguarding lead will take a leading role using their professional judgement and be supported by other agencies such as the local authority safeguarding team, social care or the Police as required. All responses to child on child abuse will be informed by the flow charts, the continuum and through liaison with any required external agencies.

All incidents of child on child abuse are dealt with immediately and sensitively. Information is gathered as soon as possible to ascertain what has happened and if any other pupils are aware of, or are involved in, the alleged abuse.

Staff talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff must not be prejudiced, judgemental or dismissive when dealing with such sensitive matters.

The Immediate Response to a Report

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim.
- Staff understand the next steps once a child has reported child on child abuse and will take the concern to the DSL.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the DSL or Social Care) Staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A CPOMS incident will be logged as soon after the discussion as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- The DSL will assess the needs of the victim and of the child who is alleged to have caused harm.
- Where the incident includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible and consider a referral to the Police and Social Care using the flow charts (Appendix 2)
- The DSL must complete a risk assessment (Appendix 3) where behaviour is 'Abusive' or 'Violent' and will share this information with the appropriate external agencies.
- A risk assessment may be considered for incidents classified as 'Inappropriate/Problematic', considering the following:
    - Frequency
    - Element of discrimination
    - Pre-planning
    - Difference in power or authority
    - Effect on the victim
    - Wider contexts

Recording

When recording behaviour, it is essential that we:

- record as soon as possible
- are clear, explicit and non-avoidant
- avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child
- use the child's exact words wherever possible and note where and when the incident happened and who else was present.

All decision making will be recorded with actions, referencing who will complete the actions and when/for how long.

Children (including bystanders)

It is important to understand that a victim may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. We recognise that in some instances another child may report on another child's behalf. All children will know how to report concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse.

We ask that all children report any concerning behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the child, discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will then record the incident or concern on CPOMS to alert the DSL team. In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, we will never promise a child that we will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore use our Pastoral Team to support children if they are struggling to speak with staff. If pupils can't talk, they are able to message or leave notes for staff (via their class worry monster, or on our website 'I have a worry' link. Their parents can also contact school if they tell them at home.

We will ensure that support will be put in place for the victim and the perpetrator as both will require help and protection. Where necessary, additional education will also be put in place to change behaviours.

Parents/carers

We understand that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with making or receiving a report that their child has been the victim of or is an alleged perpetrator of child-on-child abuse.

In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Part 5, we will seek advice and support from other services as decided on a case-by-case basis. All decisions and actions taken by the school will consider the needs of the individual children involved, and the wider school community.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on child abuse, that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher to explain their concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher will make a formal record of the report on CPOMS and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers to come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of child-on-child abuse. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and ongoing investigations by statutory services. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaints policy. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Staff

Our staff work closely with our children and therefore may notice a change in a child's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a child or a member of the school community.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or are concerned that a child is displaying behaviours that may show they have been the victim of or that they are perpetrating child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns using CPOMS or in person if the child is in imminent danger or has been physically harmed. The DSL team will respond to the alert and other relevant staff members will be alerted as required. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to.

We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about child-on-child abuse that they have witnessed, or have been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSL/the Head teacher. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person as soon as possible and no later than the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the concerns on CPOMS and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

• **RHE (Relationships and Health Education) / RSHE curriculum**

- The school have a clear set of values and standards, upheld, and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life, which is supported by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE curriculum
- Our RHE/RSHE/PSHE programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and/or other vulnerabilities)
- We will, through our RHE/RSHE/PSHE programme promote:
    - Healthy and respectful relationships
    - Boundaries and consent
    - Equality and raise awareness of stereotyping and prejudice
    - Body confidence and self-esteem
    - How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
    - The concepts of, and laws relating to – sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, teenage relationship abuse (intimate personal relationships between children), and how to access support, and
    - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Breaches / Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaints policy. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

Links with other policies

You may find it helpful to read this child-on-child abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety (including Cybersecurity policy)
- Anti-bullying policy
- Positive relationships and behaviour policy
- Social Media policy

- Mobile Phone policy

Further information and support can be found through the following links:

• Part 5: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment (pages 104-135) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

• Definitions - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

• National Online Safety

- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours
- https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/sexual-behaviour#heading-top

APPENDIX 1 - Brook Traffic Light System (2012)

Behaviours: age 0 to 5

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation,consensual activities and positive choices

What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

Green behaviours

- holding or playing with own genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about other children's genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults
- games e.g. mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses
- enjoying nakedness
- interest in body parts and what they do
- curiosity about the differences between boys and girls

Amber behaviours

- preoccupation with adult sexual behaviour
- pulling other children's pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will
- talking about sex using adult slang
- preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people
- following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them
- talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online

Red behaviours

- persistently touching the genitals of other children
- persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults
- simulation of sexual activity in play
- sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects
- forcing other children to engage in sexual play

Behaviours: age 5 to 9

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation,consensual activities and positive choices

What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

Green behaviours

- feeling and touching own genitals
- curiosity about other children's genitals
- curiosity about sex and relationships, e.g. differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same-sex relationships
- sense of privacy about bodies
- telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body

Amber behaviours

- questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given
- sexual bullying face to face or through texts or online messaging
- engaging in mutual masturbation
- persistent sexual images and ideas in talk, play and art
- use of adult slang language to discuss sex

Red behaviours

- frequent masturbation in front of others
- sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able children
- forcing other children to take part in sexual activities
- simulation of oral or penetrative sex
- sourcing pornographic material online

Behaviours: age 9 to 13

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

What is a green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation,consensual activities and positive choices

What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

Green behaviours

- solitary masturbation
- use of sexual language including swear and slang words
- having girl/boyfriends who are of the same, opposite or any gender
- interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online
- need for privacy
- consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peers

What is an amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

Amber behaviours

- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- verbal, physical or cyber/virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) targeted bullying
- exhibitionism, e.g. flashing or mooning
- giving out contact details online
- viewing pornographic material
- worrying about being pregnant or having STIs

What is a red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

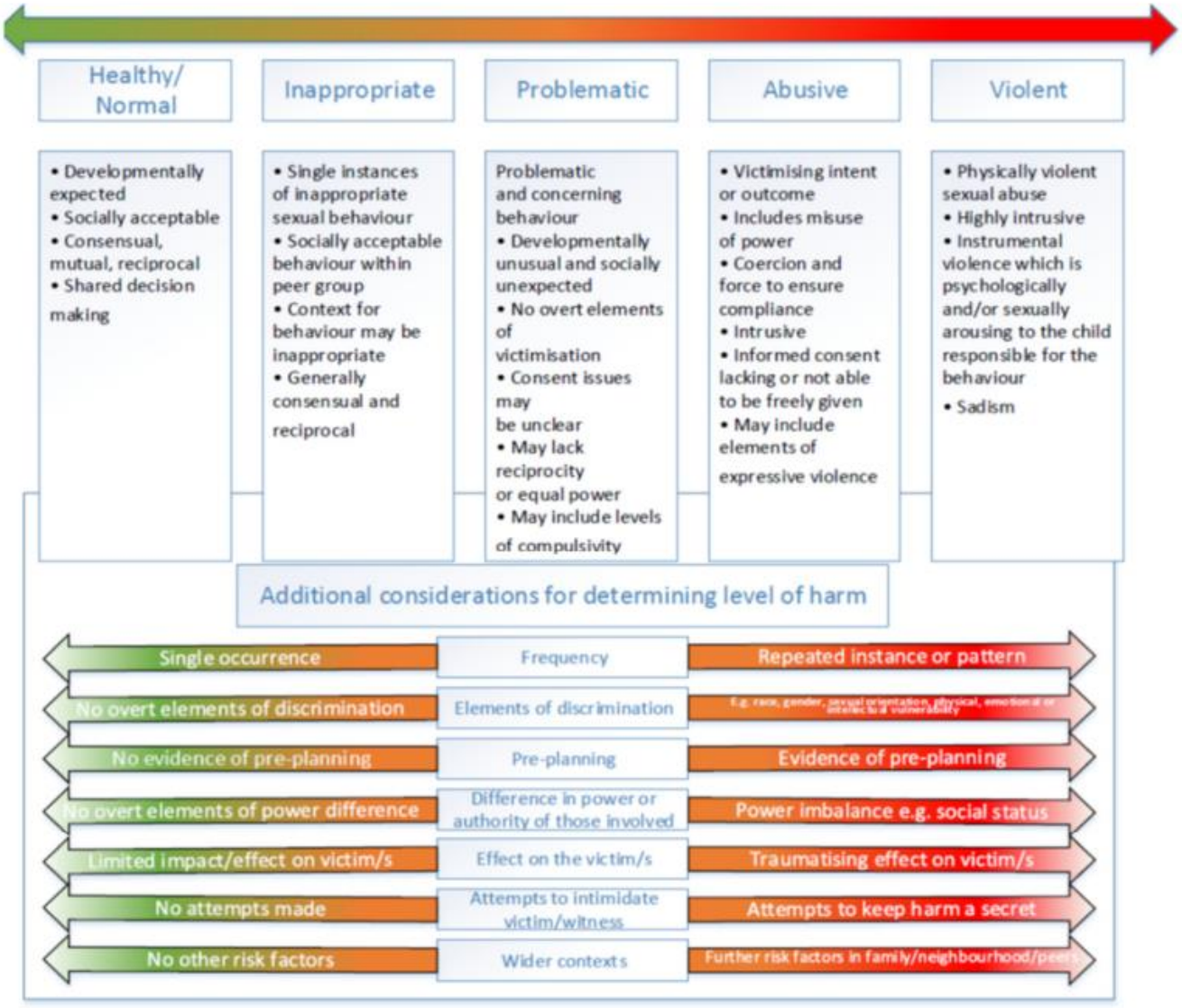
What can you do?

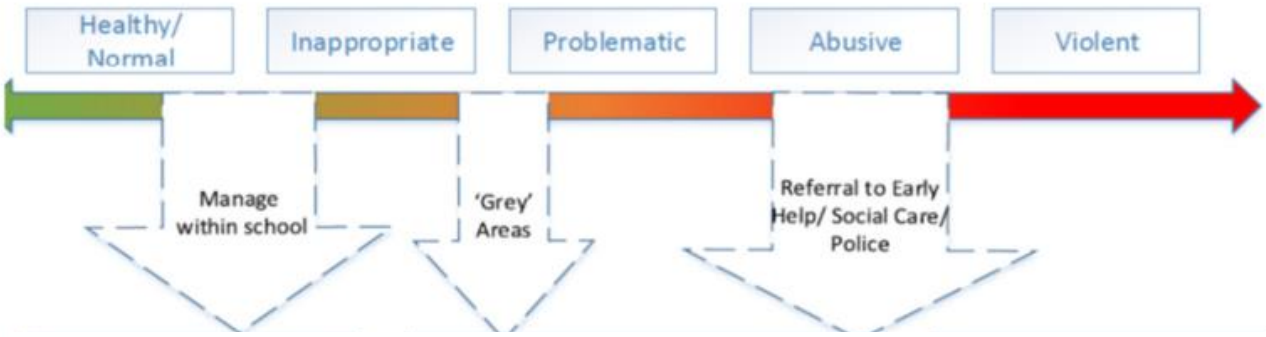
Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

Red behaviours

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- distributing naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- sexually explicit talk with younger children
- sexual harassment
- arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret
- genital injury to self or others
- forcing other children of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities
- sexual activity e.g. oral sex or intercourse
- presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- evidence of pregnancy

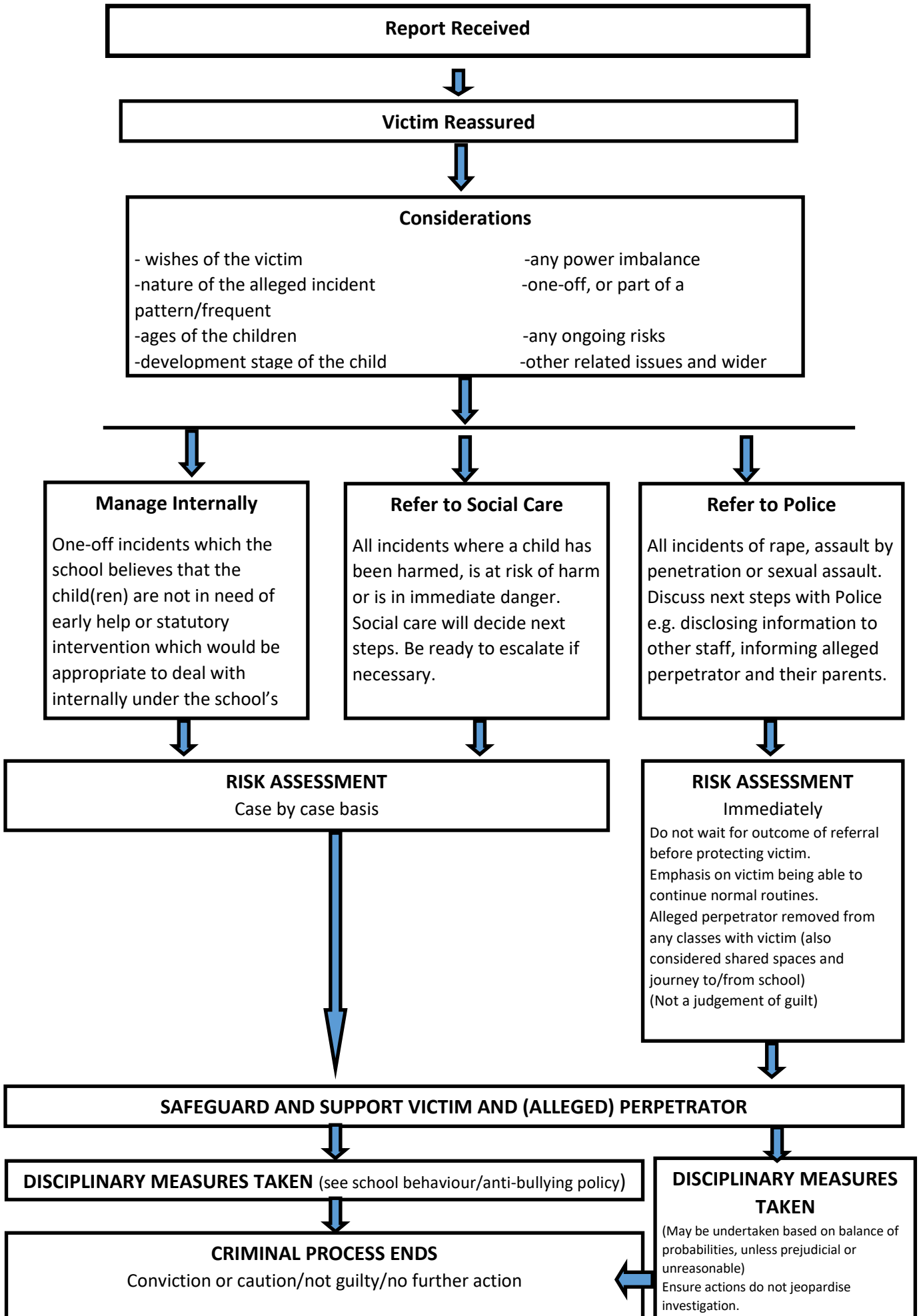
<u>APPENDIX 2</u> – Flow Charts (Referral pathways and processes)





See flow chart for process including outcomes and support.

Flow chart (Processes, including outcomes and support)



Source: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE 2017)

APPENDIX 3 – Risk Assessment

Child on child abuse – risk assessment / safety plan

Behaviour	When	Where	Who	Measures to be put in place	By whom	Review notes
What is the nature of the behaviour?	Time of day, triggers etc	Places where behaviour has and is most likely to occur	Pupils involved and most at risk	What actions to minimise the chance of the behaviour occurring	Who will supervise? Who is responsible for putting this in place?	Success? Next steps?