

SAFEGUARDING

Child-on-Child Harmful Behaviour Policy

Preventing, identifying and responding to harmful behaviour



Approved by Governors: Autumn Term 2026

Review Date: Autumn Term 2027

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): James Garlick

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs): Heather Clark Suzanne Chamberlain Liz Plumb

Safeguarding Governor: Andrew Jacobs

1. Introduction

At Great Leighs Primary School, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where every child can grow, learn, persevere and succeed.

We recognise that children are capable of experiencing and displaying harmful sexual behaviour. Child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside school, face-to-face and online, and may occur between children of any age or gender. All incidents are taken seriously and will never be dismissed as banter, teasing, growing up, part of childhood or "just having a laugh".

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum ranging from developmentally appropriate and expected behaviour through to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent behaviour. Harmful sexual behaviour refers to behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate and may cause harm to another child.

We recognise that even if there are no reports of harmful sexual behaviour, this does not mean it is not happening. We maintain a culture of vigilance in which concerns are identified, challenged and addressed quickly.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. What Harmful Sexual Behaviour Means

The school follows the statutory guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education and all other relevant safeguarding guidance. Reports of harmful sexual behaviour will be assessed carefully in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Sexual violence includes offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Children under the age of 13 cannot legally consent to sexual activity.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and may include:

- Sexual comments
- Sexual jokes
- Sexualised name-calling
- Deliberate physical contact
- Interference with clothing
- Displaying sexual images
- Upskirting
- Sexualised bullying

It can take place online or offline and both inside and outside school.

Online Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Online harmful sexual behaviour may include:

- Sharing nudes or semi-nude images
- Sharing explicit content
- Sexualised online bullying
- Sexual harassment through messages or social media
- Sexual coercion and exploitation
- Pressuring others to share images or videos

Technology-facilitated abuse may occur through:

- Social media platforms
- Gaming platforms
- Messaging applications
- Live-streaming services
- Artificial intelligence and image manipulation tools

Sexist Behaviour and Sexualised Language

The school recognises that sexist attitudes, stereotypes and sexualised language can contribute to a culture that normalises harmful behaviour.

Examples include:

- Sexist comments
- Gender-based stereotypes
- Derogatory language
- Humiliating or degrading remarks

Such behaviours will always be challenged and addressed.

3. Whole School Approach

School Culture and Expectations

Great Leighs Primary School promotes a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion.

We will:

- Not tolerate harmful sexual behaviour
- Challenge inappropriate language and conduct
- Foster respectful relationships
- Create an environment where children feel able to report concerns
- Ensure all concerns are acted upon appropriately
- Support all children involved

Safeguarding and wellbeing remain central to all decisions.

Children

Through assemblies, safeguarding education, RSHE and online safety lessons, children are taught:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Consent and personal boundaries
- Online safety
- Digital citizenship
- How to seek help
- How to report concerns
- That abuse is never the fault of the victim

Teaching is delivered in an age-appropriate manner and is reinforced throughout school life.

Parents and Carers

We believe parents and carers play a vital role in safeguarding children.

We will work in partnership with parents to help them understand:

- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Indicators of concern
- Online risks
- How to support children
- How concerns will be managed by school

The school will continue to signpost families to support services and safeguarding information.

Staff

All staff receive annual safeguarding training and regular safeguarding updates.

Training includes:

- Recognising harmful sexual behaviour
- Responding to disclosures
- Online harms
- Recording concerns accurately
- Supporting victims
- Managing allegations fairly

Staff understand their responsibility to report concerns immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

Online Safety

The school has filtering and monitoring systems to reduce exposure to harmful content and online risks.

Staff receive training in:

- Online safeguarding
- Reporting procedures
- Emerging online threats
- Technology-facilitated abuse

Our Online Safety Policy should be read alongside this document.

4. Procedures for Responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour

All reports will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

Children making reports will:

- Be listened to carefully
- Be reassured
- Be protected from further harm
- Be informed about how concerns will be managed
- Receive appropriate support

The DSL will lead all safeguarding responses.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Staff will never promise confidentiality where safeguarding concerns exist.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Parents will normally be informed unless doing so would place a child at greater risk.

Anonymity

We will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of children involved.

This includes:

- Careful information sharing
 - Limiting unnecessary disclosures
 - Responding rapidly to misuse of social media
 - Protecting victims from retaliation or peer pressure
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Recording Concerns

All concerns will be recorded promptly and accurately using the school's safeguarding recording procedures.

Records will include:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Nature of concern
- Exact words used where possible
- Actions taken

Records will form part of the child's safeguarding record.

Brook Traffic Light Tool

James Garlick holds a current Brook Traffic Light Tool licence and training. The Brook Traffic Light Tool supports professional decision-making regarding sexual behaviours and assists the school in identifying, understanding and responding appropriately to concerns.

The Brook Tool will inform professional judgement but will not replace safeguarding decision-making.

Risk Assessment

The school will normally complete a written risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour.

Risk assessments may consider:

- The victim
- Any additional victims
- The child displaying concerning behaviour
- Supervision requirements
- Classroom arrangements
- Lunchtime and breaktime provision
- Educational visits
- Extra-curricular activities
- Online contact
- Transport arrangements
- Risks to the wider school community

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and updated when circumstances change.

Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that harmful sexual behaviour may be influenced by factors beyond the school environment.

Consideration will be given to:

- Friendship groups
- Online communities
- Social media influences
- Family circumstances
- Local community contexts

The wider context will help inform safeguarding decisions and support plans.

5. Supporting Children

Supporting a Victim

The wishes, feelings and safety of the victim will remain central to decision making.

Support may include:

- A trusted adult
- Pastoral support
- Counselling support
- Mental health services
- Adaptations to routines
- Additional safeguarding measures

Support arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

Supporting a Child Displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour

We recognise that children displaying harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced trauma, abuse or unmet needs.

Our response will be:

- Safeguarding-focused
- Proportionate
- Supportive
- Educational where appropriate

The aim is to address behaviour whilst ensuring the child receives appropriate support.

Informing Parents and Carers

Parents will normally be informed of incidents unless this would increase risk to a child.

Where Children's Social Care or Police are involved, advice from those agencies will be followed regarding communication with families.

6. Outcomes

Outcomes will always be proportionate and child-centred.

Possible outcomes include:

Managing Internally

Where appropriate, incidents may be managed through:

- Behaviour procedures
- Educational interventions
- Safeguarding support
- Restorative approaches where appropriate

Early Help

Where additional support is required, Early Help processes may be initiated to provide coordinated support.

Children's Social Care

Referrals will be made when a child:

- Has been harmed
- Is at risk of harm
- Is likely to suffer significant harm

Police Involvement

The school will report matters to the police where required by safeguarding guidance and legislation. We will continue to support all children throughout any investigation.

6A. KCSIE 2026 response requirements

This policy is a focused supplement to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The school will use child-centred language such as “child who has been harmed” and “child who is alleged to have caused harm” where appropriate, while recognising that statutory guidance may use victim and alleged perpetrator. The needs and rights of every child will be considered separately.

Staff must not view, copy, print or forward nude or semi-nude images of children. They will report immediately to the DSL and follow the UKCIS sharing nudes and semi-nudes guidance. Devices will be secured without searching content unless an authorised safeguarding process permits this.

A risk and needs assessment will be started promptly and kept under review. It will consider the child harmed, the child alleged to have caused harm, other children, location and online risks, protected characteristics, SEND, age and developmental understanding. Support and proportionate safety measures will not be made conditional on a criminal investigation or conviction.

- Reports will never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or an inevitable part of childhood.
- The DSL will consider referral to children's social care and the police, including the police threshold for rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, while safeguarding all children.
- The school will avoid automatic suspension or permanent exclusion and will consider safeguarding separation, timetable, supervision and reasonable adjustments in line with current guidance.
- Any Brook Traffic Light or other assessment resource is a professional aid only and will not replace statutory referral, contextual safeguarding or individual assessment.

7. Monitoring, Review and Governance

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Monitor incidents and trends
- Review safeguarding records
- Identify emerging concerns
- Evaluate the effectiveness of preventative work
- Report anonymised safeguarding information to governors

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor implementation of this policy
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective
- Review the policy annually

Lessons learned from incidents will be used to strengthen safeguarding practice, staff training and preventative education.

8. Policy Statement

At Great Leighs Primary School we are committed to ensuring every child feels safe, respected and valued.

In line with our vision:

Grow • Learn • Persevere • Succeed

we will work proactively with children, families, governors and partner agencies to prevent harmful sexual behaviour, support any child affected and maintain a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Policy Review Date: Autumn Term 2027

Responsible Officer: Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Version: 2026–2027 Governing Body Approved Edition

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