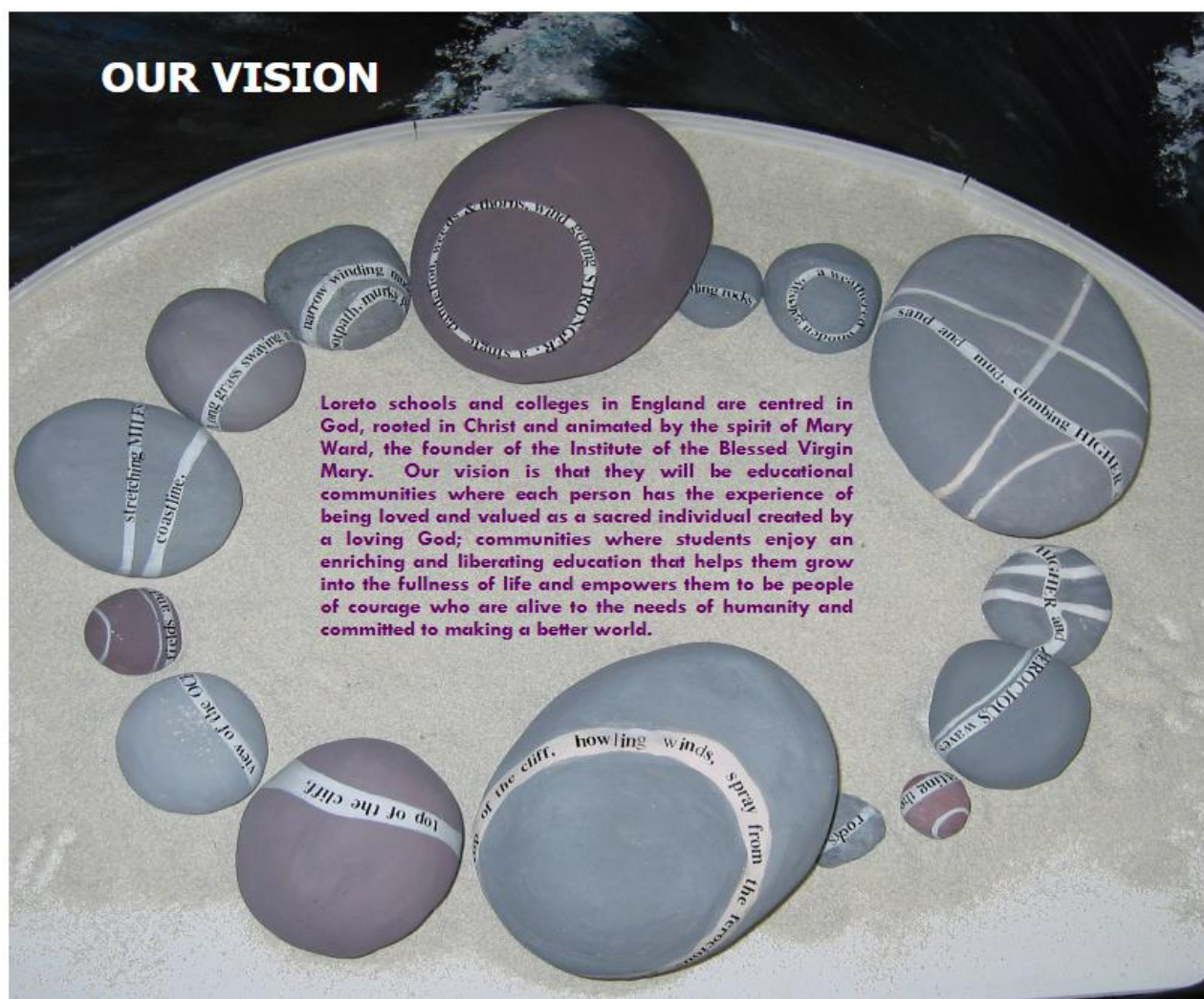


CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE POLICY



Date of revised policy approval	September 2026
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Distribution to	All Staff
Owner of policy	Headteacher
Approved by	Admissions Governors Committee
Reviewed and prepared by	DSL
Location of policy	HR Toolkit and School website





OUR MISSION STATEMENT

I am the Way

The Truth

And

The Life

(John 14:6)

At Loreto Grammar School Altrincham, students, staff, parents and Governors form a Catholic community. We aspire to create a caring, structured environment in which teaching and learning and the experience of school

- are characterised by joyful and loving service to others
- challenge each of us to realise our full potential in a spirit of joy and creativity
- encourage the pursuit of excellence
- uphold honesty, justice and mutual respect
- enable us to be questioning, independent learners and "seekers of truth"
- prepare each of us to meet with confidence the challenges of a changing world
- improve and enrich the life of the wider community and enable us to be an example of Christian values in the world as witnesses to God's Living Kingdom

Our values are centred in God, rooted in gospel values and derive from the vision of Mary Ward.

Love and speak the truth – at all times

(Mary Ward)



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Loreto Grammar School

At Loreto Grammar School Altrincham, students, staff, parents and governors form a Catholic community. We aspire to create a caring, structured environment in which teaching and learning and the experience of school:

- are characterised by joyful and loving service to others
- challenge each of us to realise our full potential in a spirit of joy and creativity
- encourage the pursuit of excellence
- uphold honesty, justice and mutual respect
- enable us to be questioning and "seekers of truth"
- prepare each of us to meet with confidence the challenges of a changing world
- improve and enrich the life of the wider community and enable us to be an example of Christian values in the world as witnesses to God's Living Kingdom

Our values are centred in God, rooted in gospel values and derive from the vision of Mary Ward. Our mission statement provides the foundation for this child-on-child abuse policy, which in turn forms part of our Behaviour Management Policy. Both policies have been drawn up with the involvement of the whole school community.

Purpose

We believe that there is excellent behaviour rooted in our Loreto ethos where students treat each other and staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. The purpose of this policy is to support the whole school community as we work towards the prevention of all forms of child-on-child abuse. This includes sustaining a safe environment which promotes trust, confidence, justice and fairness for all by consistently: recognising and identifying child-on-child abuse; raising staff and student awareness of child-on-child abuse and dealing swiftly and effectively with concerns when they occur.

Child-on-child abuse is referenced in the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Behaviour Management Policies. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with certain types of peer abuse necessitate this separate policy guidance.

Definition

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. It can be behaviour by an individual or a group and can include but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual assault (including causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent)
- sexual harassment including requests for nude/semi-nude images
- upskirting
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

This abuse can:



- be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special educational need or other differences
- result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim
- impact negatively on mental wellbeing

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.

- Significant disruption in their own lives.
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse.
- Educational under-achievement.
- Involvement in crime.

It is essential that all our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment: research suggests that downplaying certain behaviours has become normalised amongst young people, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of normalizing unacceptable behaviours. It can create an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. (KCSIE 2026).

At Loreto Grammar School staff who work with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. However, in terms of Child-on-child abuse we adopt an 'it is happening here' approach even when there may have been no reported incidents.

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.

Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2026 states that:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with' and that there are 'clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported.'

We are committed to ensuring the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately our system and processes operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

In addition:

School Governors

Monitor and review this policy.

Headteacher and Leadership Team

Communicate to all stakeholders and implement this policy and ensure all staff are trained.

DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) / Deputy DSL

Implement this policy and lead on investigations of allegations of harmful sexual behaviour (including sexual abuse or harassment).



Year Co-ordinators

Implement this policy and, in particular, investigate allegations of child-on-child abuse with the support of the Assistant Headteacher.

All Staff

Be familiar with and implement this policy. Be aware of possible signs of child-on-child abuse. Inform Year Co-ordinators of concerns about physical abuse or bullying. Inform the DSL/Deputy DSLs of any harmful sexual behaviour. Undergo relevant training.

Students

Report any incidents of child-on-child abuse that they are aware of and otherwise abide by this policy.

Parents

Report any concerns with regards to child-on-child abuse. Work constructively with the school to maintain student safety. At Loreto Grammar School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration of the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

The following policies are in place and should be read in conjunction with this one:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Managing Allegations / Whistleblowing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2026, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child' (Working Together, 2026). This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026; ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Abuse and harmful behaviour

It is necessary to consider:

- what abuse is and what it looks like
- how it can be managed
- what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm

In addition:

- children are vulnerable to abuse by other children. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures
- staff should be aware of the potential uses of technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people
- staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children



The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers. This list is not exhaustive.

Types of abuse – Part A

A1) Bullying

In the first instance, staff should report via CPOMS and the relevant Year Co-ordinator will be alerted to begin investigation.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, (usually) repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual either emotionally or physically.

There are several types of bullying including: cyber bullying, bullying related to race, faith, culture, gender, special education needs, appearance, medical conditions, sexual orientation, home circumstances or disability.

Bullying can take many forms including: name calling, making offensive remarks, inappropriate text messaging or email, inappropriate use of social networking platforms, sharing inappropriate images, gossiping, spreading hurtful rumours, excluding people from groups/activities as well as physical violence.

However, bullying isn't when friends fall out and one child is temporarily ostracised, although at times it can be misinterpreted as such. Loreto will work proactively to resolve such situations quickly and sympathetically. We have introduced the *Girls On Board* programme to support students in navigating through the choppy waters of friendships.

A2) Physical abuse

In the first instance, staff should report via CPOMS and the relevant Year Co-ordinator will be alerted to begin investigation.

This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or causing physical harm to another person by other means. There may be many reasons why a child harms another, and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

A3) Initiation / Hazing

Staff must always refer this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy via CPOMS.

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

A4) Racism, Phobic (Discriminatory) and Derogatory Behaviour

In the first instance, staff should report via CPOMS and the relevant Year Co-ordinator will be alerted to begin investigation.

The term discriminatory/derogatory behaviour refers to a range of hurtful behaviours, physical or emotional or both, which cause someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which are connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – for example disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and



social class) and sexual identity.

Reporting types of abuse – Part A

Students

There are a number of ways for a student to report an incident of peer abuse. First and foremost, students are encouraged to take any concerns to an adult within school e.g. Form tutor, Year Co-ordinator or other teacher, or to a peer mentor. There is also an email address that students can use (safeguarding@loretogrammar.co.uk) as well as anti-abuse boxes in the library, Student Services and the Post Box in the toilets near Rm 6.

Parents / carers

Parents and carers can report concerns by contacting School using the telephone number 0161 928 3703 or using the email address info@loretogrammar.co.uk or alternatively safeguarding@loretogrammar.co.uk

Reporting types of abuse – Part A (Staff)

Concerns regarding bullying, physical harm and racist, phobic (discriminatory) and derogatory behaviour will be reported to Yr Co-ordinators who will investigate and record on CPOMS. Initiation/hazing will be reported to the DSL/Deputy DSL using CPOMS. Once an incident of peer abuse has been confirmed, this will also be recorded in a central record held by the DSL and the student's SIMS behaviour module will be updated. Incidents are reported to the Governing Body. Reporting to the Police or Social Services by the DSL should be considered if abuse is significant.

Post identification procedures (reactive strategies) – Part A

A range of strategies and interventions are available as all students and all peer abuse incidents are individual. It should be made clear to the 'victim' that their concerns are being taken seriously, and that appropriate action will be taken.

Once a suspected incident of peer abuse is brought to the attention of a Year Co-ordinator or DSL/Deputy DSL, it will be investigated. This will involve speaking with the 'victim', the 'perpetrator/s' and any witnesses. Once an instance of peer abuse has been substantiated, restorative strategies will then be employed. Student records will be updated as outlined in Recording.

Ongoing support for the victim and the perpetrator will be considered e.g. pastoral mentoring.

Consequences – Part A

If the restorative approaches fail, a clear set of sanctions will be imposed, in line with Loreto's Behaviour Management Policy. In rare circumstances it may be appropriate to impose sanctions immediately.

Types of abuse – Part B: Harmful Sexual Behaviour

B1) Sexual violence and sexual harassment

This must always be referred immediately to the DSL and Deputy DSL. The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Part 5.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. It can occur both inside and outside of school and online and offline.

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many



reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as it is to the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may include:

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

B2) Requests / sharing of nudes and semi-nudes or indecent imagery

This must always be reported immediately via CPOMS or contacting the DSL

This usually involves the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. This can be an example of sexual harassment. This includes images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes', as well as photographs, videos and livestreams. Staff should treat AI-generated or altered sexual imagery of a pupil with exactly the same seriousness and follow exactly the same immediate referral route to the DSL/Deputy DSL, as a real photograph or video.

B3) Upskirting

This must always be reported immediately via CPOMS or contacting the DSL

This 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. It is a criminal offence. Anyone, of any gender, can be a victim.

B4) Teenage relationship abuse

This must always be reported immediately via CPOMS or contacting the DSL

Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

Recognising peer abuse (harmful sexual behaviour)

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed by the DSL/Deputy DSL and consider:

- chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability



- all alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- what was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- the effect on the victim
- any attempts to ensure the 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

Reporting harmful sexual behaviour

Students

There are a number of ways for a student to report an incident of peer abuse. First and foremost, students are encouraged to take any concerns to an adult within school e.g. Form tutor, Year Co-ordinator or other teacher, or to a peer mentor. There is also an email address that students can use (safeguarding@loretogrammar.co.uk) as well as anti-abuse boxes in the library, at Student Services and in the toilet block in Babthorpe.

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers can report concerns by contacting School using the telephone number 0161 928 3703 or using the email address info@loretogrammar.co.uk. There is an additional email address of safeguarding@loretogrammar.co.uk.

Taking action – staff

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the student(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Create a risk assessment (and safety plan if appropriate)
- Record all incidents and all action taken on CPOMS

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the facts. Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions such as 'What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?'. Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

It is equally important to deal with the matter sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

Recording harmful sexual behaviour – staff

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around
- Record on CPOMS
- Once an incident of peer abuse has been confirmed, this will be recorded in a central record held by the DSL
- The student's SIMS behaviour module will be updated
- Incidents are reported to the Governing Body



Consider the intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on the next course of action

The DSL/Deputy DSL will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If Trafford First Response and the Police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

1. Informing parents/carers

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Is the pupil 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

2. Points to consider

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved?

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

Repetition

Consider if the behaviour has been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion. In the same way it must be considered if the behaviour has persisted towards an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved.

3. Next steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur



again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

The support they may require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a member of the safeguarding or pastoral team. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends, in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group, for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour, it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

Aftercare

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by our Governors. Students will be audited on an annual basis. The procedures outlined in this policy will be evaluated annually by Year Co-ordinators.



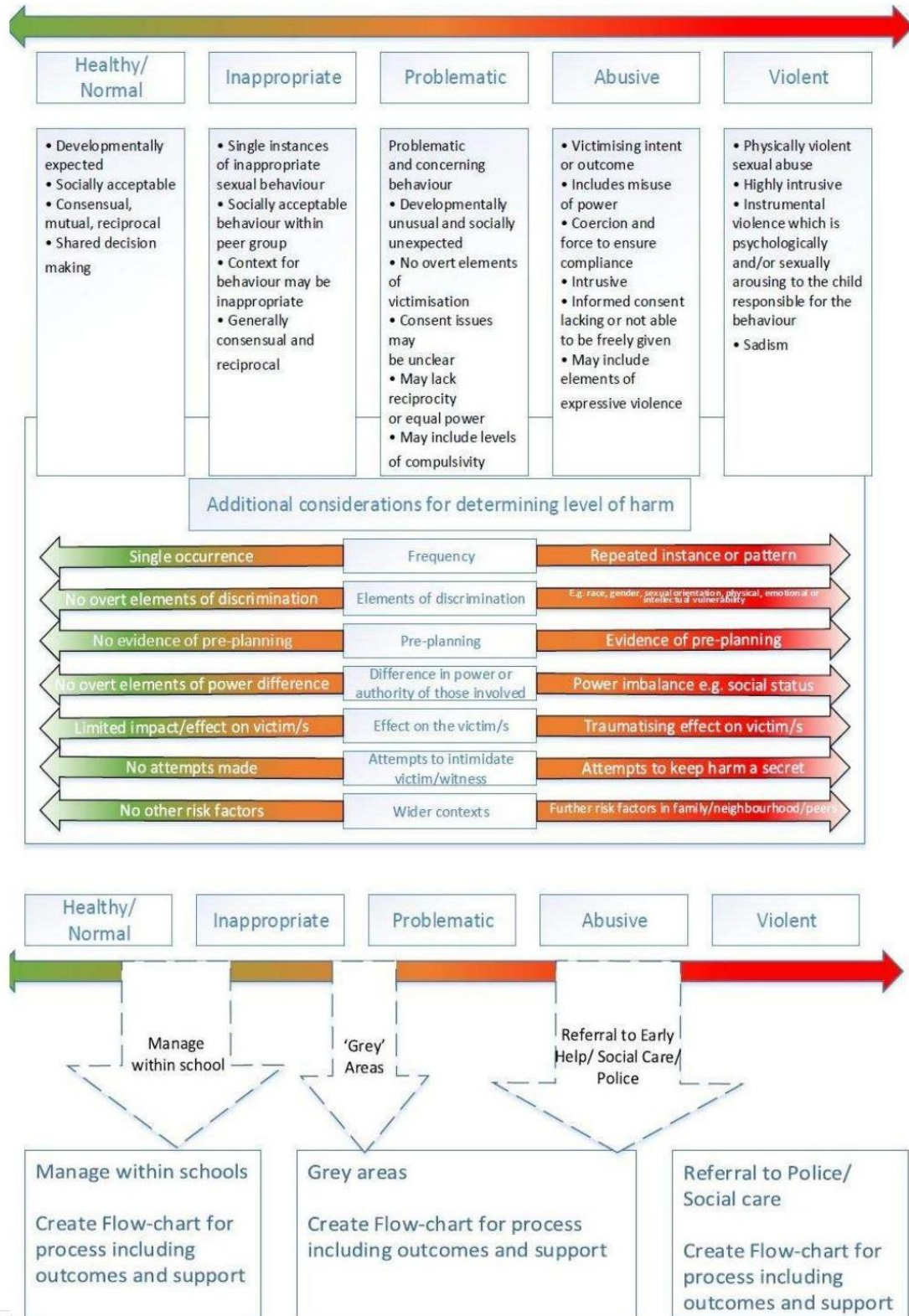
Prevention (proactive strategies)

As stated above, our main aim is to prevent child-on-child abuse at Loreto Grammar School. Child-on-child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. It is important to develop appropriate strategies to proactively prevent child-on-child abuse.

We will do this primarily by creating an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them; students will be consistently reminded of ways to report concerns. We will also achieve this through the education of students e.g. at assemblies, in PSHCE and Form Period (where abusive and prejudiced behaviour is addressed) with the aim of making sure students are clear about the part they can play in the prevention of child-on-child abuse, including when they find themselves as a bystander. Young people are also encouraged to play their part in creating a positive ethos in School by participating in students' bodies such as the School Council and the Mental Health Working Party and by participating in student voice activities. Staff also receive suitable training and are asked to be vigilant with regards to inappropriate comments and/or behaviour. Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Parents will be given access to this policy and are encouraged to contact school with concerns.

Annex A – Harmful Sexual Behaviour

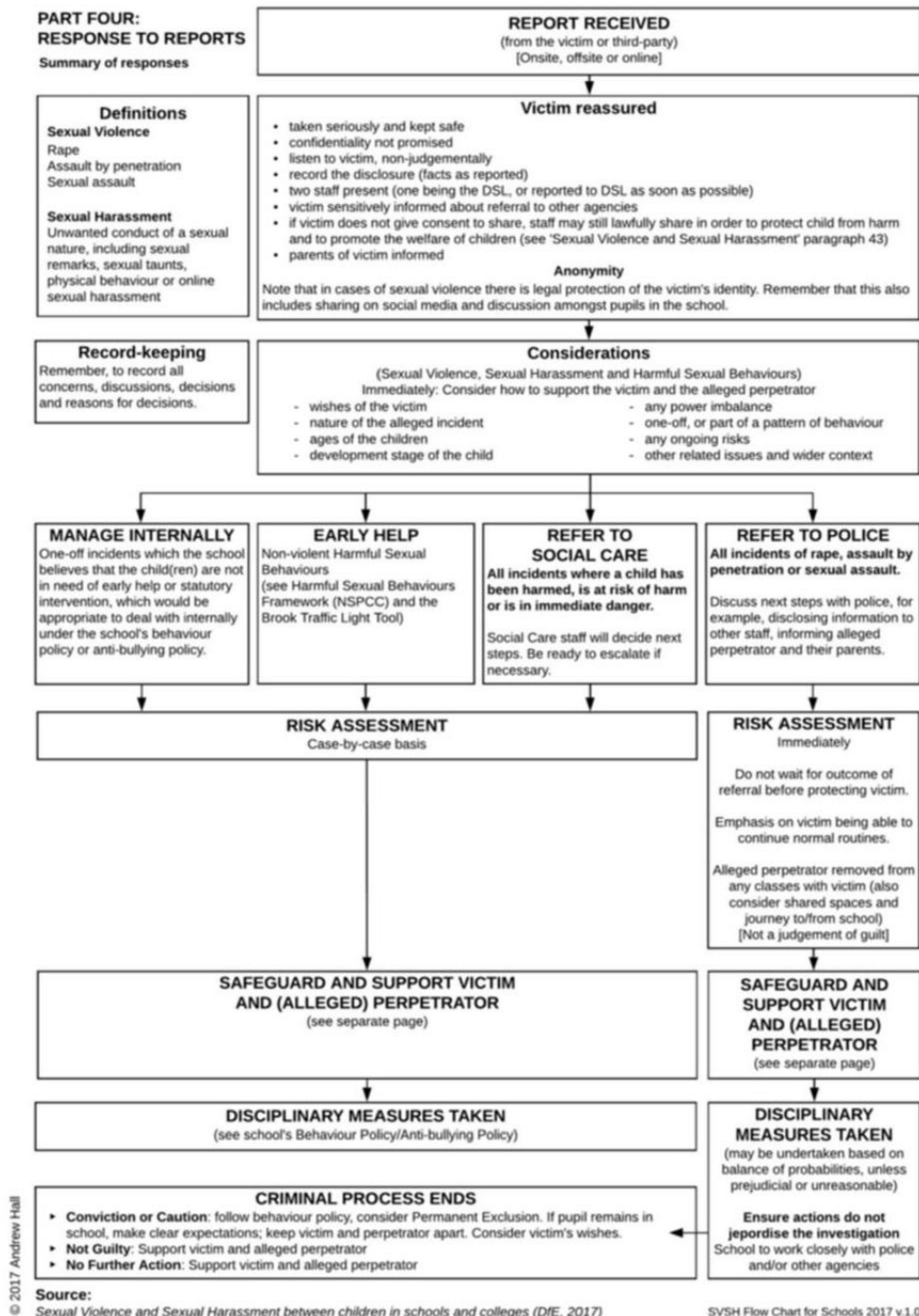
Annex A





Annex B – Response to Reports (Flowchart)

Annex B



Source: Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2017). SVSH Flow Chart for Schools 2017 v.1.0 © 2017 Andrew Hall



Annex C – Further Information

Where to go for further information:

DfE: KCSIE 2026

DfE: Statutory guidance: Working together to safeguard children, 2026

DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation at school, 2022

DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017

DfE: Teaching Online Safety in Schools, June 2019

DfE: Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education, 2025

DfE: Behaviour and discipline in schools, 2024

DfE: Mental health and behaviour in schools, 2018

UKCIS: Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online, 2017

Gov.uk: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

NPCC: When to call the police

Annex D – Glossary

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. See Annex A.

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).

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. 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.