Priors Hall – a learning community

Child on Child Abuse:

Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy

2026 - 2027

'Ready for Learning, Ready for Life'

Adopted September 2026

Review July 2027

Introduction

Priors Hall – a learning community, recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Child on child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter", "growing up", or gender stereotypes such as "boys being boys". 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 identified we will follow our safeguarding procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)

• Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school, such as the Positive Relationships Policy, Anti- Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy and Online Safety Policy. This policy concentrates on child on child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child on child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Aims

The policy will:

• Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing child on child abuse

• Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people involved.

- Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by a peer, parents or adults in the community.

Understanding child on child sexual violence and harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement, emotional and physical health and

wellbeing. Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

Defining Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB)

All behaviour takes place on a scale. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on the scale is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. In this policy, we recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB). We are adopting the NSPCC definition of HSB as:

"Sexual behaviours expressed by children…that are developmentally inappropriate, may be
harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child…or adult."

We will also use Simon Hackett's continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours (**Appendix 1**) along side the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool adapted from Family Planning Queensland (2012).

Vulnerable groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk, however we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include:

⇒ experience of abuse within their family;
⇒ living with domestic violence;
⇒ young people in care;

⇒ children who go missing;
⇒ children with additional needs (SEND and/or disabilities);
⇒ children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

Whilst research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by other children and girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools, this is not confined solely to girls. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gang cultures or CCE issues. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child on child abuse but they may do so in gendered ways.

All staff working at Priors Hall have had thorough safeguarding training on induction and are aware of indicators, signalling that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Responding to alleged incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of child on child abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Jen Forshaw), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Tess McQuade and Jacques White) or Designated Safeguarding Officers (Charlotte Brazier, Justin Pye, Alex Crawford, Lucy Nisbet and Calla Haycock-Hall) taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies

such as social care or the police as required. All concerns are logged electronically onto CPOMS and read by the DSL, DDSL or DSOs.

The immediate response to a report

• Priors Hall will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.

• Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.

• A written report will be made as soon after the interview 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.

• Where the report includes an online element Priors Hall 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.

• An initial risk assessment will be put in place to stop risk of further immediate harm; this may involve contacting MASH and speaking with parents as appropriate.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding lead (DDSL or DSO) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

• The victim, especially their protection and support;

• The alleged perpetrator; and

• All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at Priors Hall, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them; risk assessments will be recorded on CPOMs and will be kept under review.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSLs or DSOs) will ensure they are engaging with MASH or partnership officer where appropriate.

See **Appendix 3** for the IFTL Sexual Harassment / Violence Report Triage Tool template.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Following an incident, we will consider:

• 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;

• The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;

• The ages of the children involved;

• The developmental stages of the children involved;

• Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?

• If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;

• Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and other related issues and wider context?

Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom:

Whilst Priors Hall's Senior Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

• The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.

• We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on Priors Hall's premises and on transport to and from the school.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Options to manage the report

Manage internally

1. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored on CPOMs

2. In line with point 1 above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from 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 harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to the Northamptonshire MASH Team, following locally agreed protocols.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or DDSL/DSO) will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be made through the MASH as above. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or DDSL/DSO) will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this will be passed on to the police.

Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. Where a report has been made to the police, Priors Hall Senior Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers.

Senior Leaders will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the

police will be sought in order to help us. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, Priors Hall will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our Positive Relationships Policy. If the perpetrator remains in school, we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils in the school. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online). Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary.

A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies (see **Appendix 2**). We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL or Headteacher will support this move. Where there is a criminal investigation the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport if appropriate. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils). Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our Positive Relationships Policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the victim and perpetrator would remain in separate classes and the Headteacher and DSL would continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport (if necessary). The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in

such cases. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons).

In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child on child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment in this policy, physical assaults and initiation violence from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated, and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police. The principles from the Anti-Bullying Policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum (**Appendix 1**) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group

• is problematic and concerning

• involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability

• involves an element of coercion or pre-planning

• involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour

• involves a misuse of power

Online Behaviour

Many forms of child on child abuse include an element of online behaviour, including behaviours such as cyberbullying, sexting or youth produced sexual imagery or the sharing of such imagery inclusive of artificially created sexual imagery such as 'deep fakes'. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found in the Anti- Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Child Protection Policy.

Prevention and raising awareness

Priors Hall – a learning community actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child on child abuse by:

• Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding Team, staff and volunteers, children and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child on child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes

(a) Contextual Safeguarding;

(b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and

(c) The importance of taking seriously all forms of child on child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child on child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing.

• Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child on child abuse via PSHE, RSE and the wider curriculum.

• Pupils are frequently told 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.

• They are regularly informed about the Priors Hall's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of child on child abuse.

• Engaging parents on this issue by:

(a)Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;

(b) Encouraging parents to hold the Priors Hall to account on this issue.

• Ensuring that all child on child abuse issues are fed back to the Priors Hall's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who maybe in need of additional support. This is done by way of regular safeguarding meeting at which all concerns about pupils (including child on child abuse) are discussed.

• Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);

• Working with Governors, IFtL, Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of understanding and acceptance and respect amongst all members of the school community;

• Creating conditions in which our pupils can 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-judgmental environment, and have them listened to; and

• Responding to cases of child on child abuse promptly and appropriately.

Multi-agency working

Priors Hall actively engages with its local partners in relation to child on child abuse, and works closely with Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, Northamptonshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies, and other schools. The relationships Priors Hall has built with these partners are essential to ensuring we are able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of child on child abuse. They help Priors Hall:

(a) To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist;

(b) To ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly;

(c) To support and help inform our local community's response to child on child abuse;

(d) To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils.

Priors Hall – a learning community actively refers concerns/allegations of child on child abuse where necessary to Northamptonshire MASH (or equivalent), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies.

Children resident out of county but attending a Northamptonshire school /academy will be reported to their home MASH or equivalent Social Care.

In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm and abuse and who have LAC status, the children's social worker must be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns will be required.

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Priors Hall – a Learning Community has an unwavering commitment to safeguarding to ensure that: all our children and young people are safe and feel safe; that children, parents/carers and staff are able to talk about any safeguarding concerns and feel assured that they will be listened to; and that all staff and volunteers are aware of and implement safeguarding procedures and guidance, including what to do if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm. In essence, we instil a culture of vigilance.

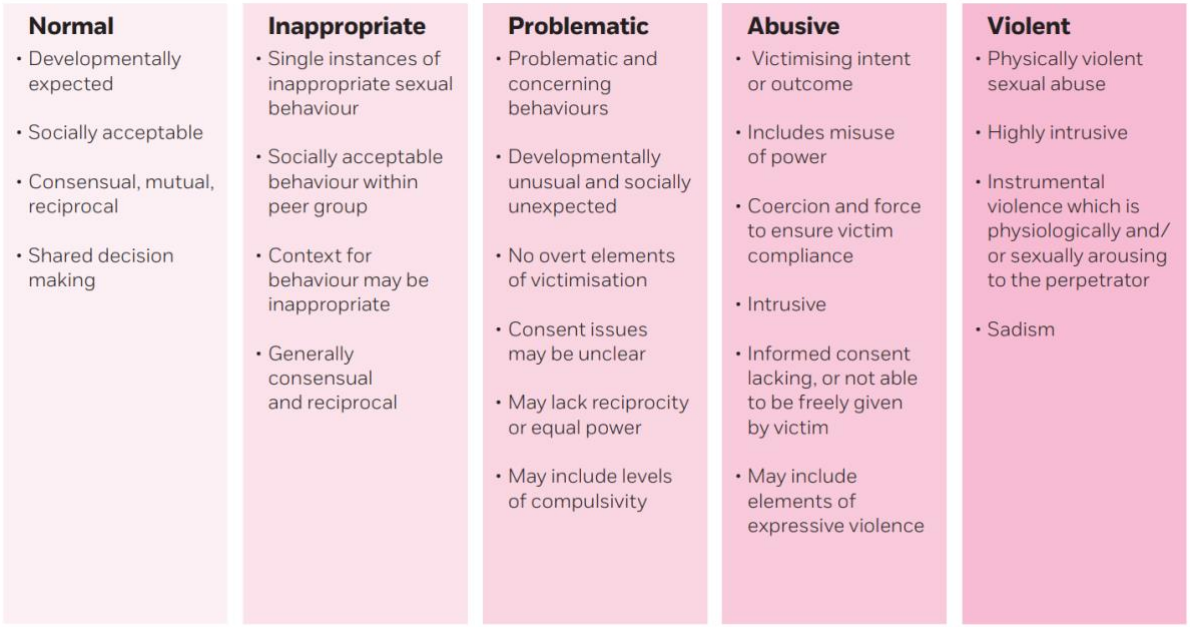
All concerns should be given to our school Designated Safeguarding Leads: **Jenny Forshaw (DSL) Jacqueline White (Assistant Headteacher and DDSL), Tess McQuade (Headteacher and DDSL), Justin Pye (Assistant Head and DSO), Charlotte Brazier (Assistant Head and**

DSO), Alex Crawford (Nursery Lead Teacher and DSO), Lucy Nisbet (SENDCo and DSO) and Calla Haycock-Hall (Pastoral Lead and DSO).

- In any case where an adult is concerned that a child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm they must report this immediately to the DSL or to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will make a referral directly to Northamptonshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **0300 126 7000**.
- If a child or other person is at immediate risk of harm, the first response should always be to call the police on **999.** This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of Priors Hall – a Learning Community.
- If a concern is in relation to a member of staff at Priors Hall (who is not the Headteacher), please contact Tess McQuade on **01536 216090** to report this concern.
- If a concern is in relation to the Headteacher, please contact the Chair of Governors (Matt Miller) via email on SBoak@IFTL.co.uk or IFTL Safeguarding Lead (Victoria Blackmore) via email on vblackmore@iftl.co.uk.

Appendix 1 Hackett Model

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



https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/publications/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf

Appendix 2 - Useful Publications and Websites

Government Publications

Keeping Children safe in Education –

Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026)

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement

Gangs and Youth Violence | Safeguarding Network

Preventing and tackling bullying in schools

Preventing and tackling bullying

Other useful documents

Sexting

Sexting in schools and colleges-Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people

Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

Child on child abuse

Farrer &Co - Child on child abuse toolkit, guidance on peer-on peer abuse policy and

template child on child abuse policy

https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/updated-dfe-guidance-and-our-peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit-for-schools/

Anti-bullying alliance

There are some useful links on the section on sexual bullying:-

Equally safe at school.org

Equally Safe at School | A whole school approach to preventing gender based violence

Preventing abuse among children and young people-guidance from Stop it Now

Stop It Now - Preventing child sexual abuse

What is Age appropriate?

http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/what-is-age-appropriate

NSPCC-Harmful sexual behaviour

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/

Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education HMSO

Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK

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Appendix 3 Sexual Harassment / Violence Report Triage Tool

SEXUAL HARASSMENT / VIOLENCE REPORT TRIAGE TOOL

Name of victim		**Date of incident**	
Alleged perpetrator		**Time of incident**	
Staff taking disclosure		**Location of incident (in or out of school)**	

This document is based on: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (publishing.service.gov.uk)

WHAT TO CONSIDER	DSL COMMENTS	Rating 1 to 5 (1 = low / no to 5 = high / definite)
1. 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 should 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 or college's duty and responsibilities to protect other children;		
2. The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed (as set out on paragraphs 18- 22);		
3. The ages of the children involved;		
4. The developmental stages of the children involved;		
5. Is there any power imbalance between the children. For example, is an alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;		

6. Is 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);		
7. Has the sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers;		
8. Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff?; and		
9. Other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.		
	Total score / 45	

VICTIMS VIEWS: Use quotes and be factual of their exact words

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: The starting point regarding any report should always be that there is a zerotolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

Ofsted BA EIF handbook:

"...Permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and when allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school."

Date:_____ Name: _____ Signature: _____

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