



# Cardinal Allen Catholic High School

## Anti-bullying Policy

- Including child on child abuse

September 2025

At Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, respect for the dignity of each individual is at the heart of our mission and we aim to create a sense of order and self-discipline for pupils, which reflects the Christian values and ethos of our school.

### 1. Introduction

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School is committed to ensuring that all pupils are safe, supported and treated with dignity and respect. As a Catholic community, we live by our mission to 'Live to Make Christ Known'. We are dedicated to creating an environment where all members of our school community understand that abuse in any form is unacceptable. We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers intentionally or unintentionally. Child-on-child abuse can cause serious harm and must be treated with the same level of care, professionalism and urgency as any other safeguarding concern.

This policy outlines our approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to child-on-child abuse in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, and statutory guidance including:

[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

Linked policies:

[Child-Protection-and-Safeguarding-Policy-25-26.pdf](#)

[Behaviour-Policy-June-2025-1.pdf](#)

[Mobile-Phones-and-Social-Networking-September-2025.pdf](#)

[Online-Safety-Policy-September-2025.pdf](#)

### 2. School Commitment

At Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, the governing body, senior leadership team, and all staff are committed to:

- Preventing the occurrence of child-on-child abuse;
- Identifying and responding appropriately to concerns or disclosures;
- Providing ongoing support for all children affected;
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies;
- Embedding a whole-school safeguarding culture through our Christian ethos of compassion, justice and respect.

### 3. Definition of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial or coercive control exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, or peer groups. For the purposes of this policy and in line with KCSIE 2025, the term child refers to anyone under the age of 18.

Examples include:

- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, etc.)
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Sexual violence or sexual harassment
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images (sexting)
- Upskirting (criminal offence)

- Coercive control or emotional harm
- Initiation/hazing rituals
- Abuse facilitated online, including grooming or harassment

Abuse is abuse, and it will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, or “part of growing up”.

#### 4. Contextual Safeguarding

We adopt a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that incidents of child-on-child abuse may occur inside and outside the school environment and may be influenced by peer relationships, community factors or online activity. We work collaboratively with external partners to identify and respond to these wider influences on pupils’ safety and wellbeing.

#### 5. Prevention

Our preventative work is embedded across the curriculum and wider school life through:

- High-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and PSHE (LIFE) programmes;
- Promoting positive relationships based on respect, empathy and consent;
- Clear and consistent expectations through our Behaviour Policy;
- Online safety education and monitoring in line with our Online Safety Policy;
- Assemblies, pastoral programmes, and mentoring schemes;
- Staff training to ensure awareness of emerging risks and patterns of behaviour;
- Where present, use of CCTV;
- Duty roster for staff: key areas are patrolled before school, break, lunchtime and after school;
- A clear transition process to Cardinal Allen Catholic High School;
- Early identification and intervention by the pastoral and safeguarding teams;
- Mentors (Year 10 pupils) who receive training to help and support pupils.

#### 6. Identification and Vulnerability

Any child can be vulnerable to child-on-child abuse. Some pupils, however, may be more at risk, including those who:

- Have experienced abuse or trauma.
- Have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Identify as LGBTQ+ or are exploring their identity.
- Are socially isolated or experience peer rejection.
- Have experienced online abuse or coercion.

Staff are trained to recognise indicators of abuse, including unexplained injuries, withdrawal, anxiety, distress, changes in friendships, or sexualised behaviour. All concerns are logged on CPOMS and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### 7. Understanding Behaviour: Hackett’s Continuum

The school recognises that sexual behaviour exists on a spectrum. Professor Simon Hackett’s Continuum Model (2019) and the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool, support staff in identifying whether behaviour is:

- Green: Developmentally expected and consensual.
- Amber: Concerning, inappropriate, or problematic.
- Red: Harmful, abusive, or violent.

This framework helps staff to respond proportionately and ensures that support and intervention are appropriate to the behaviour observed.

## 8. Reporting and Response Procedures

All reports of child-on-child abuse must be taken seriously, recorded accurately, and dealt with swiftly. Staff must never promise confidentiality and must reassure pupils that they will be listened to and supported. Any concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse will be addressed as follows:

### 1. Initial Response

- Listen carefully, without interruption or judgment, and take the disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the pupil that they are believed and supported.
- Do not investigate, ask leading questions, or promise confidentiality.

### 2. Recording

- Record the disclosure on CPOMS immediately and inform a member of the safeguarding team.

### 3. Assessment and Action

- A member/s of the safeguarding team assesses immediate safety needs of all pupils involved.
- Decisions will be made regarding internal management, early help, or referral to statutory agencies.
- Risk and needs assessment completed if deemed necessary (victim, alleged perpetrator, others).
- Parents/carers informed unless this puts a child at further risk.

### 4. Support for Pupils

- Victims, alleged perpetrators, and any other affected pupils will receive appropriate pastoral and safeguarding support.
- Review meetings will be arranged to monitor safety and wellbeing.

### 5. Online Incidents

- Managed under the Online Safety Policy; digital evidence preserved, and relevant agencies informed.

### 6. Review and Learning

- The case is reviewed to ensure effective resolution and to identify learning for school policy and practice.

## 9. Multi-Agency Working

The school works closely with Lancashire Children's Social Care, the Police, and the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a coordinated response to incidents. Referrals will follow local safeguarding procedures as outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All information shared or recorded in relation to safeguarding concerns, including child-on-child abuse, is managed in line with the school's Data Protection Policy and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Confidentiality is maintained at all times, and information is only shared with relevant professionals on a need-to-know basis to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

## 10. Recording, Monitoring and Review

All incidents of child-on-child abuse will be recorded on CPOMS and reviewed regularly to identify patterns or emerging risks. The DSL provides regular safeguarding reports to the Headteacher and Governing Body. The policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in statutory guidance.

## Appendix A: Definitions and Examples of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse encompasses a broad range of behaviours and may take place in person or online. The examples below align with statutory definitions and are intended to help staff identify and respond appropriately.

### 1. Physical Abuse

Includes hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. It may also include initiation rituals or hazing-type violence where physical harm is inflicted on another pupil to gain acceptance or status within a group.

## 2. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and DfE guidance as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online or offline, inside or outside school. This includes:

- Sexual comments or name-calling
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting
- Unwanted touching or groping
- Displaying or sharing sexual images
- Pressuring others into sexual acts or image sharing
- Rape or assault by penetration (criminal offences)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Upskirting (criminal offence)

## 3. Sharing of Nude and Semi-Nude Images

Also known as 'sexting' or 'youth-produced sexual imagery', this includes consensual or non-consensual creation, possession, or sharing of explicit images of a child under 18. All incidents must be reported to the DSL immediately and managed in line with the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance and the school's Online Safety Policy.

## 4. Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Includes persistent name-calling, humiliation, manipulation, gaslighting, threats, or intimidation that causes emotional harm. It may involve exclusion, isolation, or coercion within friendships or peer groups.

## 5. Bullying and Cyberbullying

Behaviour that is deliberately hurtful, repeated, and causes harm to another individual. Cyberbullying involves the use of technology such as social media, messaging, gaming, or image-sharing platforms to intimidate or humiliate others. All incidents are managed in line with the Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.

## 6. Coercive Control and Financial Abuse

Includes controlling behaviour that restricts another child's freedom, friendships, or access to money or possessions. It can also include the use of threats, emotional manipulation, or blackmail to maintain power or control.

## 7. Abuse within Intimate Peer Relationships

Some young people may experience harmful or controlling behaviours within romantic or sexual relationships. These may include sexual pressure, jealousy, isolation, coercion, or violence. Such abuse is treated with the same seriousness as adult domestic abuse and referred to appropriate agencies as needed.

## 8. Online and Digital Abuse

Online behaviour can include harassment, threats, image-based abuse, grooming, or manipulation via messaging, gaming, or social media. Staff should recognise that online abuse can occur alongside in-person abuse or be entirely virtual. All cases are managed following the Online Safety Policy and in consultation with the DSL.

## Appendix B: Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

The Brook Traffic Light Tool provides a recognised framework for identifying and categorising sexual behaviours in children and young people. It helps professionals distinguish between healthy, problematic, and harmful behaviours so that they can respond proportionately and safeguard appropriately.

### Green – Healthy Sexual Behaviour

- These behaviours are:
- Developmentally appropriate
  - Consensual and mutual

- Occur between children of similar age or developmental stage
- Fun, curious, and light-hearted

Examples:

- Holding hands or kissing between peers of similar age
- Age-appropriate curiosity or discussion about relationships
- Private exploration or self-touching within developmentally expected limits

### Amber – Inappropriate or Concerning Sexual Behaviour

These behaviours may be:

- Outside a child's developmental stage
- Non-mutual or involve some level of coercion
- Linked to other safeguarding concerns

Examples:

- Sexualised language or gestures that are excessive or aggressive
- Simulated sexual acts or persistent focus on sexual content
- Sharing of sexual jokes or images in a coercive way

Action:

- Record and discuss with the DSL for assessment and possible early intervention.

### Red – Harmful or Abusive Sexual Behaviour

These behaviours are:

- Coercive, manipulative, or aggressive
- Involve power imbalances, threats, or secrecy
- Potentially criminal offences

Examples:

- Forcing or pressuring another child into sexual acts
- Sexual assault, rape, or exploitation
- Distribution or creation of explicit images of minors

Action:

- Immediate referral to DSL, social care, and/or police.
- Record on CPOMS and follow statutory safeguarding procedures.

## Safeguarding Team

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Mrs L Garside

**Deputy DSLs:** Mrs A Buchanan, Mrs J Carey, Mr T Farrington, Mrs K Holme, Miss C Smith and Mr D Sutcliffe

**Safeguarding Governor:** Mr S Doherty

**Heads Of School:** Lower School Mrs J Olver-Duffy, Middle School Mrs C Bateman, Upper School Mrs A Isherwood

**Pastoral Assistants:**

Year 7 Mrs J Carey; Year 8 Mrs J Walsh; Year 9 Mrs T Savage; Year 10 Mrs A Buchanan; Year 11 Mrs K Holme



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