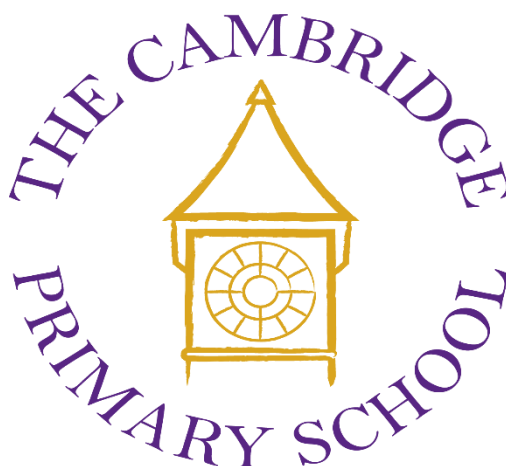


THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Inspiring Minds Together'

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS POLICY

2024



Date of Approval:	Nov 2024
Date of Next Review:	Nov 2025

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Managing Allegations Against other Pupils Policy

The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024', states that governing bodies should ensure policies state 'how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with'. This policy has been written in line with Hampshire County Council's Model Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

INTENT

At The Cambridge Primary School, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their conduct will be dealt with under The Cambridge Primary School's Behaviour and Relationships policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding policy in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). The Managing Allegations Against other Pupils Policy is firmly established and understood by the whole school community. The ethos of the school as reflected in our Vision Statement and our Behaviour and Relationships policy incorporates measures that we hope will prevent child-on child abuse and subsequently, pupils making allegations against other pupils.

At the Cambridge Primary School, we intend:

- To minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils
- To clarify the allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues
- To explain the safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people
- To provide a clear procedure to follow if an allegation against a pupil is made

IMPLEMENTATION

Minimising the risk of allegations against other pupils

At the Cambridge Primary School, we will implement:

- A developmentally appropriate PSHE curriculum which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- Modelling of appropriate social interactions.
- Effective systems for children to be able to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, supported, believed and valued, and that the issues raised will be looked into and addressed.
- Targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.
- Robust risk assessments and targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.
- Engagement with specialist support and interventions.

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Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. In these circumstances, it is important that the SEND policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policy should be considered in conjunction with this.

Some of the Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

- Physical Abuse:
 - Violence, particularly pre-planned
 - Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse:

- Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse:

- Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting and youth produced sexual imagery).

Sexual Exploitation:

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

The safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people¹

The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require difficult professional judgments. Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young

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people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. In our society generally the age at which children become sexually active has steadily dropped. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation. It may also be difficult to be sure that what has or has been alleged to have taken place definitely does have a sexual component.

As usual, important decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, on the basis of an assessment of the children's best interests. Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children;
- Any disability or special needs of the children;
- Their social and family circumstance;
- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed;
- Any evidence of pressure to engage in sexual activity;
- Any indication of sexual exploitation.

There are also contextual factors. Gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge can all be used to exert power. A sexual predator may sometimes be a woman or girl and the victim a boy.

Procedure to follow if an allegation against a pupil is made

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern (see above), the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed and procedure followed for recording the disclosure.
- When the allegation has not been made by the victim directly, (for example, by a friend or in an overheard conversation), staff should not assume that someone else is responding to the incident or concern and should speak to the DSL whilst bearing in mind why the victim has chosen not to make a report themselves.
- When an allegation is stated to have taken place away from the school premises, online, and/or when there are children from different schools involved, the safeguarding principles remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing will be especially important.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation on CPOMs, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL will consider;
 - The wishes of the victim.
 - The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
 - Ages of the children/young people involved.
 - Developmental stages of the children/young people.
 - Any power imbalance between the children/young people.

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- Any previous incidents.
 - On-going risks.
 - Other related issues or wider context.
- The DSL will manage the report with the following options:
 - Manage internally
 - Refer to Early Help
 - Refer to Children's Social Care- The DSL should contact the children's reception team (CRT) to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate. If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, CRT will refer the case to the multi-agency agency safeguarding hub where the police will become involved.
 - Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.
 - The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils.
 - It may be appropriate to suspend the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
 - Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
 - In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. The risk assessment will consider: the victim, especially their protection and support; the alleged cause of risk, their support needs and any discipline action; all other children at the school; the victim and the alleged cause of risk, sharing classes and space at school.
 - The risk assessment should be kept under review and the plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
 - A support plan, focusing on restorative justice and emotional well-being, will be put in place for both the cause of risk, and the victim.

IMPACT

At the Cambridge Primary School, we monitor the impact of this policy through:

- Weekly Safeguarding Meetings, reviewing record keeping, procedures and incidents
- Pupil conferencing and surveys, ensuring pupils feel comfortable and confident to name and talk to a trusted adult in the school and knowing what constitutes respectful friendships
- Quality Assurance of the planning, teaching and learning of RSE and PSHE
- Parent surveys, ensuring parents feel confident that allegations, concerns and incidents are handled appropriately creating a safe environment and community

The outcome of this monitoring is presented to the Local Advisory Committee through the safeguarding update at half-termly meetings. It is also reflected in our annual safeguarding audit (Hampshire County Council template).

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ⁱ Taken from The safeguarding implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review (2015)

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