CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

COLLEGE COMMITMENT

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 College and other children. This is enshrined in the founding principles of the College which exists as a Salesian school to provide an environment where all can flourish in an atmosphere of loving kindness, the hallmark of an authentic Salesian education.

Research has shown that teenagers do not always understand what constitutes abusive behaviours and controlling behaviours which could escalate to physical abuse, e.g. checking someone's 'phone, telling them what to wear, who they can/can't see or speak to; or that this abuse is prevalent within teenage relationships. Further research shows that teenagers are likely not to understand what consent means within their relationships. They often hold the common misconception that rape could only be committed by a stranger down a dark alley and do not understand or recognise that it could happen within their own relationships.

This can lead to these abusive behaviours feeling 'normal' and therefore left unchallenged or not reported as they are not recognised as being abusive.

In response to these research findings the College will provide education to help prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of abusive relationships, by encouraging them to rethink their views of violence, abuse and controlling behaviours, and understand what consent means within their relationships. This can be evidenced in curriculum lessons, PSHE sessions, external "talks" and pastoral assemblies.

Even if there are no reports, it does not mean that child on child abuse is not happening. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding leads. Staff receive training on the process and procedures associated with this in the annual September inset with a key focus on safeguarding.

Salesian College accepts and acknowledges its responsibility to refer child-on-child abuse to the police if there is a risk of **significant harm**, which is the threshold for intervention under the Children Act 1989. This involves a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm (physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect). Schools should consider the seriousness of the incident, the age of the children involved, and any aggravating factors to determine the level of harm and decide whether to involve police or refer to local authority children's services.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION (KCSIE) 2025

Salesian College Farnborough recognises that children can abuse other children and that such abuse can take many forms, including bullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and online abuse. This policy is informed by and complies with the statutory guidance set out in the Department for Education's **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025**, which came into force on 1 September 2025. In line with Part Five of KCSiE 2025, the College takes all allegations seriously and ensures a proportionate, child-centred response that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all involved. All staff must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

KCSiE 2025 Updates

Terminology. Sensitivity: Schools are advised to be cautious with terms like *"victim"* and *"perpetrator"*, and instead use language that aligns with how the child identifies.

Part Five Focus. This section outlines how schools should respond to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children, including:

- Immediate safeguarding response
- Risk assessments
- Support for both parties
- Ongoing monitoring

Online Safety Risks Expanded. The guidance now includes misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories as safeguarding risks under online safety.

Shore Space Resource. A new link to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Shore Space is included, offering confidential support for young people concerned about harmful sexual behaviour

KEY DEFINITION OF CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

Child on child abuse can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur between a group of children towards a single child or group of children.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- abuse in intimate relationships between children is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse' (KCSiE 2025)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- can include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others - for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children (KCSiE 2025)

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur in school or out of school, online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. These can be cases which are familial or extra familial. The College notes the distinction set out in KCSiE 2025 and recognises how this statutory guidance refers to:

- Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims
- Witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children
- Children can be victims, and perpetrators, in their own relationships too
- The abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

COLLEGE COMMITMENT

We have a zero-tolerance policy on child-on-child abuse. We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Child on child abuse should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". This can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

Prevention:

- Taking a whole college approach to safeguarding & child protection. Staff Inset training in September draws staff attention to this area
- Providing training to staff via Insets, refresher sessions and regular updates via staff bulletins and the regular College newsletter
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the College's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum. For example, the PSHE curriculum programme provides support and the College planner has a focus on living, learning and loving as a means through via unacceptable cultures are tackled
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.
- Engaging the assistance of the College counsellor
- Developing the RSHE Curriculum at Salesian College which seeks to educate students about healthy relationships, consent, and respect, helping to support the prevention of child-on-child abuse

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.
- Dialogue must be kept open and encouraged. The victim should be asked if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or designated

safeguarding lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's (as far as reasonably possible).

- If the report includes an online element staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2023) guidance.
- Staff taking the report will inform the DSL's as soon as practicably possible but at least within 24 hours.
- Staff taking a report will never promise confidentiality.
- Allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with in line with our child protection, responding to a child – disclosure and safeguarding policies (Policies 9.1, 9.1.3, 9.2). These can be reviewed using the CPOMS system
- Parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk).
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Hampshire Children's Social Care (01329 225379).

Risk Assessment:

Following a report, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will consider;

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.
- All other children at the College.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at college.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

This policy also recognises the importance of the DSL's understanding and implementing of an appropriate adult requirement for young people following the Child Q review which relates to the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Code C 2019. PACE Code C 2019 details the role a person undertakes when acting as "the appropriate adult" (usually a parent, guardian, social worker) while a student is being questioned or detained by the police.
The adult will support the young person and observe that the police are acting properly and fairly

Action: The DSL (whose prominent role is outlined in Annex C of KCSiE 2025) **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 involved.
- Developmental stages of the children.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- Any previous incidents.
- Ongoing risks.
- Other related issues or wider context.

Options: The DSL will manage the report with the following options:

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Refer to Children's Social Care
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care)

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Regarding confidentiality, the College will follow these guiding principles:

- Staff shouldn't promise confidentiality as it might be in the victim's best interest to seek advice and guidance
- If a victim asks the College not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, there's no definitive answer. This is because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
    - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the College will take suitable action. 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 college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Regarding anonymity, the College will follow these guiding principles:

- Be aware of the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report and any support for the children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

- The College will (in most cases) engage with both the victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there's been a report of sexual violence (this might not be necessary in relation to sexual harassment, but the College should decide this on a case-by-case basis)

- The exception is if there's reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put the child at additional risk
- The College should think carefully about what information it provides about the other child involved, and when. The College should work with relevant agencies to ensure its approach to information sharing is consistent
- It's good practice for the College to:
    - Meet the victim's parent or carers with the victim to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard and support them, and how the report will progress
    - Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim. The College should explain the reason behind any decision
- The DSL would attend these meetings - the College should decide what other agencies should attend on a case-by-case basis

ONGOING RESPONSE

- The DSL will manage each report on a case-by-case basis and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the College, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (children& adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis, including the provision of and signposting to relevant organisations and helplines, for example those referenced in KCSIE.
- The College will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in line with behaviour and discipline in schools.
- The College recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

REFERENCES:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025)
Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE 2021)
The Children Act (1989)

Policy Control	
Author	Deputy Head
SLT Approved Date	10 October 2025
Governors Approved Date	23 October 2025
Review schedule	Annual
Date of next review	September 2026