



COMMUNITY  
SPORTS  
FOUNDATION

**N** THE  
NEST

# CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Date of Next Update: July 2026



## SCOPE

This policy applies to all Norwich City Community Sports Foundation (“Foundation”) and The Nest’s – Norfolk’s Community Hub (The Nest) colleagues, including those on temporary contracts or who have been working at the Foundation through a recruitment agency for more than 12 weeks. It does not apply to agency workers who have worked at the Foundation or The Nest for less than 12 weeks, consultants or self-employed contractors.

This policy supersedes any previous guides prior to its issue date.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to prevent children who are part of our organisation or take part in our activities, being harmful to one another and to inform staff of how to respond and manage allegations where harm has occurred

The Foundation takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse, and it should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. We understand that this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on child within our environments, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

We also recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys’ perpetrators whilst children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Colleagues should be aware that children may be harmful to one another in several ways. Child on child abuse is sometimes also referred to as peer-on-peer abuse.

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

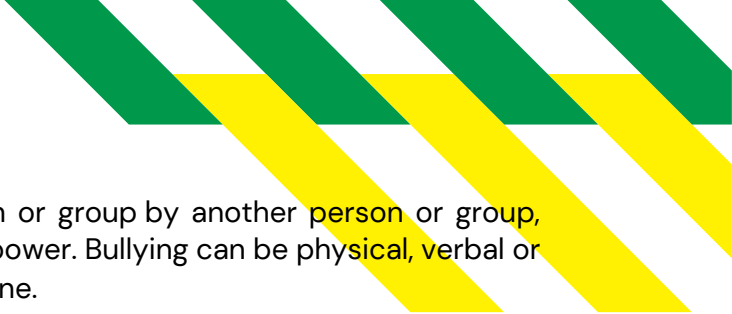
### Definition

‘Child on child abuse’ is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as any form of abuse inflicted by one child or a group of children, i.e individuals under the age of 18, against another child or group of children. This policy covers child on child abuse both inside and outside of the Community Sports Foundations programmes and both in person and online.

‘Harmful sexual behaviour’ is defined as developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive.

Types of Child-on-Child abuse

Bullying



The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

### Cyber bullying

Online bullying (often referred to as cyberbullying) is any form of bullying that is carried out through the use of electronic media devices, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, or gaming consoles.

It can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and is also supported by the Communications Act 2003.

### Prejudiced Bullying

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviours, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society.

These are often linked to 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 or gender identity.

### Abuse in intimate personal relationship between children

Also known as teenage relationship abuse this is defined as 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, to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

### Physical abuse

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

### Sexual violence

When referring to sexual violence we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- 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- colleagues 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

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of our environments.

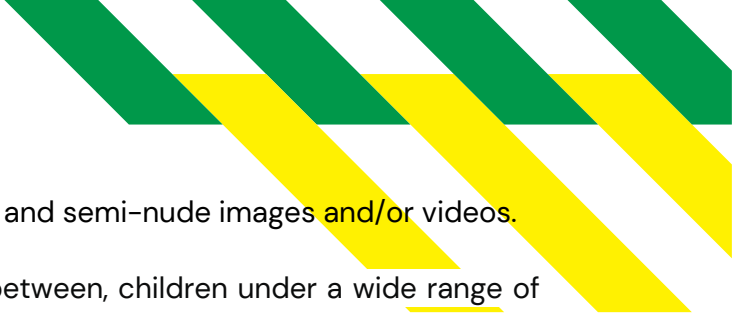
When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment.

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

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes.
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- sharing of unwanted explicit content
- sexualised online bullying
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and
- coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

It is important that colleagues consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.



Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

Nudes and semi-nudes can be shared by, and between, children under a wide range of circumstances and are often not sexually or criminally motivated. Children still need to understand that consensual image sharing is illegal whilst non-consensual image sharing is both illegal and abusive.

Incidents can broadly be divided into two categories:

- aggravated: incidents involving additional or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of nudes and semi-nudes
- experimental: incidents involving the creation and sending of nudes and semi-nudes with no adult involvement, no apparent intent to harm or reckless misuse

If the imagery is shared further, it may lead to embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to blackmail and exploitation. This can present significant risks to mental health and wellbeing.

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

Children may face situations where they are sexually exploited by other children.

- forcing someone to strip and/or touch themselves sexually
- to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- to coerce into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose.

Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if they agree by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Up skirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 amended the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to make up skirting a specific offence of voyeurism.

This 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, alarm or distress.

## Initiation/Hazing

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 several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The concept is that it 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.

## Responding to the report

It is important to understand that children may not find it easy to tell others about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to.

In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report, or a colleague may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.

If colleagues have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told. The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important.

How we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of our environments should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously.

A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting child on child abuse. Nor should they ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Where relevant it is important to explain that there are laws in place to protect children rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

## Key Considerations

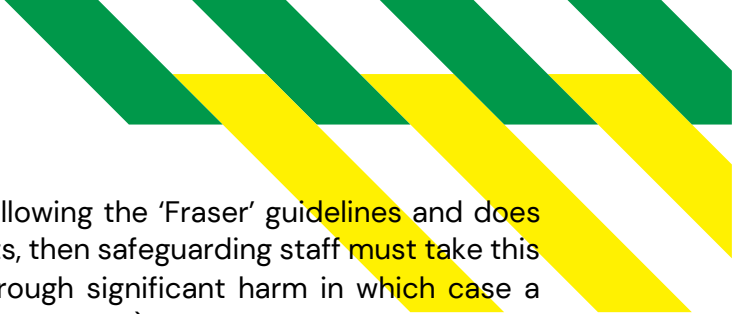
- Where possible manage reports with two colleagues present, (preferably one of them being part of the safeguarding team)
- In relation to sexualised behaviours, children under the age of 5, or those who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration however colleagues should be mindful this could also be indicative of child sexual abuse
- careful management and handling of reports that include an online element. The key consideration is for colleagues not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.

- not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with safeguarding staff or local authority children's social care) to discuss next steps. Colleagues should only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- recognising that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be any colleague. It is important that the person to whom they disclose recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. Colleagues should be supportive and respectful of them.
- recognising that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse.
- keeping in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.
- listening carefully to the child reflecting to them, using the child's language, being non-judgemental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting them where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, colleagues can ask if the child has been harmed and what the nature of that harm was.
- considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows colleagues to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second colleague is present). However, colleagues should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, it is essential a written record is made.
- only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the opinion of the note taker. Colleagues should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by local authority children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation, and
- informing safeguarding staff, as soon as practically possible, if they are not involved in the initial report.
- safeguarding staff will assess the information and make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Advice and Duty Service if the child is believed to be at risk of harm, or future harm.

NB. See Safeguarding Responding and Managing Allegations policy for further information.

#### Informing Parents/carers

If a decision is taken that statutory agencies are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents/carers.



If a child is deemed to be 'Gillick Competent' following the 'Fraser' guidelines and does not wish you to share the information with parents, then safeguarding staff must take this into consideration (unless this has occurred through significant harm in which case a statutory referral is likely, or the child is under the age of 13).

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines>

NB. Further Foundation guidance is available within the Safeguarding – Information Sharing policy

In all circumstances where risk of harm to the child is evident, colleagues should encourage them to share the information with their parents/carers and support them to do this.

If the child does not give consent, but colleagues can evidence they are acting in their best interests, they would not be criticised by disclosing to parents/carers against the child wishes. The rationale for this decision would need to be clearly documented to ensure the Foundation are not actively breaching the rights and choices of the child.

Colleagues should always seek to inform parents of the circumstances of the incident in a face-to-face meeting wherever possible. This includes the parents of both victim and perpetrator separately.

### Assessing Risk


To accurately assess risk, it is important that colleagues consider all factors to establish the risk of harm. Through identification of these factors a solution focused approach can be undertaken to mitigate and lower future risk.

Colleagues should be mindful that the below questions are not an exhaustive list:

- How old are those involved in the incident and is there any age difference?
- is there deliberate intent to harm another child
- Do they understand what they are doing?
- What is the effect on all children involved?
- Where did the incident or incidents take place – was it in an open visible place or in private?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?
- Can each of the children give the same explanation of the incident?
- Does one child's version differ from another's and if so, why?
- What is each child's understanding of what occurred?
- Does the child understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?
- Could the child's behaviour have been prompted by something they may have heard or been learning about?
- Is the incident regular and repetitive?
- Has the behaviour persisted after it has already been discussed or dealt with?

Whilst dealing with child on child abuse the answers to risk questions may not always be clear cut however risk assessment information should always be recorded to effectively underpin decisions in relation to management of the situation.

### Solution Focused Responses



The information gathered from risk-based questions will help colleagues to determine the gravity of the matter and the impact the incident has had on the children involved. A response plan should be recorded and actively managed.


- Those involved in child-on-child abuse should understand that they are able to report future incidents with confidence. An agreed mechanism to do this should be agreed.
- Support considerations for those involved will often depend on the individual. It may be that they feel able to deal with the situation on their own or with support of family and friends. Alternatively signposting to counselling services or mentoring may be appropriate.
- Do environments where child on child abuse has occurred require additional supervision resources?
- Consider whether support is required to improving peer group relationships
- Consider educational interventions with individuals or whole groups.
- Understand why the child-on-child abuser has behaved in such a way. It may be that they are experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way.
- In cases of harmful sexual behaviour consult the traffic light tool for greater understanding of behaviours and responses.
- [https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/files/PP\\_Primary\\_Traffic\\_Lights\\_5\\_11\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/files/PP_Primary_Traffic_Lights_5_11_ENG.pdf)
- Consider strategies to keeping children apart, if necessary, particularly during periods where supervision may not be stringent.
- Ensure that future consequences are articulated to all parties including those children involved and parents/carers.
- Consider whether sanctions are required such as exclusions, warnings and for what period to allow the child to reflect on their behaviour
- Consider whether a restorative approach with all the children involved children is appropriate.
- Consider the requirement for an ongoing risk assessment
- Consider whether referrals to support services for families such as Local Authority Early Help are required. <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-and-family-support>
- Children involved should 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.

### Prevention

Colleagues should champion children's rights and create environments where children feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.

Awareness raising and education tackling such issues will give them an open forum to talk things through rather than seeking one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

Colleagues should feel confident and empowered to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of children, including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another.



Training and resources will be available to colleagues to help them understand abusive behaviours and talking to children in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice.

Colleagues must not minimise abusive behaviours and consider each issue and everyone's views before action is taken. Minimised concerns are likely to result in a child seeking no further help or advice.

Resources will be readily available to children, parents and carers to support and educate child on child abuse issues.

Responsibility and Key Contacts  
Safeguarding Manager – Annamarie Mayes

#### Associated Policies

Safeguarding – Safeguarding Children  
Safeguarding Responding to and Managing allegations  
Safeguarding – Information Sharing  
Safeguarding – Anti Bullying Policy Statements

#### Responsibility and Key Contacts

This policy is approved by the Chief Executive Officer, who holds ultimate responsibility for its implementation and effectiveness. Operational responsibility for the policy content rests with the relevant Head of Department. The Compliance and People teams are jointly responsible for ensuring the policy remains up to date, aligns with current employment legislation, and reflects the values of both the Foundation and The Nest.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all new employees read this policy and complete any associated training in place at the time as part of their induction.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they understand and comply with this policy.

For contact details of the key contacts referred to in this policy, please ask your Line Manager.

**Policy Issue Date** July 2025  
**Last Review Date** N/A  
**Date of Next Update** July 2026

This policy is next due for a general review on the above date. It may however be reviewed and updated earlier, in the event of a change in Foundation or The Nest requirements, or relevant legislation.