

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy & Procedure (Students)

2026/2027

Author:	Name	Stephen Musa	
		Deputy Principal	
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1. Key Personnel

1.1 Senior Managers and Governors

CEO: Michelle Brabner

Designated Senior Safeguarding Leads: Stephen Musa, Deputy Principal, and Liz Jones, Director of Learner Wellbeing

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Karen Marsh, Learner Wellbeing

Designated Governor for Safeguarding: Elaine Small and Susannah Porter

1.2 Designated Safeguarding Officers

Liz Jones – ext. 2759 (01704 392759)

Karen Marsh – ext. 2758 (01704 392758)

Anne Marie O'Donovan – ext. 2713 (01704 392713)

Jodie Marcucci (Area of focus lead for SV&SH) - ext. 2886 (01704 392886)

Heather Jamieson – ext. 2602 (01704 392602)

Safeguarding Helpline – ext. 2821 (01704 392821) / safeguarding@southport.ac.uk

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 This policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines for a zero-tolerance approach for staff to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

3. Introduction

3.1 As part of KCSIE 2026, Part Five, Child-on-Child sexual harassment and sexual violence statutory guidance has been devised to direct schools and colleges as to how they should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. Including those that have happened outside of the education setting and /or online. All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude “it could happen here” and this is especially important when considering child on child abuse.

4. Context and Definitions

4.1 All staff should be clear as to the College's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing and responding where they believe that a child may be at risk from it.

4.2 Staff should recognise, acknowledge and understand the scale of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

4.3 Staff should recognise the escalatory nature of misogyny and the benefits of early identification to support their approach to minimise the risk of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

4.2 It is important to consider sexual harassment in the broader terms. Sexual harassment creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse. Abuse should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “parting of growing up” or “boys being boys”. There are different ways to describe children and adults who have been subjected to sexual violence and or sexual harassment and the accused of this abuse. We use the term ‘victim’ as it is a widely recognised and understood term. Not everyone who has been subjected to sexual violence and sexual harassment will consider themselves a victim, we should remain conscious of this when managing any incident or allegation. We use the term ‘the accused’ and where appropriate ‘perpetrator’; it should be noted that they should also receive support.

4.3 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment without showing obvious signs and
- communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

4.4 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

4.5 The evidence shows that girls are more likely to be subject to sexual violence and sexual harassment than boys; boys are more likely to perpetrate such violence and harassment.

4.6 Children can also abuse their peers online. This can take the form of abusive, harassing, misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images and pornography and to those who do not want to receive such content (unsolicited image sharing).

4.7 As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff should know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviours and indicators of risk early staff should know that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

4.7 Sexual Harassment

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between learners that are abusive in nature. 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 College. 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. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim.
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission.
- 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).
- Online sexual harassment; this may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include: consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, including where generated by AI sometimes described as "deepfakes" or "deep nudes". The term "images" includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence. UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people provides detailed advice for schools and colleges. Sharing of unwanted explicit content, sexualised online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages, sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the accused.

4.8 Online

Schools and colleges should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. See useful contacts for links to The UK Safer Internet Centre, Internet Watch Foundation, Childline and UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Advice.

Careful management and handling of reports that include an online element including being aware of searching screening and confiscation advice (for schools) and UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people. **The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.** In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection. **A safeguarding approach should be taken in response to all incidents of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual.**

4.9 Sexual Violence

There is an awareness that child-on-child sexual violence can and does occur, **both inside and outside of College.**

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 Sexual Violence is described as:

- 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; she/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 - 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)**
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent – A person (A) commits an offence if she/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Note – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with the third party.
- **Sexual violence may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence.**

4.10 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is 'harmful sexual behaviour' and may include misogyny/misandry. Harmful sexual behaviour has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or offline and can also occur simultaneously between the two. Harmful sexual behaviour should be considered in a child protection context. Ages and developmental stage of the children involved is critical and sexual behaviour may be considered harmful if there is a significant age difference, typically more than 2 years. However, it should be noted that a younger child may also abuse an older child especially if they hold power over them eg. Due to disability or physical size. Early intervention in inappropriate behaviour such as misogyny can help prevent escalation to more serious abuse such as sexual harassment and violence. Children who display harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

5. Consent

5.1 Consent is about having the capacity and freedom to choose. Consent of 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 she/he agrees 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

6. Responding to reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

6.1 College promote a clear, well promoted, and accessible system that enables children to confidentially report abuse knowing their concerns will be taken seriously.

6.1 Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex, requiring difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning, effective training and effective policies will provide College with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any report. College are not alone in dealing with sexual violence and sexual harassment, statutory partners such as Children's Social Care and the Police may need to become involved in some cases.

6.2 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can happen to a single child or a group of children, staff should be aware that girls are more commonly the victims and boys the perpetrators.

- 6.3 Incidents will be considered both on and off site, and online, our responsibilities will extend to safeguarding learners when travelling to and from College.
- 6.4 It is essential that all victims are reassured they are taken seriously. They should not feel that they are creating a problem in reporting an incident.
- 6.5 Recognise that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be **any member of staff**; the child has placed them in a position of trust.
- 6.6 Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is likely that in the best interests of the victim, advice and guidance from others/appropriate agencies will be sought.
- 6.7 Not all victims will find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally, they may show signs or act in a way which they hope staff will notice and react to, for example: **through a friend** or a member of staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a victim has been harmed. **Some children may face additional barriers to disclosure especially for children with vulnerabilities related to disability, sex, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.**
- 6.8 Listen carefully to the child, reflect back, using the child's language, avoid judgement, be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, only asking open-ended questions such as where, when, what etc. Staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was.
- 6.9 Ideally, staff should wait until the end of the conversation to write a detailed summary, allowing staff to give the child their full attention. If notes are taken during the report, care must be taken to remain engaged and not appear distracted. **It is essential that a written record is made on Promonitor.**
- 6.10 Record only what the child says, without interpretations or personal opinion. These notes may be used in statutory assessments and/or criminal investigations.
- 6.11 All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reason for those decisions, should be recorded on Pro Monitor under confidential comments at the appropriate level. Records should include; a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL or DDSL.
- 6.12 If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, Safeguarding should be informed immediately where a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and or the Police by a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- 6.13 When a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, Safeguarding should be informed immediately, and this should be referred to the Police by safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

- 6.14 Where consent is not given, staff will consider whether they should lawfully share the information, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example to protect children/adults from significant harm or where a criminal offense has taken place. Consent would also be broken where there are potential risks that could cause an immediate/danger to others. If a referral to children's social care and/or a report is made to the police against the victims wishes, it will be handled with care; the decision will be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.
- 6.15 Sanctions may be given under our Positive Behaviour Policy where there is a finding of sexual violence or harassment, and to minimise any possible risks the accused(s) may be suspended whilst an investigation takes place.
- 6.16 Whilst the College establishes the facts of the allegation and the process of engaging with Children's Social Care and the Police, the accused(s) will be removed from any classes that they share with the victim. College will also carefully consider how to maintain a reasonable physical separation between the victim and the accused across College premises including before and after College based activities and on transport to and from College where appropriate. Particular regards will be given to the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim and the potential for the accused to intimidate the victim or witness. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the accused.
- 6.17 Where it is believed the accused(s) may pose a further risk to the College community a risk assessment will be put in place by the Safeguarding Officer. Where there are grounds to believe potential risks are serious and unmanageable a Fitness to Study panel will convene to review the case. A risk assessment should also be in place for the victim, to minimise any risk of further harm. Consideration will be given to how the learners involved travel to and from College, any cross over in the College setting, and any contact on social media as well as any other relevant information. The risk assessment will consider how the victim and accused can be protected and supported, whether there may have been additional victims and transferable risk which will protect them from future harm. If the incident is alleged to have happened on College premises, the location and time of the incident will be recorded on the risk assessment with steps to improve safety in that area.
- 6.18 Risk assessments are recorded digitally, regularly reviewed and used to inform safeguarding decisions. At all times, the College will actively consider the risks posted to all learners and put adequate measure in place to keep them safe.
- 6.19 In cases of sexual violence, professional risk assessment by social workers or sexual violence specialists are likely to be required. The College's risk assessment is not intended to replace the detailed assessment of expert professionals, instead, used to support and protect College learners and update College's own risk assessment.
- 6.20 Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the Police, the College will speak to the relevant agency and discuss how the accused(s) will be informed of the allegations.

- 6.21 Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the Criminal Convictions procedure should be followed. 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(s) to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other learners).
- 6.22 Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the Criminal Convictions procedure should be followed and College will consider any suitable sanctions including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator(s) is going to remain at College, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator(s) in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on College premises and transport.
- 6.23 All staff involved should carefully consider the potential impact of the abuse on both the accused/s and the victim/s.
- 6.24 Staff should do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any young people involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Consideration should be given to the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.
- 6.25 Parents/carers will normally be informed where the learner is under the age of 18 or is a vulnerable adult, unless this could place the individual at greater risk of harm.
- 6.26 Where a report has been made to the police, College will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to others, in particular, the accused and their parents or carers.
- 6.27 If the event of reports of the children attending different schools or College, the Colleges duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners remain the same. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be imperative.
- 6.28 Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will result in close liaison between the Safeguarding Team and the Head of Learning Support and Inclusion.
- 6.29 The four likely scenario options when managing a report;
- Manage internally using the College Positive Behaviour Policy and providing pastoral support without involving statutory services; for eg. in some cases of harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment for example, one-off incidents such as using sexually explicit language or name calling.
 - Universal Services and Early help; College should be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners to agree the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered. Providing early support is effective in promoting the welfare of children rather than reacting later. For example, addressing non-violent HSB.

- Referrals to Children's Social Care; where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger. For example, allegation of rape or sexual assault.
- Reporting to the Police; any report to the Police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care.

All concerns, discussions, decisions and their rationale should be clearly recorded in writing.

- 6.30 Where cases are classified as "no further action" by the Police or CPS or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school or College will continue to offer support to the victim and the accused(s). If an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn, it does not necessarily mean it was unfounded; consideration will be given to how the process has affected both the victim and the accused and the appropriate support will continue to be offered. Consideration will be given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. All of the above should 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.
- 6.31 If a report is found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider whether the learner making the allegation needs support or may have been abused by someone else, and this was a cry for help. If so, a referral to local authority children's social care may be appropriate. If a report is proven to be deliberately false or malicious, the school or college should consider any disciplinary action against the individual, in line with the College Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 6.32 Disciplinary action can be instigated whilst Police and/or Children's Social Care investigations are taken place. Other investigations will not prevent College from investigating and imposing appropriate sanctions on the balance of probability. Liaison with the Police/Children's Social Care will determine if a College action would prejudice Police investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution.
- 6.33 Safeguarding and supporting the accused and learners who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour;
- The College should balance the need to safeguard the victim (and the wider learner body) and provide the accused with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and provide appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions.
 - The age and the developmental stage of the accused will be considered as well as the nature of the allegations and frequency of allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
 - The proportionality of the response will be considered; support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - The perpetrator(s) will be offered the correct support to try and stop them re-offending and to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour. Details of organisations that support parents will also be provided.

7. Preventing and Addressing Sexual Violence and Harassment

- 7.1 The Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body have a visible and ongoing commitment to preventing and responding to all forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Any incidents disclosed are reported through the termly safeguarding reports for review.
- 7.2 College expectations are included in induction talks and proactively communicated to learners, including the Positive Behaviour Policy. Ensuring a clear and consistent message is delivered.
- 7.3 The College have a planned programme of evidence based content delivered through progress sessions. Our preventative education programme is developed to be age and stage development appropriate, and tackles such issues as:
- Supporting children develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships
 - Consent and Healthy Relationships
 - Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence and appropriate behaviour including how to access support
 - Sexual Health and Contraception
 - Safety and exploitation
 - Understanding online harms such as sharing images, the prevalence of deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers
 - Body confidence and self-esteem
 - LGBTQ+ awareness
 - Stereotyping, prejudiced behaviour and equality (including awareness of protected characteristics)
- 7.4 Robust links have been established with external agencies such as Merseyside Police, RASA (rape and sexual abuse centre), Children's Social Care and Early Help and Adult Social Care to allow the Safeguarding Team to make timely referrals and seek professional support and advice.
- 7.5 Learners and staff are provided with clear information on how to report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence and how the College can support them. The Policy is available to them on the website.
- 7.6 Training will be delivered to all staff as part of the annual safeguarding training to raise awareness of sexual harassment and sexual violence, supporting staff to respond effectively to disclosures and prevent incidents. Staff can contact the Safeguarding Team for further information or guidance if required.

8. Liaison with parents and carers

The College will:

- Ensure that parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.
- Ensure that parents/carers know about the complaints procedure and how to use it.
- Ensure that parents/carers know where to access independent advice about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.
- Work with parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the College environment that give rise to Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.

9. Monitoring and Review, Policy into Practice

The Corporation will review this Policy annually, as well as if incidents occur that suggest the need for a review.

10. Responsibilities

This Policy will only work if it ensures that the whole College community understands that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken to both prevent and respond to it.

It is the responsibility of:

- all staff and governors to be aware of this policy and implement it accordingly
- the Head of HR to direct all new starters to the policy
- the Assistant Principal – Student Experience and Welfare to communicate the policy to the College community
- the Head of Studies to deliver a comprehensive programme via tutorials of preventative education
- learners to abide by the policy

11. Data and Confidentiality

1. Instances of sexual violence and sexual harassment allegations will be recorded in a central record on ProMonitor.
2. All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.
3. There may be occasion where the College is obliged to disclose information, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent:
 - Where the learner's behaviour threatens their safety or safeguarding, and that of others.
 - Or where the College would be liable to civil or criminal liability for failure to disclose.

12. Other Relevant Documents

This Policy links with a number of other College policies, practices and action plans including:

- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online-Safety Policy
- ID Badge Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (staff)
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- Information for Students (booklet)
- Information for Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (booklet)
- College Charter Code of Conduct
- Missing from Education Policy

This document and the above documents can be found on the College website, and via the Student Hub (Southport College) or Main Reception (KGV Sixth Form)

13. Useful contacts

Safeguarding Team 01704 392821
 Student Information Desk (Southport) 01704 392704
 Student Information Desk (KGV) 01704 530601
 Progress Tutors 01704 392811

14. Useful Information

- **The UK Safer Internet Centre** provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues.
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).
- **Childline/IWF:** Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online
- **UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice:** Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images or videos (also known as sexting and youth-produced sexual imagery).
- **National Crime Agency's CEOP Education Programme** provides information for the children's workforce and parents and carers on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

- **LGFL 'Undressed'** provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.
- **Shorespace;** A safe space for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour.