



LOCATION: CURRICULUM HANDBOOK, DOCUMENT 9

BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
(Includes the policy on Child-on-Child Abuse)

“This policy should be read as part of a collection of policies that together form the overall Safeguarding Policy and procedure for Abbey Court School.”

Date policy first adopted: March 1997

Date reviewed: May 2026

Reviewed By: Jacqueline Rudden

Date ratified by Governing Body: 19th May 2026

Date of next review: Summer 2027

I. INTRODUCTION

- I.0 In order to cater for the learning difficulties of our pupils, which are complex, we need a behaviour policy that is consistently delivered by everyone involved with Abbey Court School. This will ensure that learning opportunities are maximised. All staff are trained in PROACT-SCIPr-UK © to ensure consistency (Positive Range of Options Avoiding Crisis using Therapy – Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (revised, UK). – ‘PROACT - SCIP’ is described as; "A Whole Approach to our work with individuals who Challenge" and is accredited by the BILD Code of Practice for Trainers in the use of Physical Interventions (2001).
- I.1 Successful positive management of behaviour is firmly rooted in the school ethos. Positive behaviour should be constantly and appropriately reinforced. It is important that all staff continually evaluate their own behaviour and attitudes in order to appreciate the positive and negative messages they are giving to the pupils. (e.g. we should ask ourselves, “Am I focusing on the negative behaviour?” etc.)
- I.2 The school ethos encourages an atmosphere in which staff feel free to discuss problems with regard to behaviour management. Difficulties are not seen as failures. The management of behaviour can be stressful and challenging. Staff must be able to rely on and support each other in an atmosphere which encourages openness, discussion and mutual respect.
- I.3 This behaviour policy is in a continual stage of development as it is recognised that behaviour theories and methods will change and improve in light of experience and, possibly, legislation.
- I.4 Abbey Court School is a Gold Rights Respecting School and puts the 54 articles of the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of all school policy. This policy reflects that we believe that as a school, we must do everything possible to ensure that through their learning and experience of school, our pupils grow as healthy as possible, receive protection, have their views listened to and are treated fairly and with respect.

Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.

Article 29 – Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.

1.5 This document supplements all school policies but has a particular affinity with the Child Protection and Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities/ Racial Discrimination, P.S.H.E. and Citizenship, R.E., SMSC and Health and Safety Policies, as well as the Abbey Court School Aims and Values. The recording of pupil behaviour, and subsequent review, uses online software called Behaviour Watch: <https://www.behaviourwatch.co.uk/public/gb/index.html>

1.6 PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND ENTITLEMENTS:

- If a pupil has a known behavioural pattern/problem, there should be no pre-judging of that pupil by members of staff.
- Time should be given to both pupils and staff to be able to achieve goals that have been set.
- Pupils should be encouraged to be aware of themselves as individuals and have a sense of their own identity.
- Self-advocacy is to be respected at all times by all members of staff for all pupils.
- Pupils should be equally valued and have equal opportunities.
- Pupils have a right to learn.
- There should be age-appropriate learning.
- The pupils should be encouraged to fulfil their potential.
- The pupils should be encouraged towards independence, and learn to be responsible for themselves wherever possible.
- There should be an element of progression for every pupil.
- Both pupils and staff are entitled to have support.
- Pupils require sensitive handling at all times.
- Positive attitudes should be maintained at all times.

2. DEFINITION

2.0 The organisation and management of behaviour in Abbey Court School is underpinned by a whole school approach, and is much a part of the ethos of the school as an approach to the management of individual situations

2.1 Abbey Court School has a positive approach to the behaviour of pupils with an emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and achievement rather than punishing bad or inappropriate behaviour. In this way, we intend to assist pupils in understanding and controlling their own behaviour.

2.2 Pro-active behaviour management, i.e. foreseeing possible behaviour difficulties before they happen, is a positive approach to dealing with behaviour problems rather than reactive management, i.e. the application of sanctions for bad behaviour. At Abbey Court School, we strive constantly to be proactive.

2.3 Also see the SMSC Policy. Abbey Court School makes effective provision for the four aspects of pupils’ personal development (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) and thus promotes the development of the whole child. Abbey Court School values its work in personal, social, health, relationship and sex education and citizenship highly, and developing and respecting the rights of pupils with a focus on British values. We want pupils to become responsible adults and supportive citizens and seek to create an ethos and climate in the school which will help them to flourish as young people; therefore, we actively promote and evaluate pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 To provide a safe and happy environment conducive to learning, encouraging pupils to manage their own behaviour and recognise that they have responsibilities as good citizens.
- 3.2 To promote a consistent approach to meet individual needs.
- 3.3 To foster an atmosphere of awareness and concern for the needs of others.
- 3.4 To develop mutual respect for the rights of everyone associated with the school.

4. OBJECTIVES

- 4.0 To have agreed behaviour management procedures which are known by all staff.
- 4.1 To have a defined structure for behaviour management to support staff, which incorporates clear guidelines on the use of rewards, sanctions and procedures, behaviour requiring special behaviour management and working with parents

5. RECORDING AND ASSESSMENT

- 5.0 Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBSPs) will be drawn up as and when appropriate using a common proforma (see Appendix 1). Any specific staffing that is used to support individuals will be named on the proforma. An explanation of how a decision to compile an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) is given in paragraph 7.4 of this policy.
- 5.1 An agreed approach to and format for recording will be used throughout the school to provide consistency. Individual Behaviour Support Plans will be monitored very regularly and the information disseminated to all concerned. (E.g. pupils, parents, staff, professional bodies involved, such as the Educational Psychologist).
- 5.2 Where appropriate, an Individual Behaviour Support Plan forms part of a pupil's I.E.P. and will be reviewed annually at the Annual Review, and as pertinent as a pupil's behaviour changes. Where physical interventions are planned, the aim will always be to reduce the need for these and, indeed, the need for an IBSP.
- 5.3 An **incident file** is kept in the main office for the incident records. Events that are classed as an 'incident' will meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - A challenging behaviour requiring the use of physical (restrictive) interventions and resulting in a recordable injury to anyone involved (staff, pupil);
 - A challenging behaviour requiring physical (restrictive) intervention or resulting in a recordable injury to anyone involved whilst in the public gaze (e.g. on an educational visit or in the presence of a visitor in school);
 - Any event or occurrence that may be classed as a 'near miss' (e.g. a pupil leaving the school building unseen who is subsequently found safe and well in the school car park);
 - A challenging behaviour or event/occurrence resulting in a significant injury/concern that requires the subsequent involvement of outside agencies (e.g. medical, social services, parents, police);
 - Any event or occurrence that involves inappropriate behaviour (e.g. a pupil undressing or sexualised behaviour in public) or results in damage to property.

These incidents can be recorded using the Behaviour Slip on BehaviourWatch and then printed for the attention of the most senior member of staff on site (in any case, a verbal report should always be made without delay to the Headteacher or member of the Senior Management Team).

5.4 Events that do not fit into the criteria for an 'Incident' (e.g. a minor injury caused by one pupil on another person) are recorded using the Behaviour Watch behaviour slip; for these incidents, a printout is not required.

5.5. Any significant incidents where a member of staff has used force on a pupil must be recorded (in accordance with Section 93a of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026). Incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as is practicable after the event, and by the end of the same day, by the staff member(s) involved. This should be recorded by school staff using the Behaviour Slip on BehaviourWatch and then printed for the attention of the most senior member of staff on site (in any case, a verbal report should always be made without delay to the Headteacher or member of the Senior Management Team). The written report must include:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant), what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained;
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts;
- that parents/carers have been informed.

5.6 Any incidents of 'seclusion' or restraint (including 'non-force restraint') must be recorded (in accordance with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, and the DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026). Incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as is practicable after the event, and by the end of the same day, by the staff member(s) involved. This should be recorded by school staff using the Behaviour Slip on BehaviourWatch and then printed for the attention of the most senior member of staff on site (in any case, a verbal report should always be made without delay to the Headteacher or member of the Senior Management Team). The written report must include:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained;
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts;
- that parents/carers have been informed.

5.7 Reporting

In accordance with the DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, any significant incidents of where a member of staff has used force on a pupil, and/or use of 'seclusion' or restraint (including 'non-force restraint') must be reported to parents /carers in writing, as soon as is practicable after the incident; school staff should endeavour to do this by the end of the same day.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) to whom it can be reported, without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident. This decision is made by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteachers.

Parents/carers should be verbally informed of the incident by a senior staff member (in some cases, this may be delegated to the class teacher, under the direction of a senior staff member), during a telephone or face-to-face conversation, as soon as it is practicable after the incident. Details of the incident should be shared, including an explanation of any use of force/physical (restrictive) intervention on a pupil, and/or use of 'seclusion' or restraint (including 'non-force restraint'), as well as an opportunity provided for parents/carers to ask any questions or discuss the incident further.

A senior member of staff will then complete the Abbey Court School's 'Parent Notification of Use of Intervention' letter (please see Appendix 2), and arrange for this to be sent by email (please see Appendix 3) by the school Office to parents/carers; staff should endeavour to do this by the end of the same day. This will include the following information:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force;
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable;
- details of post-incident actions that have been, or will be taken (such as pupil assessed by a school First Aider, post-incident support provided to pupil, de-brief of incident, review of Individual Behaviour Support Plan).

Any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive (refer to Health and Safety Policy).

6. ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY

6.0 Abbey Court School aims to provide a positive climate with high expectations of all pupils in the management of their behaviour and work. The staff recognise the association between high expectations, quality teaching, and good behaviour. The following offer strategies and entitlements that support Abbey Court School's ethos:

6.1 Staff aim to offer consistent communication when carrying out behaviour management, with attention to both verbal and body language, facial expressions, tone and volume of voice. The pupils in the class need to know and understand the class rules and the acceptable standards of behaviour. When dealing with behaviour, class teams plan for continuity, and specific handling techniques are monitored as necessary. This necessitates co-operation and understanding between classroom staff.

6.2 Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss behaviour issues and participate in problem-solving through Pupil Voice meetings, PSHE and Citizenship and circle time/candle time lessons, and through the pupil survey. This includes allowing and enabling students to express themselves appropriately. Opportunities are given through, for example, role play, to recognise and practice positive behaviours, developing understanding, empathy, trust and support.

6.3 Good classroom practice promotes good behaviour. Targets are communicated clearly to pupils, and teachers ensure, through differentiated planning, that the targets are realistic to the present

performance and in relation to the performance of their peers. The criteria for success is stated. The management of the environment is also important in creating calm: having routines, class rules, security, shared values, adequate equipment and resources. Attention to group formations and to the management of groups within the classroom is also beneficial.

- 6.4 The curriculum is interesting, exciting, varied, relevant, and has regular changes. Variety can increase attention and motivation - different teaching strategies are employed in each class by each teacher. There are always equal opportunities (e.g. Equal Opportunities Policy).
- 6.5 Staff need to carry conviction and confidence when implementing Individual Behaviour Support Plans; this is enabled through self-confidence, which in turn generates confidence in the pupils. A system of positive rewards and incentives is encouraged as opposed to a reliance on negative sanctions. Staff ensure that the pupil perceives that rewards are related to good behaviour. Confrontation can usually be avoided by staff getting to know and understand their pupil's needs and concerns.
- 6.6 Any strategies agreed upon are given time to work. Pupils also require time to assimilate information and instructions and to respond. Pupils' views are important. Listening is an important skill.
- 6.7 Staff in Abbey Court School set a good example. They provide a good model of behaviour and attitudes. Cases of 'Do as I say, not as I do' and "I won't have you shouting in my class, Fred Bloggs", are not appropriate within our ethos.
- 6.8 There is a climate of mutual respect and the rights of everyone.
- 6.9 All pupils are given opportunities to develop class charters and behaviour codes.

7. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

7.1 General Behaviour Management

We believe that the children at Abbey Court School should exhibit good standards of behaviour. We have high expectations of them.

Good classroom practice promotes a positive atmosphere, which promotes good behaviour. Examples of strategies used to achieve this include:

- use of role models;
- clear expectations; establishing clear boundaries;
- discussing behaviour and consequences with the pupil;
- and most importantly, consistency and clarity amongst staff within the class, department and school in dealing with difficult situations and behaviour.

7.2 DAY TO DAY BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At Abbey Court School, we believe in the use of rewards to motivate pupils and to promote good behaviour. Positive behaviour will be encouraged at all times.

Examples of rewards that may be used are:

- verbal praise;
- gesture;
- smiling;
- token - e.g. in-house certificates or stickers;

- privileges - e.g. taking the register back, choosing a favourite activity;
- showing good work in assembly and celebrating with the whole class;
- sent to the Leadership Group or Senior Management Team;
- clapping;
- thumbs up.

All rewards introduced should be within the agreed school guidelines. Under no circumstances should food, drink or close physical contact (i.e. kissing or hugging) be used as a reward.

General expectations of good behaviour will be promoted at all times. It is accepted that within the day management of the class, children may need reprimanding. This can be done using facial expression, tone of voice, etc.

- 7.3 Due to the developmental ability of pupils at Abbey Court School, it is often necessary to offer some support or physical encouragement to move around the school. For pupils and staff, particularly in the secondary department, hand-holding is inappropriate. Instead, **'Touch Support'** is used whereby, if necessary, a pupil is lightly touched or supported on their forearm with the other hand being placed supportively on the shoulder if extra support is needed. As this is used to support pupils, it is not a physical (restrictive) intervention that is required to be added to an Individual Behaviour Support Plan. Please refer to the Use of Appropriate Touch Policy.

7.4 BEHAVIOUR REQUIRING SPECIAL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

BehaviourWatch will help to identify when a difficult or negative behaviour becomes consistent or persistent and requires planned physical interventions, then an Individual Behaviour Support Plan will need to be agreed upon and documented.

Individual Behaviour Support Plans are based on systematic observation and assessment, and/or the use of the data from BehaviourWatch. At the start of each long term, the Key Stage Leader reviews the incidence of behaviour and advises the teacher whether an IBSP would be pertinent for a specific pupil.

Additionally, the teacher's professional judgement will determine when behaviour needs an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (i.e., when the normal rewards and sanctions cease to be effective). This is then discussed and agreed with the Behaviour Co-Ordinator (Deputy Headteacher).

An Individual Behaviour Support Plan defines management strategies for a pupil. Where physical (restrictive) interventions, any use of restraint (including 'non-force restraint') or 'seclusion' are planned for, these should be clearly stated in the Individual Behaviour Support Plan. This includes any PROACT-SCIPR-UK (Strategies for Crises Intervention and Prevention) techniques (to be used by trained school staff. The Individual Behaviour Support Plans are all shared with parents, with parental agreement required for the planned use of physical (restrictive) interventions.

- 7.5 Each individual pupil will need his / her own Individual Behaviour Support Plan constructed, which will be followed by the staff to achieve consistency in approach. When carrying out Individual Behaviour Support Plans, rewards should be used with consideration for them to be effective, and sanctions must be agreed and written into the programme, i.e., what sanction will be given and why. Sanctions will never include corporal punishment or withdrawal of a pupil's entitlement.

7.6 BULLYING

It is recognised that there may, usually due to the developmental needs of our pupils, be instances of what might be considered bullying of pupils by another pupil in the school, but please refer to section 14 for a more detailed definition of bullying. Bullying will be dealt with in the same way as all other inappropriate behaviour, i.e. once the behaviour is recognised, it will be observed, assessed and managed using methods outlined above.

Please refer to the Child on Child Abuse Policy. The Abbey Court School Child Protection and Equal Opportunities/ Racial Discrimination policies are also specifically relevant here. All instances of bullying will be reported using the record of incidents.

8.0 WHEN TO USE PHYSICAL (RESTRICTIVE) INTERVENTION

Section 550 of the 1996 Education Act clarified circumstances for using reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. This was then reiterated and reinforced through the Education Act 1997 (Section 4), which clarified the use of physical force by teachers. Since then, a range of laws and government guidance have been used to attempt to clarify the use of force in schools, including:

- The Department for Children, Schools and Families; Human Rights Act 1998
- DFES / DH Guidance on Restraint (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) (2002)
- DFES Guidance on Restrictive Physical Interventions (2003)
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections ACT 2006 and the
- 'Use of reasonable force' Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013
- Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention (Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in health and social care services and special education settings) June 2019
- **DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026.**

Schools are enabled to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent or stop a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- a) causing injury to themselves or others (or for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- b) committing a criminal offence;
- c) damaging property;
- d) causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026; Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

8.1 DEFINITIONS

The DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, provides the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' (see Appendix). This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

8.2 WHEN PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IS USED

The following relevant considerations should be taken into account when physical intervention is to be used (key points from 'Use of reasonable force'; Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013)

- School staff have the power to use force, and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their careers that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances, such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed, for no longer than necessary.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example, when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases, it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

('Use of reasonable force'; Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013)

The DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, states that school staff should consider the following when determining when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate:

- Is it necessary?
- Is it proportionate?
- Has the child's welfare been considered?

The Medway Authority has recognised PROACT-SCIPR-UK (Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention) as an agreed method for behaviour management, which includes the use of appropriate restraint. Some guidelines contained therein are listed:

- a) Only use the minimum physical intervention necessary;
- b) Only physically intervene with the pupil for the length of time necessary;
- c) Only agreed PROACT-SCIPR-UK procedures are to be used by trained, named staff (assessed for competence by the accredited PROACT-SCIPR-UK Instructors);
- d) The incident and intervention used must be recorded on Behaviour Watch. This must also be brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team at the time. (See 5.3).
- e) Parents of the pupil must be informed by a Senior member of staff whenever a physical (restrictive) intervention, and/or use of force, and/or use of restraint (including 'non-force' restraint) has been used, otherwise by the class teacher in discussion with SMT. This applies even if this is an identified and agreed strategy stated on the Individual Behaviour Support Plan. See Section 5.7 and Appendices 2 and 3 for specific details.

8.3 FORBIDDEN USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

The DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, states that: 'It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.' (Abbey Court School staff are trained in Physical Interventions and **not** in restraint procedures, as these are not currently deemed necessary at Abbey Court School.)

- 8.4 **Duty of Care:** No person is expected to put themselves at risk by restraining a pupil; however, the safety of the pupil and other pupils present is paramount. If a situation demands an instant and immediate response to protect the Health and Safety of a pupil, then staff have a duty of care to do so.

The DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, states that: 'Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, schools should carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.'

9. SANCTIONS

- 9.1 A sanction is an agreed constructive approach to dealing with a behaviour problem. It is recognised that even occasional inappropriate behaviour may still need sanctions.

- 9.2 Pupils who have Individual Behaviour Support Plans will have agreed sanctions, clearly outlining the approach required and by whom it should be carried out. This will ensure consistency at all times. (See section on 'Behaviour requiring special behaviour management', 7.4)
- 9.3 Sanctions will only be carried out by employed members of staff. People not employed by the school, i.e., volunteers, may not enforce a sanction.
- 9.4 Sanctions need to be clear and brief.
- 9.5 Sanctions placed on a child must be carried out to ensure consistency and purpose.
- 9.6 Sanctions must be realistic.
- 9.7 Sanctions should take place immediately (unless a pupil is able to understand the relevance of sanctions not taking place until a period of time has elapsed).
- 9.8 All sanctions used should be recorded on BehaviourWatch.
- 9.9 It is important when applying sanctions to ensure that the students' self-esteem is not diminished and that it is the behaviour that is being punished and not the perpetrator.
- 9.10 The responses and behaviour of the staff should be examined as closely as that of the pupils.

9.11 AGREED SANCTIONS

Reprimand - i.e. verbal, signed, or by facial expression

Restitution - i.e. putting things right

Reparation - i.e. undertaking a task that is relevant to the situation as compensation for the misbehaviour

Restrictions - i.e. loss of privileges

9.12 FORBIDDEN SANCTIONS

(The use of forbidden sanctions by staff can lead to disciplinary action and/or the reporting of incidents/concerns to safeguarding bodies)

Corporal punishment - i.e., smacking or any other physical punishment;

Deprivation - i.e., of food, drink, and education entitlement;

Ridicule;

Mechanical Restraint – the use of equipment to restrain or limit the movement of pupils (if a pupil is required to be placed in a mobility device, then it is necessary to ensure that the appropriate use of the specified equipment is identified in their IEP. Any use of the equipment beyond that described could be considered inappropriate physical restraint by mechanical means;

Standing in the corridor;

Shouting at a pupil (other than an assertive command in a Health and Safety context).

10. COMMUNITY LINKS/WORKING WITH PARENTS

10.1 When an Individual Behaviour Support Plan is necessary, parents and outside agencies will be involved as appropriate. Draft Individual Behaviour Support Plans will be sent home for parental input and approval. Any Individual Behaviour Support Plans involving physical (restrictive)

interventions, any use of restraint (including 'non-force restraint') or 'seclusion'-will ALWAYS be discussed with parents, before implementation (other than for health and safety reasons).

10.2 Agreed Individual Behaviour Support Plans are kept in the individual pupil's File in the school office. The Behaviour Co-ordinator monitors these to check that they are reviewed and updated by Key Stage Leaders/Class teachers.

11. STAFFING AND RESOURCES

11.0 Each class team will be responsible under the auspices of the class teacher for the behaviour management of all members of the class. Teams work together to problem-solve the management of behaviour and agree on strategies with the KS leader.

11.1 Any Individual Behaviour Support Plans will then be written by the KS Leader and class teacher, and approval obtained by the Behaviour Co-ordinator (IBSPs are signed by the parent/carer, Key Stage Leader, Class Teacher and the Behaviour Coordinator). These are reviewed regularly by the class teacher, including after any significant incidents.

11.2 Necessary resources will be highlighted through Key Stage Leaders who report to the Leadership Team.

11.3 "Children who require complex or repeated physical management should have a prescribed written handling policy, and staff dealing with them (generally in special or residential schools) should be trained in proper and safe methods of restraint..." (Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act). It is recognised that all staff are entitled to training, and opportunities will be offered to continue to develop behaviour management skills. Furthermore, the DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions' guidance, April 2026, states that: 'Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.'

11.4 All staff have received training in Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention, and the staff who have completed the PROACT-SCIPR-UKr-UK Instructors course are registered trainers. Staff will receive regular updates of PROACT-SCIPR-UK procedures to ensure a consistent approach towards behaviour management. The inclusion of any physical (restrictive) intervention in an individual's Individual Behaviour Support Plan will be:

- by the coordinator for the management of pupil behaviour;
- by agreement with the Head/Deputy;
- by agreement with the parents (Individual Behaviour Support Plan requires signature);
- following the practice and assessment by instructors of competence in the use of the agreed physical (restrictive) intervention.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In line with the school ethos, there are principles, values and entitlements written within Appendix 5 (Also Refer to Abbey Court School Equal Opportunities Policy).

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Where a pupil has a specific Individual Behaviour Support Plan, all staff who work with the pupil must fully understand the procedure. The Individual Behaviour Support Plan is the risk assessment of the pupil's behavioural needs, with measures/strategies identified to mitigate risks.

All other staff should be made aware of the plan and procedures.

In order to secure the school premises and ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, a keypad system has been installed at the entry to the school. Apart from this, pupils have free access to pupil learning environments within the school and its grounds, with the exception of identified high-risk areas, such as the school hydro pool, to promote freedom of movement (also see Abbey Court School Security Section in the Health and Safety Policy).

14. ANTI-BULLYING

14.1 DEFINITION

We have to be very careful to recognise the differences between bullying and conflict, violence and disagreement. Bullying is the exercise of power by one person over another involving repeated, deliberate, threatening, or hurtful behaviour of a physical, verbal or emotional nature. Bullying is repeated oppression of a less powerful individual or group. "One-off incidents" may not therefore be bullying (from <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition>, November 2014).

At Abbey Court School, we recognise that the bully is also a victim, usually having low self-esteem, perhaps may have suffered bullying and is frightened and unsure and needs care and perhaps counselling to cope with fear/anger.

We encourage those in our care to have respect for themselves and others and for their environment. This, we believe, reflects our ethos and the Abbey Court School Aims and Values. We believe that every child has the right to a safe and secure environment in which to learn and achieve success.

Please also refer to the Child on Child Abuse Policy and Computing Policy for further information, including the use of the internet and electronic devices (such as mobile phones, tablets, computers) for bullying purposes.

14.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to create a climate in which all types of bullying are unacceptable.

To empower those who witness bullying anywhere in the school to report it.

To ensure that bullying behaviours are understood and that those who are bullied can report incidents in a fear and threat-free environment.

To share information with the whole school community.

AIMS

To promote a secure and happy environment free from threats, harassment, and any type of bullying.

To take positive action to prevent bullying from occurring, through R.E. and PSHE and Citizenship programmes and the implementation of the school's Equal Opportunities, Child Protection and Behaviour policies and the use of Circle Time.

To show commitment to overcoming bullying by practising zero tolerance.

To involve pupils and parents in the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership which helps maintain a bully-free environment.

To make staff aware of their role through training and foster the knowledge and attitudes which will be required to achieve these aims.

To ensure that pupils are treated with respect and dignity.

All action relating to curricular issues underpins the belief in valuing people as individuals and their right to a bully-free environment.

The stated aims will be further achieved through the school policies and programmes already in practice.

The AIMS of our anti-bullying policy are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for our children;
- To encourage respect for the individual at all times, celebrating the differences between us;
- To prevent bullying behaviour.

14.3 Guidelines and Whole Staff Responsibilities

- Children will be encouraged to develop the appropriate skills enabling them to make reasoned and informed choices, judgements and decisions and to enable them to report an incident to an adult.
- An environment will be provided within the school and the classroom in which every child will be valued.
- All staff are aware of and involved in the drawing up and the review of the Child and Child Abuse, Equal Opportunities, Child Protection and Behaviour policies within the school.
- Strategies are in place through behaviour and PSHE&C policies to support positive behaviour within the school.
- There are systems in place within the behaviour policy for managing and reporting any incidents. Reports are made to the Class Teacher, Key Stage Leader, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Head Teacher, and Head Teacher.
- Interactions and behaviours are closely monitored at all times by teachers and those in charge of pupils, and reports of behaviour and other incidents are reported on an incident form and subsequently investigated.
- Pupils are constantly reminded through PSHE&C lessons to "TELL THE NEAREST ADULT, IF ANYONE DOES ANYTHING YOU DO NOT LIKE", as a strategy to protect themselves and that they have rights under the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child. A help request card is available in all classes.
- Pupils will be encouraged to speak out about bullying behaviours witnessed or experienced.

14.4 POSITIVE ACTION

Awareness raising of bullying is included in our work with children, through:

- Assemblies
- Curriculum work in the classroom
- Talk and sharing time in the classroom
- One-to-one talking with a child or group of children
- Dealing with situations as and when they occur

All opportunities will be used as and when it is appropriate. Good practice in classroom and curriculum organisation and delivery reduces bullying opportunities and motivation.

For example, in the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Room layout
- Availability of resources
- Explicit classroom rules
- Pupil involvement and management of rules and routines
- Use of rewards and sanctions
- Use of circle time in the classroom, giving children the opportunity to discuss problem areas
- Developing our pupils' self-image so they feel confident to speak up for themselves
- Practice in monitoring and stopping inappropriate behaviour
- Flexible learning practices
- Group work
- Co-operative rather than competitive practices
- Independent learning habits

Out of the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Positive promotion of our Code of Conduct to encourage all to respect themselves as well as others;
- Encouraging children to play different activities and be occupied;
- Careful supervision of all areas, particularly during break times, helping to minimise bullying opportunities;
- Adults as role models;
- Use and profile of sanctions in school;
- Profiles of Head/Deputy with regard to supervision and support;
- Policy and practice in relation to gender, race, citizenship, special educational needs and disabilities, etc.

When bullying occurs, is discovered or reported:

- It will be thoroughly investigated by actively and sympathetically listening to the parties concerned.
- Blame will not be apportioned, but responsibility for the action is encouraged to be taken by those responsible.
- When reported, and if it is group bullying, the group will be required to be talked to and mediation suggestions as to how the victim can be helped.
- In the case of a single person being involved, concrete proposals will need to be sought from the bully as to how the victim can be helped and how he/she can improve their behaviour.
- The victim needs to be well supported within and outside the school and assured that he/she will be protected and safe.
- The situation requires careful monitoring, and all teachers and supervisors who have responsibility for the pupils involved are required to be informed of actions and decisions.
- All incidents of bullying are to be reported to the Headteacher, who will make the decisions with regard to informing parents, involving outside agencies and supporting staff with agreement and advice on sanctions and deterrents, and action to be employed.
- In the case of a bullying incident being reported, the Governing body will be informed.
- The strategies that are normally employed within the school to enhance the self-esteem of pupils will also be employed to support in a bullying situation.

- Opportunity being offered to celebrate success - achievement assemblies, rewards and praise.
 - Pupils will be supported in voicing opinions.
 - Reinforcement of positive behaviour and responsibility taken for behaviour.
 - The use of 'Circle Time'.
 - Incidents of bullying will be recorded and parents informed.
 - Teachers and other adults will be involved in ongoing training.
 - There will be discussions at Pupil Voice meetings to assess the extent of bullying in the school.
 - Parents will be involved and kept informed.
 - Classroom discussions will be conducted regularly about bullying and the rules put in place.
 - The policy will be regularly reviewed in line with the planned review of the behaviour policy.

14.5 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

General procedures for dealing with bullying will follow these principles:

1. Adults are available
They make sure that children know they are ready to listen and are ready to provide immediate support. They remain calm and make it clear that the incident will be investigated.
2. Incidents are investigated
Every incident is investigated as soon as possible. All those involved are interviewed individually to avoid intimidation and to produce an accurate report. All incidents are reported to DSL via the safeguarding procedure.
3. Records are kept
Records and incidents of bullying will be kept in the incident folder.
4. There is a response
 - a) To the person doing the bullying – will be spoken to with sanctions related to the severity of the incident. Parents will be involved if appropriate, and strategies to help the child not to do it again will be put in place and followed up.
 - b) To the person being bullied - will be assured that the situation is being dealt with. They will also be given strategies to help deal with the situation.
 - c) Staff will emphasise that the pupil is right to tell an adult in school if they are having a problem with another pupil.
 - d) Support from additional agencies, e.g., Educational Psychology, may be sought.
5. Review and follow-up will be carried out as appropriate to the situation. As in our Behaviour Policy, praise and encouragement will always be given to the child's efforts to change, as this is our main aim.

All concerned are made aware of and helped to deal with the **CAUSES OF BULLYING** as well as the **CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING**. There is always a reason behind why a person bullies, and part of dealing with an incident must be helping a person to realise why they do it and then helping them to stop doing it, as well as supporting the victim.

15. EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Individual class teachers will keep a record of all “Behaviour” recording that takes place in the individual pupil’s file kept in the office (See recording sheets, appendices 1 and 2.) These records will be monitored and agreed by Key Stage leaders with individual class teachers, or at Department meetings termly, or more often if the need arises.

The policy will be reviewed annually with staff or during a staff development day. The policy will be deemed to be effective if staff feel confident in managing pupils` behaviour difficulties because the policy gives them a strategy to work with, and the support documented is available to put it into practice as necessary.

16. EXCLUSION

Exclusion is a serious step for a school to take. When a pupil is excluded from school, the parent, the school and Medway Council have certain shared responsibilities and rights. Abbey Court School follows the Medway Exclusion Policy (see Appendix 4)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Section 550 of the 1996 Education Act
- The Education Act 1997 (Section 4)
- Department for Children, Schools, and Families
- Human Rights Act 1998
- DFES / DH Guidance on Restraint (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) (2002)
- DFES Guidance on Restrictive Physical Interventions (2003)
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections ACT 2006
- ‘Use of reasonable force’ Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013
- <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition> (November 2014)
- <http://www.proact-scipr-uk.com/>
- DfE ‘Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions’ guidance (April 2026)

APPENDICES:

1. Individual Behaviour Support Plan Proforma
2. 'Parent Notification of Use of Intervention' letter
3. Email to accompany 'Parent Notification of Use of Intervention' letter
4. Child on Child Abuse Policy

Appendix I



INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN **[INSERT PUPIL NAME]**

This Plan should be read in conjunction with the ABC model, where B describes the behaviours and A the antecedents or 'triggers' that we know about the pupil that we need to support them with to help them cope with their behaviours.



BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR DISPLAYED

[Provide a summary overview of the behaviours we can expect to see and the context of when we will see them. Include the positive responses from pupils in these contexts. Remember to avoid vague words like naughty, silly, angry, as these are subjective and mean things to different people. Be precise]:

Example:

- *John can be very energetic and bouncy and happy to see familiar people first thing in the morning.*
- *He can display this by encroaching in their personal space or moving close to their faces.*
- *When he is becoming unsettled, he will become agitated. He will show this by biting his lip, hitting his head or tapping the side of his leg.*

BEHAVIOUR PATTERN

How often are these behaviours displayed? *[provide a summary of duration and regularity]*

Example:

- *John displays challenging behaviour during most class-based activities, but also during lunchtime and shared activities.*
- *He struggles during assemblies and during the start of lunchtime where the students are getting ready to settle for lunch.*



BEHAVIOUR INDICATORS (What we typically see before the behaviour escalates and the risk of that behaviour occurring)

Triggers

Example:

- *Triggers seem to be when John is in transition between activities and when he is in a situation where a resource needs to be shared (this may include TAs working with him).*
- *John does not like loud noises*
- *If he is hungry, he can start to become agitated.*

POSITIVE AIMS [List 3 or 4 things you want to achieve through this plan]

- *For John to develop appropriate responses to peers.*
- *For John to use pertinent communication to make requests.*
- *To reduce the number of physical interventions required to support John.*
- *To develop access to the curriculum that enables John to participate in his learning.*

AGREED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE BEHAVIOURS

[This section is about the plans we need to have in place to support the pupil to move on, or to understand their actions and to learn from their mistakes. We may use an assertive command, but we would not shout. We would be courteous, i.e., rather than “stop running” say, ‘Can you walk please’. When we use a physical intervention, our demeanour is always supportive, and our language is empathetic].

List the interventions used/plan in place for supporting and managing the pupil's behaviour. We want to aim to more effectively support the pupil and therefore reduce these interventions.

Example:

- *Let John know what is expected of him in a calm but firm tone of voice*
- *Language should be simple and minimal, supported by Makaton signs and symbols.*
- *John should have his Communication Book with him at all times, and should be encouraged to use this to express himself as much as possible. This should also be used to encourage shared communication experiences with members of staff*
- *Check John had his breakfast and snack/drink, and provide further snack/drink if needed*
- *Divert John's attention to an activity or item that motivates him*

All of the specific strategies outlined above will be implemented alongside a proactive PSHE and SMSC curriculum, which promotes an understanding of, and respect for, others and embodies the ethos of a Rights Respecting School community.

**Please delete section below if physical interventions are not required:*

USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS (techniques to be used and by whom)

PROACT-SCIP-r UK (Kent variation) physical interventions, are to be used by trained staff members and only after all other strategies have been exhausted or for the imminent safety of the pupil (and the safety of others).

All of the specific strategies outlined above should be implemented alongside a proactive PSHE&C and SMSC curriculum, which promotes an understanding of and respect for others and embodies the ethos of a Rights Respecting School community.

As a last resort, a one-person or two-person escort (PRO-ACT SCIP-r UK Kent Variation) may be used to support and escort the child to a safe area (this will be a place in the school or outside on the playground, soft play or the courtyards), where he/she can be allowed time to calm, with overview from a member/members of staff at all times.

A one-person or two-person escort (Kent Variation) may also be used when accompanying the child for off-site activities, such as educational visits and swimming at the hydro pool, where this is deemed safe.

Programme devised by:	Date:
-----------------------	-------

SIGNATURES	
Parent Agreement	
Class Teacher	
Key Stage Leader	
Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour Coordinator)	
Date to be reviewed	



INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN
[INSERT PUPIL NAME]

REVIEW	
Should the Behaviour Support Plan continue?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Where No, the Behaviour Support Plan can be ceased	
Where Yes, are amendments to provision required to further support the pupil? (Please list)	
[Where physical intervention is required as a positive intervention, planned physical interventions should be clearly stated]	

Programme devised by:	Date:
-----------------------	-------

SIGNATURES	
Parent Agreement	
Class Teacher	
Key Stage Leader	
Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour Coordinator)	
Date to be reviewed	

Appendix 2

01634 338220

office@abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk

www.abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk

Headteacher: Ms. V. Aspin



Primary and Secondary:

Cliffe Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3DL

Further Education:

Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP

Larkin Farm:

Templars Drive, Strood, Kent, ME2 3FD

Dear

I am emailing to inform you that a restrictive intervention/use of force has been used with your child today.

Time:

Date:

Location:

Duration of intervention:

Why the intervention was deemed to be necessary:

What type of force/restrictive intervention was applied:

Details of any physical injuries sustained (if applicable):

Follow-up actions that have been/will be taken:

- Your child was assessed by a First Aider.
- As discussed with you on the phone, strategies agreed in the Behaviour Support Plan were implemented and emotional well-being support was offered. Preferred activities were offered to re-engage and support calming techniques.
- A debrief will be held in school with the staff members involved.
- The Behaviour Support Plan will be reviewed, as part of the debrief process.

A member of school staff has already contacted you by telephone to discuss this incident with you in more detail; however, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any further questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Kind regards,

Abbey Court School

** Require edits

Appendix 3

Dear _____,

As discussed with you on the telephone this afternoon by your child's class teacher, I am emailing to inform you that a physical (restrictive) intervention/use of force was used with your child today.

Please see attached letter for further information regarding this.

Kind regards,

(_____, Abbey Court School)

APPENDIX 4

Abbey Court School Policy on Child-on-Child Abuse

1. Introduction

It is normal for some children and young people to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop. At Abbey Court School, the pupils have severe learning difficulties and it is not unusual for them to lack inhibitions and self-awareness and this always needs consideration. However, sexualised behaviour between peers that has become harmful or abusive is unacceptable and must be addressed.

At Abbey Court, we recognise that pupils are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers sexually. We consider any allegation of child-on-child sexual abuse seriously and do not tolerate or pass off harmful sexual behaviour as 'banter' or 'just having a laugh'. These allegations are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures, including seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. This policy is in line with the safeguarding requirements in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024), which we must work to; Part 5 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance sets out how schools should manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment. This policy also links to the guidance issued by the DfE in 2018: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

2. Definition of sexual abuse.

'Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.' (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, 2024)

3. Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm;

- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery);
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent;
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example, sexual or sexist name-calling.

Abbey Court also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour. Pupils can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when pupils are travelling home.

4. How we seek to minimise the risk of harmful sexual behaviour

The principle aim of our approach is to foster the conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. We work to a culture in which the voice of our pupils is central, where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, and that they will not be judged. We use relationships, sex and health education to help our pupils understand, in an age-appropriate way, what harmful sexual behaviour is, including by peers. We teach them the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We also teach them about the importance of making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a pupil is abused, it is never their fault.

We help our pupils to develop the skills to understand:

- what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour;
- that such behaviour is not acceptable;
- the possible reasons for such behaviour, and the vulnerability of perpetrators;
- that they must tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable – and must tell a trusted adult if they witness such behaviour towards others.

We understand our pupils may not always be able to talk to adults about child-on-child sexual abuse. To help them, we will encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions, respond to their concerns, and respect and listen to them. We want our pupils to feel confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.

5. Parents and carers

It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour, and reinforce key messages from school at home. We work in partnership with parents to support our pupils and want to help them keep their child/ren safe. Parents and carers should understand:

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour;
- the effects of harmful sexual behaviour on PUPIL;
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place;
- what to do if it is suspected that child-on-child sexual abuse has occurred;

Further information to support parents and carers in relation to harmful sexual behaviour is available online, including on the NSPCC and Lucy Faithfull Foundation websites.

6. Staff

Abbey Court school staff undertake annual safeguarding training where the different types of abuse and neglect are discussed; this includes information about harmful sexual behaviour and our expectations for staff vigilance about this and other potential types of abuse. Staff also receive updates on safeguarding issues throughout the school year, including about the nature and prevalence of harmful sexual behaviour, where appropriate. Importantly, the training also ensures that our staff know what to do if they receive a report that harmful sexual behaviour may have occurred, including how to support pupils. Staff at Abbey Court School receive training, at least yearly, on recognising and dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

7. Our response to an incident/allegation

The wellbeing of our pupils is always central to our response to an allegation or incident of harmful sexual behaviour. Any pupil reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe; no pupil will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or made to feel ashamed. Our staff will never promise confidentiality to the pupil as the concern will need to be shared further. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident (and subsequently the details may also need to be shared with Children's Social Care / the police and other specialist agencies). We have in place effective working relationships with our safeguarding partners, which are essential to ensuring that concerns are appropriately managed. We will explain the next steps to the pupil or their advocate so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed. Where the pupil already has Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child In Need or a child with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform the child's Social Worker and work in partnership with them as appropriate. Whilst we establish the facts of the case and start the process of liaising with other agencies as appropriate, we will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises, and where applicable, on transport to and from the school. Where an incident includes an online element, we will always work in accordance with appropriate guidance, taking advice from other partners as necessary. Our staff will not view an indecent image of a pupil unless absolutely necessary, nor forward it for any reason.

Recording

It is essential that information relating to allegations about harmful sexual behaviour are recorded within our school, as with any other child protection concern – and in line with our Child Protection Policy (CPOMS). The record may form part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care or by another agency. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. The facts will be recorded as the pupil presents them. The record will then be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly. If a pupil is at immediate risk of harm, staff will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and deal with recording as soon as possible afterwards. All

related concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for decisions will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

Investigation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for leading investigations, and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate, for example Children's Social Care and the police. They will also be the main point of contact for parents and carers. The Designated Lead will ensure there are accurate records of each stage of the investigation and that any supporting information is included on CPOMs.

Risk Assessment

We will complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour, considering all pupils involved in an incident. We will also consider all other pupils at our school and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them. Risk assessments will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Where appropriate, the affected pupil and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and review of the risk assessment.

8. Guiding principles

The safety of our pupils is paramount. We will use a proportionate approach, basing our actions on the principle that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns will be considered carefully and, on a case-by-case basis, underpinned by robust risk assessments. Our actions will not be judgemental about the guilt of the alleged perpetrator and will always be taken in the interests of all pupils concerned. Our approach will help us to ensure that all pupils are protected and supported appropriately. The following principles will guide us:

- the wishes of the pupil in terms of how they want to proceed – the victim will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed;
- the ages and developmental stages of all pupils involved;
- consideration of any power imbalance between the pupil – for example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident / does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty;
- consideration of whether the alleged incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other pupil, or staff;
- consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

9. Investigation outcomes

Our investigation of an allegation or incident as set out in this policy will enable us to determine the outcome, working with our safeguarding partners as appropriate. We will always seek to ensure that the outcome of an investigation is appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to the report. Various options are open to us, as set out below:

Manage internally

In some cases, for example, one-off incidents, we may take the view that the pupils concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention. In these cases, we will follow our other

school policies in addressing matters, for example, our relationship and anti-bullying policies. We will also consider what support the pupil involved may need going forward - for example, pastoral support, counselling services, access to our psychotherapist and ensuring that there is a trusted adult for those affected to speak with if they wish to. We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole-setting approach or with the wider school community.

Early Help

Where statutory intervention is not required or agreed, we may use early help instead. This means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a pupil's life. We will work with parents and carers and other relevant partners when following this approach, which can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation.

Requests for support to Children's Social Care

Where a pupil has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a request for support to Children's Social Care. We will generally inform parents and carers of this unless to do so may put a pupil at additional risk. We will seek advice from other partners on such matters. If we make a request for support, Children's Social Care will consider whether the pupils involved are in need of protection or other services. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care and other agencies as appropriate. Partnership working helps to ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other pupils that require support. In some cases, Children's Social Care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. If a statutory assessment is not considered appropriate by Children's Social Care, we will consider what other support may be required. We will make further requests for support to Children's Social Care if we consider that a pupil remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Reporting to the police

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, we will report it to the police. We will generally inform parents or carers about reports of sexual abuse, unless doing so may put a pupil at additional risk. We will seek advice from other partners in individual cases. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, we will ensure that we support the pupil in any decision we take. This is likely to be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies. Where we have made a report to the police, we will consult with them and agree on what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. We will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the police and other agencies as appropriate to support all pupils involved (including potential witnesses). This will help to ensure that any actions we take do not jeopardise a police investigation. Sometimes the police will decide that further action is not required. In these circumstances, we will continue to engage with other agencies to support the pupils involved.

10. Review

All child protection concerns are reviewed regularly, to ensure that everything has been fully addressed, that actions are completed, and to consider whether the pupils involved need any further support. We will continue to work with parents and carers and other agencies as appropriate, and risk assessments will be reviewed and updated as required.