

It may be appropriate to regard a child's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power between the people involved.
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more people.
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If it is believed that the perpetrator intended to cause harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abuse even if severe harm was not actually caused.

Anyone who has a concern that a child might have been abused by another child and/or is displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour should follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Allegations of child on child abuse will be taken as seriously as allegations of abuse perpetrated by an adult. Separate enquiries and investigations will be pursued in respect of the victim and the abuser.

It is vital that all staff are aware that children displaying HSBs may be an indication that they are a victim of abuse themselves and due consideration should be given to this. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool is used by the school to identify, understand and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in young people and to ascertain whether each act constitutes what can be described as behaviour that is reflective of safe and healthy sexual development or represents harmful sexual behaviour.

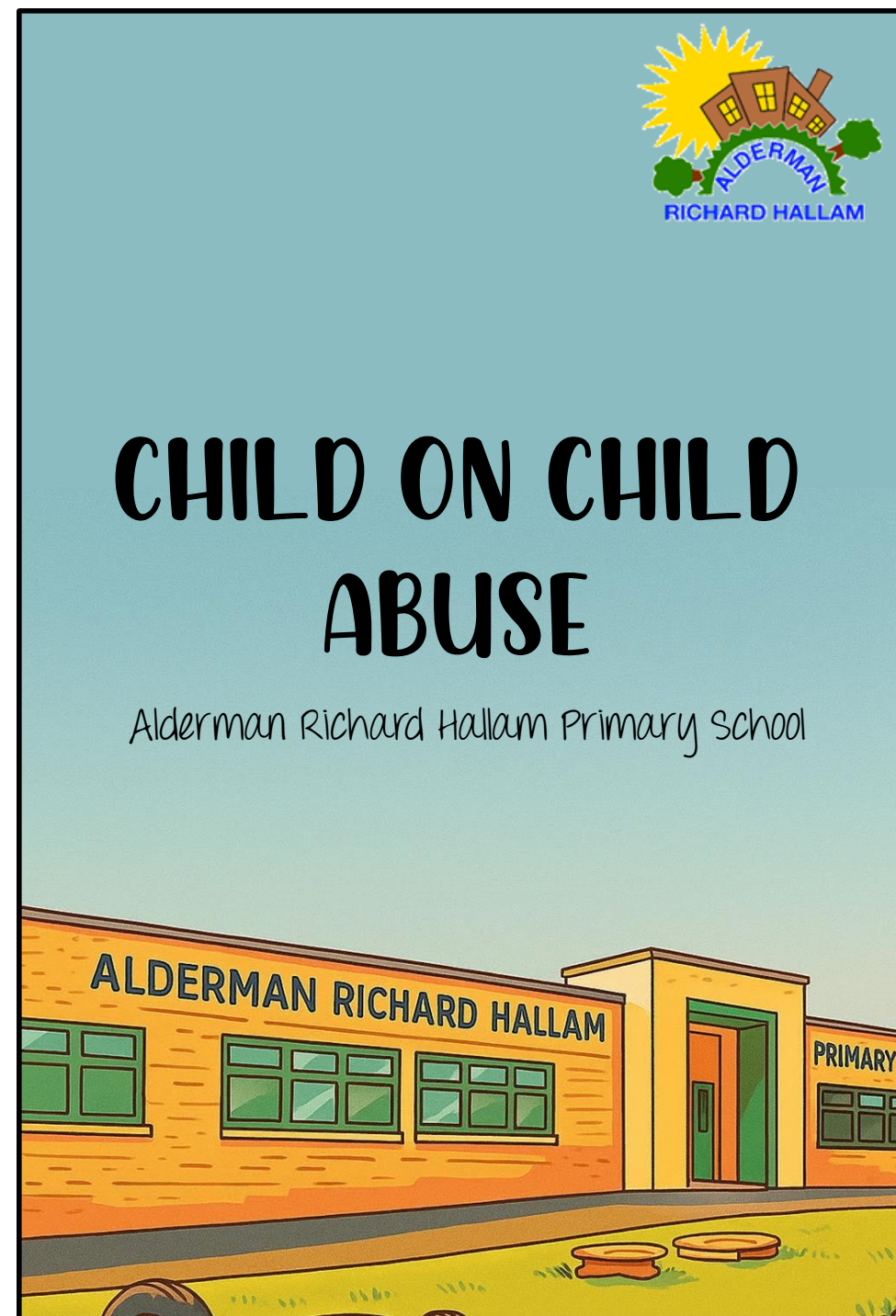
As a school, we understand the importance of addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as it can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Failing to challenge inappropriate behaviour can lead to a culture of harm and build foundations for later, more significant behaviours.



SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns regarding the safeguarding or welfare of a child or family in school, please speak in confidence to one of the following people.

 Ann-Marie Kedzior Designated Safeguarding Lead	 Carla Lawes Designated Safeguarding Lead	
 Samuel Gregory Deputy DSL	 Emma Colley Deputy DSL	 Krupa Nanda Deputy DSL
 Wayne Holder Deputy DSL	 Holli Elverstone Deputy DSL	<div>Our DSLs can be identified by their red lanyards.</div>



Child-on-child abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- **Bullying** (including cyberbullying);
- **Physical abuse** such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- **Sexual violence**, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- **Sexual harassment**, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- **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;
- **Sexting** (also known as youth produced sexual imagery), sending nudes or semi-nudes; and
- **Initiation/hazing** type violence and rituals.

Children are vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. It should be the same safeguarding children procedures as apply in respect of any child who is suffering or at risk of suffering **significant harm**.

A significant proportion of sex offences are committed by teenagers and, on occasion, such offences are committed by younger children.

Staff should not dismiss some abusive sexual behaviour as "normal" between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.

Children and young people who abuse others should be held responsible for their abusive behaviour, while being identified and responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others.

Abusive sexual activity is characterised by behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy or where one participant relies on an unequal powerbase.

Signs of child on child abuse

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The ability of professionals to determine whether a child's sexual behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults or children and downloading indecent images of children from the internet. Sexual behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development or both. It is important to consider what negative effects the behaviour has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child. It should be recognised that the behaviour may be motivated by information seeking but may cause significant upset, confusion physical damage etc. It may also be that the behaviour is acting out which may derive from other sexual situations which the child has been exposed to.

What are the impacts of abuse on a child?

Peer-on-peer abuse can manifest itself and impact a child in many ways, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Causing physical injuries
- Encouraging drug and alcohol abuse
- Going missing/running away
- Compromising their sexual health
- Committing criminal offences
- Acting disengaged from school
- Affecting their mental health and emotional wellbeing

To an extent, there is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as child-on-child abuse and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc. For this reason, a staff member's professional judgement plays a vital role in the identification process and they should always seek advice and support from the school's DSLs.