



**LAURUS**  
TRUST

# **Child on Child Abuse Policy**

**Date of Review: 16/09/2025**

**Date of Next Review: 16/09/2026**

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We believe that all students have the right to be taught in a safe environment to enable them to optimise their learning and achievement. We expect all students to have respect for themselves and others and work to ensure everyone in our community feels safe, valued and supported. The Laurus Trust promotes the values of honesty, acceptance, inclusion and fairness within a caring, restorative and nurturing environment.

## Understanding Child-on-Child Abuse (Students who harm each other)

As a Trust, we understand and recognise safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse and that children are capable of abusing their peers. We do not tolerate any form of Child-on-Child abuse and this will not be passed off as “banter” or “having a laugh”

Child-on-child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and violence
- gender based violence
- emotional harm
- on and offline bullying
- teenage relationship abuse

It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation.

All staff are aware of child-on-child abuse. Staff members who are concerned that a child might have been or is being abused by another child will follow the Trust’s safeguarding and child protection procedures and report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as outlined in this policy.

## Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) – also see separate Trust policy

The Laurus Trust takes a proactive approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviours (including sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual abuse) from taking place. We appreciate that whilst adults in The Trust are working hard to keep children safe, children also play a large part in keeping themselves and their peers safe from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is therefore

taught as part of our Trust curriculum and in assemblies throughout the year. An age-appropriate curriculum is used in our schools to build capacity amongst our students in their understanding of particular safeguarding issues, and what actions they can take to be safe (including what is respectful behaviour, what consent is, what behaviours they should report, how to report and what will happen when they do report).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour encompasses a range of behaviours, it can occur online and offline or a mixture of both. The following model is used to explain the continuum of sexual behaviours, ranging from normal to violent:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally expected</li> <li>• Socially acceptable</li> <li>• Consensual, mutual, reciprocal</li> <li>• Shared decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group</li> <li>• Context for behaviour may be inappropriate</li> <li>• Generally consensual and reciprocal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problematic and concerning behaviours</li> <li>• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected</li> <li>• No overt elements of victimisation</li> <li>• Consent issues may be unclear</li> <li>• May lack reciprocity or equal power</li> <li>• May include levels of compulsivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victimising intent or outcome</li> <li>• Includes misuse of power</li> <li>• Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance</li> <li>• Intrusive</li> <li>• Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim</li> <li>• May include elements of expressive violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically violent sexual abuse</li> <li>• Highly intrusive</li> <li>• Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator</li> <li>• Sadism</li> </ul>

Source: Hackett, S, 2010

This will be used in the process of assessment to help the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide on appropriate route to take to tackle these behaviours.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is delivered through PSHE and/or Beliefs and Values lessons, using age-appropriate content throughout the Key Stages. This is in line with the DFE’s Statutory Guidance on RSE.

Students are taught to understand the meaning of consent in all areas of relationships (including friendships, families and intimate relationships) as an integral part of this curriculum. Students will be made aware of what constitutes unreasonable pressure from peers to engage in risk-taking, inappropriate or illegal behaviour (for example, but limited to, sexting), and are made aware of how to create safe environments for all in school, outside of school and online.

## Responding to reports of child-on-child abuse

Robust systems have been established in The Trust for dealing with safeguarding concerns, including any reports of child-on-child abuse. All incidents will be treated seriously and confidentially. Allegations of abuse by a child will be treated as seriously as allegations of abuse from an adult, it should never be dismissed as normal behaviour.

Incidents of child-on-child abuse may need to be dealt with in various ways. Incidents of bullying will be dealt with via the schools anti-bullying policy and/or behaviour policy. Incidents which take place outside of school may need to be addressed in school, however the school are clear that where professional advice needs to be sought from external partners, it will be.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult children's social care on matters relating to the safety and welfare of a child and will consult the police in respect of matters relating to a possible crime.

We will put a proportionate and supportive package of care in place for those affected

## Responding to reports of Harmful Sexual Behaviours

We will respond and manage any reports of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or sexual abuse in line with guidance added to KCSIE 2025 and within the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership website.

When incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment occur, our response is ultimately decided on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking the lead role, using their professional judgement.

There are four likely responses/actions we may take when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

### Manage the incident internally

In some cases, it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, through utilising our behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support.

### Make a referral to 'Early help'

We may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions, but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent

harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Multi-agency early help would be utilised alongside Trust and individual school policies, preventative education and engagement with parents and carers.

## Referrals to children's social care

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we would make a referral to local children's social care via each school's local safeguarding hub. At the point of referral parents or carers would be informed, unless there are compelling reasons not to such as an additional risk to a child if their parent or carer was informed. This decision would be made with the support of children's social care.

If a referral is made, children's social care will make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy would work alongside the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

The individual school will immediately consider and act to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, any other children directly involved in the safeguarding report and all children at the school as appropriate. In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school (generally led by the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy) should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support

## Reporting to the Police

If deemed appropriate or necessary, school will report an incident to the police. This will generally be in conjunction with a referral to children's social care. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the police will be informed immediately. Parents or carers would then be informed unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

As a Trust we will support the child in any decision they take with the support of children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where a report has been made to the police, we will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. The best way to protect the victim and their anonymity will be discussed and agreed.

In such circumstances that the police do not take the report further, we will continue to

engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

All responses The Trust takes in response to Harmful Sexual Behaviours will be underpinned by the principle that Harmful Sexual Behaviour is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded electronically.

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies:*

- Anti-Bullying Policy – Trust Secondary
- Behaviour Policy – School Secondary

# Equality Impact Statement

<p>Names and titles of people involved with this assessment</p> <p>Title of Policy – Child on Child Abuse Policy</p>	<p>Rachel Robinson Assistant Trust Director of Inclusion</p>
<p>Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics</p>	<p>Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Religious belief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sexual orientation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gender Reassignment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Summary of any issues/proposed changes</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>September 2025</p>
<p>Date of next review</p>	<p>September 2026</p>



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