HIAC

🧾Child on Child Abuse, Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy

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Audience: All Staff
Owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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1. Introduction and Policy Statement

This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding children from child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, and harassment. It complements our overarching Safeguarding Policy by providing specific guidance and procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to incidents where children harm other children. We recognize that child-on-child abuse can have severe and lasting impacts on victims and is a serious breach of trust and safety. Our primary concern is the safety and well-being of all children under our care, and we are committed to fostering an environment where all forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and addressed promptly and effectively.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all tutors, staff, volunteers, and any other individuals working for or associated with our tutoring service, whether in clients' homes, schools, or online. It covers all children and young people who receive services from us, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. The policy addresses incidents that occur during tutoring sessions, related activities, or that come to our attention through our work.

3. Definitions

Child-on-Child Abuse (also known as Peer-on-Peer Abuse): Any form of abuse or harm perpetrated by one child against another. This can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual abuse, and neglect. It can occur face-to-face or online.

Sexual Violence: Any sexual act directed against a child without their consent, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and exploitation. This can involve physical contact or non-physical acts such as sharing explicit images.

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a child's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. This can include verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct.

Consent: A child cannot genuinely consent to sexual activity with another child if they are under the age of consent, or if they are coerced, pressured, or do not have the capacity to understand the nature of the activity.

4. Guiding Principles

•Child-Centred Approach: The safety and well-being of the child who has been subjected to abuse is always the paramount consideration.
•Zero Tolerance: We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, and harassment.
•Prevention: We are committed to proactive measures to prevent child-on-child abuse from occurring.
•Responsibility: All adults associated with our service have a responsibility to understand, identify, and respond to child-on-child abuse.
•Confidentiality: Information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis, always prioritizing the child's safety.
•Fairness: All allegations will be treated seriously, investigated thoroughly, and handled fairly, ensuring due process for all involved.

5. Prevention Strategies

We implement the following strategies to prevent child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, and harassment:
•Code of Conduct: All tutors and staff adhere to a strict Code of Conduct that outlines professional boundaries, appropriate behaviour, and expectations for respectful interactions between children.
•Education and Awareness: Where appropriate, we will promote age-appropriate education for children on healthy relationships, consent, personal boundaries, and how to report concerns. Tutors will also be trained to recognize the signs of child-on-child abuse.
•Supervision: Tutors will maintain appropriate supervision during sessions, especially in group settings, to observe interactions and intervene if necessary.
•Safe Environments: We ensure that tutoring environments (whether home, school, or online) are as safe as possible, minimizing opportunities for abuse to occur. This includes advising parents on safe home environments and adhering to school safety protocols.
•Online Safety: For online tutoring, we utilize secure platforms, provide guidance on online behaviour, and encourage parental oversight to mitigate risks of cyberbullying or online sexual harassment.
•Open Communication: We foster an environment where children feel safe and confident to report any concerns or incidents to a trusted adult.

6. Identification and Reporting Procedures

All tutors and staff are responsible for being vigilant and responding to any concerns or disclosures of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, or harassment.

6.1. Recognizing Signs and Indicators

Tutors will be trained to recognize potential signs and indicators of child-on-child abuse, which may include:
•Physical: Unexplained injuries, changes in physical appearance, or reluctance to change for activities.
•Behavioural: Changes in behaviour (e.g., aggression, withdrawal, anxiety), fear of certain individuals or places, secretiveness, or inappropriate sexualized behaviour.
•Emotional: Depression, low self-esteem, self-harm, or suicidal ideation.
•Verbal: Direct disclosures, hints, or indirect statements about being harmed by another child.

6.2. Responding to Disclosures or Concerns

If a child discloses abuse or if a concern is identified, tutors/staff must:
1.Listen Carefully: Allow the child to speak without interruption, taking their concerns seriously.
2.Reassure: Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone and that it is not their fault.
3.Do Not Promise Confidentiality: Explain that you cannot keep secrets if it means a child is at risk of harm, but you will only share information with those who need to know to keep them safe.
4.Do Not Investigate: It is not the role of the tutor to investigate the allegations. Avoid asking leading questions or pressing for details.
5.Record: Make an accurate and factual record of what was said or observed as soon as possible, using the child's own words where appropriate. Include date, time, and location.
6.Report Immediately: Report the concern or disclosure immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the tutoring service.

6.3. Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

All concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, or harassment must be reported to the DSL without delay. The DSL is responsible for:
•Receiving and recording all safeguarding concerns.
•Assessing the information and deciding on the appropriate course of action.
•Liaising with external agencies, such as local authority children's services and the police, where necessary.
•Providing support and guidance to staff.

7. Response and Support

Upon receiving a report, the DSL will initiate the following response and support procedures:
1.Immediate Safety: Ensure the immediate safety of the child who has been harmed and, if necessary, the safety of other children. This may involve separating the children involved.

2.Assessment: Conduct an initial assessment of the risk and the need for external agency involvement. This will be done in consultation with relevant authorities (e.g., children's services, police) if there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm.

3.Support for the Child Who Has Been Harmed: Provide appropriate support to the child, which may include emotional support, access to counselling services, and ensuring their continued safety.

4.Support for the Child Who Has Caused Harm: Address the behaviour of the child who has caused harm, which may involve behavioural interventions, restorative justice approaches (where appropriate and safe), and, if necessary, involving parents and external support services.

5.Confidentiality and Information Sharing: Maintain strict confidentiality, sharing information only with those who need to know to protect the child. Adhere to data protection regulations.

6.Record Keeping: Maintain detailed and accurate records of all incidents, actions taken, and communications with external agencies and parents.

7.Communication with Parents: Inform the parents of the child who has been harmed and, where appropriate, the parents of the child who has caused harm, in line with safeguarding guidance and data protection. This will be managed by the DSL.

8. Training and Awareness

•Mandatory Training: All tutors and staff will receive mandatory safeguarding training that specifically includes modules on child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, and harassment.
•Refresher Training: Regular refresher training will be provided to ensure staff remain up-to-date with best practices and legislative changes.
•DSL Training: The Designated Safeguarding Lead will receive advanced training specific to their role, including managing allegations of child-on-child abuse.

9. Monitoring, Review, and Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or organizational practice, or in response to any significant incidents. The review will assess the effectiveness of our prevention strategies, reporting procedures, and response mechanisms. Feedback from staff, parents, and children (where appropriate) will be considered in the review process.

10. Related Policies

•Safeguarding Policy
•Code of Conduct
•Online Safety Policy
•Whistleblowing Policy

References

[1] GOV.UK. Working Together to Safeguard Children. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

[2] NSPCC Learning. Child protection policies and procedures. Available at: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/child-protection-policies-and-procedures

Year-on-Year Document Review

Review Date	Reviewer Name	Changes Made / Notes	Next Review Date
01/10/25	Kris Geddes	N/A	01/10/26