



Peer on Peer abuse policy



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection
Providers must have and implement a policy and procedure to safeguard children.

Statement of Intent:

At Mosterton preschool, we are committed to safeguarding all children in our care. We follow the principles of keeping children safe in education 2024, which states

“Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with.”

We place a strong emphasis on listening to the voice of the child and ensuring their wishes and feelings are central to any action taken or services provided. Children are encouraged to express their views through age-appropriate systems and these are treated with respect and sensitivity.

Purpose and aims:

Children may harm one another in ways that constitute abuse. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define peer-on-peer abuse and the various forms it may take.
- Ensure a consistent, supportive and immediate response to incidents
- Promote awareness and preventative strategies among staff, children and parents.

Related policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Legislative framework:

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 – The child’s welfare is paramount
- Working together to safeguard children (2018) – Emphasizes the importance of the child’s voice in assessment.
- Keeping children safe in education (2024) – Outlines expectations for preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse.

Definition and types of peer-on-peer abuse:

Abuse between children should never be dismissed as “Just banter” or “part of growing up”.

Forms of peer-on-peer abuse may include:

- Physical abuse – e.g. hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling
- Sexually harmful behaviour – e.g. inappropriate touching, language or sexual assault



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- Prejudice based abuse – linked to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or social class.
- Bullying or repeated harmful behaviour – Including exclusion, intimidation or manipulation.

Staff response and expectations:

All staff must:

- Respond immediately and sensitively
- Use open-ended, non-leading questions to gather facts
- Record observations and evidence (e.g. incident reports, ABC charts)
- Conduct risk assessments and consider intent behind behaviour
- Avoid judgmental or dismissive attitudes
- Be trained and confident in responding appropriately to these incidents.

Investigating Incidents: Key steps

1. Gather the facts:
 - ❖ Speak to involved staff and children (As appropriate to age and understanding)
 - ❖ Ask open ended questions: What happened? Who was there? When and where?
2. Review evidence:
 - ❖ Use observations, ABC charts, reports.
3. Consider intent and context:
 - ❖ Was the behaviour deliberate or reactive?
 - ❖ Are there known triggers?
 - ❖ Are consistent behaviour strategies in place?
4. Safeguarding Decision:
 - ❖ If there is significant harm or risk, refer immediately to children's social care (and police if appropriate)
 - ❖ If criteria for referral are not met, consider early help or internal resolution

Informing parents:

- Parents should be informed face to face whenever possible
- Share facts without judgment and reassure that appropriate support will be offered
- Inform both sets of parents (Of the child harmed and the child causing harm) sensitively.

Facts to consider:

- Age and understanding – Are the children developmentally capable of understanding their actions?
- Location of incident – Was the behaviour hidden or visible? Are there supervision concerns?
- Childs understanding – Do they understand boundaries, consent and personal space?
- Repetition – Is this a repeated behaviour? Has it been addressed previously?

Post-Incident Actions:

For the child displaying harmful behaviour:



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- Understand the underlying cause
- Seek external support (e.g. GP, early help, strengthening families)
- Apply consequences (e.g. restorative conversations, additional supervision)
- Develop an individual risk assessment if the behaviour poses ongoing risk

For the child who was harmed:

- Provide ongoing emotional support
- Monitor for any delayed trauma or emotional effects.
- Work closely with the family and outside agencies as needed.

Aftercare and Monitoring:

Both children involved should receive support after the incident. Emotional responses such as remorse or distress may appear later. All children must feel safe, heard and supported throughout the process.

Preventative Strategies:

We aim to prevent peer-on-peer abuse through:

- Age-appropriate education on feelings, personal space and respect.
- High quality staff training
- Strong supervision and staff ratios
- Positive behaviour management strategies
- A clear culture of safeguarding first throughout the setting.

Contract termination clause

At Mosterton preschool, we reserve the right to terminate a child's placement if:

- Repeated harmful behaviour continues despite all interventions
- Parents/Carers do not follow advice (e.g. fail to seek support from external agencies)
- The behaviour causes harm or persistent risk to others and we have exhausted all strategies to prevent it.

Policy Review:

This policy is reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation, to ensure they remain current and effective.

Date: September 2025

Date to be reviewed: September 2026