



**RAINFORD
HIGH**

Managing child on child/student on student safeguarding allegations

Everyone Matters

We expect our community to be kind, polite and respectful

Everyone Helps

We expect our community to make sensible choices

Everyone Succeeds

We expect our community to work hard

Guidance Owner	Principal
Scope of the Policy	Rainford High
Written/last reviewed	January 2024
Next review due	June 2024
Summary of key changes	Reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Introduction

Rainford High believes that all children and young people have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children and young people should be free from harm by adults and other students in school.

We recognise that some children and young people will negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others. When this happens, their behaviour will be dealt in accordance with the below policies:

- Behaviour for learning policy
- Exclusion policy
- Child protection and Safeguarding Children Policy

Along with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education DFE 2024
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges DFE September 2021 which is now fully absorbed into Keeping Children Safe in Education DFE 2023.
- Working together to safeguard children 2023

This policy is written with the main focus on sexual violence and sexual harassment in line with the above documents but it applies to all safeguarding allegations made from one child to another.

At Rainford High we have a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We know this form of abuse can happen anywhere and we remain vigilant towards this and we ask all parents and carers to do so.

Safeguarding Allegations

Occasionally, students against other students in the school make safeguarding allegations. Safeguarding issues may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The below list gives an indication of possible features of such abuse. This list is not exhaustive.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned

- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography
- taking part in sexting
- Up skirting
- Flicking bras
- Pulling down trousers
- Grabbing bottoms or genitalia

Sexual Harassment

- Making sexual comments
- Telling sexual stories
- Making lewd comments
- Making sexual remarks about clothes and appearances
- Calling someone sexualised names
- Making sexual jokes or taunting them
- Physical behaviour such as brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Up skirting
- Online sexual harassment

Online Sexual Harassment

- Consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude and semi images and/or videos
- Sharing or unwanted explicit content
- Sexualised online bullying
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including social media
- Sexual exploitation, coercion and threats
- Coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging other children or young people to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (for example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children or young people, staying out overnight)
- encouraging other children or young people to attend inappropriate gatherings
- photographing or videoing other children or young people performing indecent acts
- photographing or videoing other children or young performing indecent acts
- encouraging other children to produce and distribute inappropriate images of themselves or others

Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or face to face can also occur at the same time between the two. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and therefore we will take a safeguarding approach to all students involved.

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger/ vulnerable students using any or all of the above methods. Children and young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves, may be forced to recruit other children or young people under threat of violence, for example as part of county lines.

Please be aware that all safeguarding allegations will be taken seriously and we will not tolerate any behaviours that harm other students or put them at risk.

We will not accept explanations for such behaviours as:

- 'it was just a laugh'
- 'it was banter'
- 'it is children being children'
- 'it is part of growing up'
- 'it is boys being boys' or 'girls being girls'

We will treat all situations seriously to ensure appropriate action is taken to prevent further incidents and support everyone involved. These behaviours are harmful for all students involved. The safety of our students is of upmost importance and dismissing incidents is unacceptable. We take a safeguarding approach for all individuals involved.

We have a zero tolerance to student on student/child on child abuse. Child on child abuse can result in significant harm.

How make a report

At Rainford we have the below methods of making a report.

- Speaking to a member of the safeguarding team – Mr Kenyon, Miss Litherland, Mr White, Mr Pendlebury, Mrs McCartney and Mrs Sheedy
- Speaking to any other member of staff in school
- Emailing safeguarding@rainford.org.uk
- Visiting the pastoral offices
- Posting under an office door
- Speaking to your tutor
- Making an online report on the SHARP system <https://rainford.thesharpsystem.com/>

We encourage anyone involved to make a report.

The most popular ways of reporting are using SHARP and visiting the pastoral office.

All cases will be handled calmly and every student will be listened to and supported.

We understand that a student that a student may not find it easy to tell staff about abuse.

When an allegation is made

When an allegation is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern.

If there is a safeguarding concern, for example sexual violence or sexual harassment allegations, a Designated Safeguarding Officer should be informed as soon as possible, who will then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A factual record should be made of the allegation/concerns on CPOMS along with any additional information, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will take the lead on the case.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Police and Social Services for further advice, support and intervention depending on the circumstances of the allegations before progressing to a full internal investigation. It is possible that Police and Social Services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around the young people involved.

The safeguarding team will keep a clear chronological records of the actions taken and investigations.

Handling report of a potential criminal offence

If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, then the Police and Social Services will be informed as stated above at the earliest opportunity. We will inform the victim's parents immediately.

As per guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, we will discuss when and how to inform the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents with the local authority and/or Police. However, as per general safeguarding principles we will take the appropriate action to safeguarding all students involved.

Our general procedures are:

1. Report is made to school. The DSL/DDSL are informed.
2. Victim's parents are informed.
3. If there is a potential criminal offence, then Police and Social Services will be informed.
4. Alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents are informed that a concern has been made and are given the appropriate information to enable them to safeguarding their children.
5. Meetings with the victim and parents to discuss the concerns, the actions, support and the risk assessments.
6. Meetings with the alleged perpetrators parents to discuss the concerns, the actions, support and the risk assessments.
7. Risk assessments will be written.

We will reassure the reporting student that they are being taken seriously and they will be supported and kept safe.

We will seek advice from the Police and Social Services on how much information we can disclose to the accused student and their parents as this is often restricted.

School Investigations and Outcomes:

Rainford High will liaise closely with external agencies but we will also, where appropriate, conduct our internal investigation in line with our behaviour and safeguarding policies.

*As stated in **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023** document, 'disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the police and/or children's social services are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly'. This is a matter for the school and should be carefully considered on a case by case basis. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should take a leading role. The school should consider if, by taking any action, they would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the police and/or children's social care should help the school make a determination.*

We will deal with each situation on a case by case basis but we may carry out a full investigation and issue separate conclusions aside from the progress or outcome of a Police investigation. A record of 'no further action' from the Police will not prevent Rainford High from concluding that an incident has happened if on a balance of probabilities it is more likely to have happened than not and therefore Rainford High may issue appropriate consequences in line with the behaviour and exclusions policies.

Risk Management and Reduction

If an allegation is made against a student of a safeguarding nature, then appropriate actions and support will be put into place for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. A risk assessment/management plan will be written for each student to ensure these and other students are kept safe and are not vulnerable to malicious allegations being made. This plan may involve group moves to split up the students. Priority will always be given to ensuring minimum disruption for the alleged victim.

We will allocate each student involved with a mentor/trusted adult to support them. These adults will not be involved with the investigation process.

The school should be informed of any situation where a child or young person presents a safeguarding concern as identified by any external agencies. E.g. if a student has been involved with a crime outside of school of a safeguarding nature. As a school, we work collaboratively with other agencies and we will work closely with them to support and manage situations carefully to promote safety for all.

There will always be a balance between privacy and the need to share key information in order to safeguard students. For example, key information may need to be shared with a student's teachers so they can support the young person in lessons. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make the decision about what information needs to be shared in order to safeguard the student in school, under authorisation of the Principal. These decisions will be documented.

Parents will be involved in the risk management stage and we will seek support from the social services team and Police, where appropriate, to ensure this plan is robust.

All risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and the student support will be adapted to support all students through the investigation and outcomes.

What if the accused student is from another school?

If we receive an allegation from a student in our school then we will inform the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the Police and the Designated Safeguarding Officer from the related schools (where appropriate).

What if the allegation is made against a Rainford student from a student at another school?

We would follow the same procedures as stated by working collaboratively with other agencies and forming appropriate risk management plans to support the student and the safety of other students in our community.

Sexting/Nudes

Staff and other adults who work with children and young people in Rainford High will read this policy within the framework of the following guidance:

- Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people DFE – UK Council for Internal Safety.

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

When an incident involving youth-produced sexual imagery comes to the school attention:

- The incident should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the child or young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents/Carers should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents/carers would put the child or young person at risk of harm

At any point in the process if there is a concern that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the Police immediately.

If staff believe there are inappropriate images of children on a device, then the device will be confiscated, switched off and locked away. The Police will then be contacted for advice, guidance and support. The device will remain confiscated until Police advise us on the next steps.

We are committed to multi-agency working and we will seek advice from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and/or Police when dealing with any cases involving youth produced sexual imagery and sexting.

We understand there are variety of situations and motives behind youth produced nudes/semi nudes and therefore we will deal with each issue on a case-by-case basis with the focus being on safeguarding the children involved. We will assess the risk factors and circumstances in the situation to support the decision on next steps.

We will remind all children and parents that the laws are there to protect children.

Report Remove:

Please find below a key link to Childline where young people can make a report if their images are online and children will work to try and remove them.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/>

We strongly advise young people to use this link and seek support from school if they are in a situation involving inappropriate images of themselves being online.

Education and Prevention

As a school, we are committed to the education of our students through our Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme, where we cover these topics in assemblies and in tutor time.

For further information, please consult our webpage links below:

<http://rainford.org.uk/pshce-rshe/>

Related Policies

Anti-bullying Policy
Behaviour for Learning Policy
Drugs and substance Misuse Policy
Exclusion Policy
Search Policy
Child protection and safeguarding policy
Equality and diversity policy
Relationships, Sex and Health Policy