

Whitmore Park Primary School

Child on Child Abuse Policy 2023 Including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children

Owner:	Mrs Jacqueline McGibney	Published date:	September 2023
Approved by Headteacher:	Mrs Jacqueline McGibney	Date:	September 2023
Approved by Co-Chair of Governors:	Mr Karl Miles Mrs Rosella Brennan	Date:	September 2023
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1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity on what is meant by Child on Child abuse in all its forms
- Understand the culture within our school
- Evidence how ALL staff support the children in our school
- Give children confidence that they will be supported and informed
- Give parents/carers the assurance that staff know how to deal with this abuse
- Evidence how our safeguarding staff handle reports/concerns/disclosures
- Inform of the post incident management process/ongoing support/safety planning

In addition to this policy, we have other policies that support this and that should be read in conjunction with this policy including Anti-Bullying, Child Protection & Safeguarding, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour and Restraints Policy, Online Safety Policy. Please see link here for these policies.

This policy is based on the DfE Guidance September 2023

Keeping children safe in education 2023

2. Our staff

ALL staff at **Whitmore Park Primary School**:

- recognise the increasing national concern regarding this issue as highlighted in the KCSiE 2021 document
- are aware of the level and nature of risk that our pupils are or may be exposed to
- understand the important role that they play in the culture of vigilance
- recognise Child on Child abuse of all types
- are confident and competent in responding promptly and appropriately with timely challenge of the attitudes and behaviours of Child on Child abuse (both inside and outside the classroom)
- listen to children, capture their voice, and help to create a culture in which our children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment
- will not downplay behaviours and dismiss them as 'just banter', 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'
- understand that by dismissing unacceptable behaviours it can lead to an unsafe environment for children and, in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not having the confidence to come forward, speak out and report what has happened to them.
- report and record their concerns following our safeguarding processes

- understand that even if there are no reports of this type of abuse that it 'does happen here'
- are committed to a whole school, whole staff approach, to ensure the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of Child on Childabuse within our school and beyond
- recognise and understand that children who harm others, may have additional or complex needs of their own, e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse, witnessing/ suffering abuse as well as educational under-achievement and possibly an involvement in criminal activity and therefore they too, will need support.
- encourage parents to communicate with us so that we can work together to ensure and enable a prompt and appropriate response to any type of Child on Child abuse.
- know that putting a stop to Child on Child abuse of any type and ensuring the safety of our children is a priority in our education school.
- regard the introduction of this policy as a positive, proactive, and preventative measure

At Whitmore Park Primary School we work hard to create a culture where Child on Child abuse does not happen. We strive to create an ethos of mutually respectful behaviour. However, if this type of abuse is seen, heard or reported **ALL** staff are confident in their actions and subsequent support.

This is covered in our annual Safeguarding refresher training but also in staff training throughout the year, assemblies and PSHE curriculum. This also includes our school Governors. Local context is addressed by DSL/DDSLs attending termly updates and sharing messages to staff members.

3. Our children

ALL children are at risk of Child on Child abuse, but some groups are more vulnerable than others to abuse and include the following:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities
- A child living with domestic abuse
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm
- A child who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of being exploited, criminally/sexually
- A looked after child
- A child who goes missing from school/home or is missing education

Research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. They often are exploited into gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in those gangs. However, we are aware that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as anti-social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited/entrapped into gangs and subject to violence because of gang culture.

At Whitmore Park Primary School we encourage our children to talk to us and tell us when they are worried and what they are worried about, be it about themselves or another child. We are confident that our children know:

- who to speak to and/or where to go for support
- that they will be listened to, taken seriously and not dismissed
- that they will receive the right help at the right time
- that they will receive ongoing support
- that they will be supported to feel safe in school
- that they will be supported to continue to access their education.

We also inform our children that there are other ways to report abuse if they are worried about themselves or other children and for whatever reason don't feel that they can speak to staff in school. For example:

NSPCC Childline: 08001111

Whitmore Park Primary School uses a range of tools to raise awareness including inviting organisations/speakers in to deliver information sessions to your children, pupil surveys, assemblies. PSHE curriculum is a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum and assemblies which open up topics such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships, including consent
- What respectful behaviour looks like
- Gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong and addressing cultures of sexual harassment

4. Child on Child abuse - What is it?

Child on Child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse using coercion/power and/or control by an individual child or group of children and is exercised between children and within their relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

All staff at Whitmore Park Primary School recognise that children can abuse their peers and are aware of the different forms that these safeguarding issues take:

- Bullying emotional/physical so <u>repeated</u> behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically (hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm)
- Online/Cyber bullying
- Prejudiced relating bullying
- Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexually Harmful behaviour.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

- Hate crime
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Gang association and serious violence County Lines
- Radicalisation

This abuse can be motivated by perceived differences. e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences and result in significant, long lasting, and traumatic isolation, intimidation, and/or violence to the victim.

We will record all instances of Child on Child Abuse, inform parents /carers of such incidents and the DSL/DDSL will take any further actions as required. Such as a MASH referral and/or contacting the police.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is **repeated**, or has the potential to be repeated over time. Children and young people who are bullied and/or who bully others may have serious and lasting problems.

To be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include the following:

- an imbalance of power such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. These imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition as these behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason, e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Online bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms, etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It can take many forms and this list is not exhaustive:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails, or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling-sending menacing or upschool messages through social networks, chat rooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations.

Prejudiced related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society, e.g. disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity.

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB)

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB) can occur between two children of any age and sex or with groups of children by sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any school where pupils are together and that the impact of this behaviour on children can be extremely distressing, impacting on their emotional health and wellbeing as well as affecting their academic achievement.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment **must** be referred **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL).

Sexual Violence - For this policy we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by <u>Penetration</u>: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the
 vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the
 penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably
 believe that B consents.
- <u>Sexual Assault</u>: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Harassment - For this policy we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. We refer to this in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberating brushing against someone, interfering with

online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (both often referred to as sexting); sexualised online bullying and inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider

pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB) In this policy we recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic, and sexually harmful behaviour.

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as to the young person it is intended towards. It may include:

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse

Consent is when someone **agrees by choice** and has the **freedom** and **capacity** to make that choice. It is important to note that:

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- The age of consent is 16
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

This relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. These images may have been because of upskirting.

Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team, etc. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Hate Crime

Hate crimes happen because of race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability. They can happen anywhere, home, school and in the community and can be

frightening for both victim and witnesses and is an offence. Hate crimes can include:

- physical attacks physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- threat of attack offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints
- verbal abuse or insults harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures, and remarks, bullying and threats

5. Indicators that a child may be suffering from Child on Child abuse

Indicators and signs that a child may be suffering from Child on Child abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse and can include:

- failing to attend school, disengaging from classes, or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected
- physical injuries
- experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing
- becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse.
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age
- abusive behaviour towards others

Abuse affects our children and their presenting behaviours in different ways and the list above is not exhaustive. Children who present with one or more of these signs are not necessarily victims of abuse and their behaviour will depend on their individual circumstances.

ALL staff at Whitmore Park Primary School are alert to behaviour that may cause concern and think about what the behaviour might signify. We actively encourage children to share with us any underlying reasons for their behaviour, and, where appropriate, to engage with their parents/carers so that the cause(s) of their behaviour can be investigated and understood with the appropriate support in place.

6. Responding to a concern/incident/disclosure of Child on Child abuse

Child on Child abuse may occur in our school, on the way to or from our school or out in the community. Consideration will be given to many aspects of the abuse and here are a few examples:

- Does it involve a single incident or has occurred over time?
- Is the behaviour problematic and concerning?
- Does it involve any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination, e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability?
- Is there any element of coercion or pre-planning?
- Does it involve a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the

behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power?

• Has there been a misuse of power?

It is also important that we:

- ascertain if there were there any witnesses to the abuse
- make notes and record ALL conversations with children spoken to as well as parents/carers/other professionals, including any actions taken. These records are held on our secure electronic system CPOMS.
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves
- ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both victim and alleged perpetrator

Consideration should also be given to supporting children who have witnessed Child on Child abuse of any kind. This is likely to be traumatic and support may be required. We will signpost to agencies and support services available where needed.

At Whitmore Park Primary School we will do all that we can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed following this. Social media is likely to play a part in the fall out from any incident and friends from either side could well harass the victim or alleged perpetrator online as well as face to face. Any evidence we have of pupils using social media or inappropriately will be sanctioned according to our existing policies.

7. Responding to all reports and concern of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children.

We have covered at point 6 what we do when responding to Child on Child abuse concerns/disclosures and these **all** apply to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children disclosures; however, we recognise complexity and challenges that we face following the report of this particular type of abuse.

Our DSL/DDSLs will take the lead role when dealing with this type of abuse using their professional judgement and working together practices.

We understand that it is not easy for children to tell us about this type of abuse and they may struggle to make a direct verbal report. Therefore, observations of changes in presenting behaviours is key. See Point 5 above.

The DSL will consider the following:

- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour
- The ages of the pupils involved
- The developmental stages of the pupils involved
- Any power imbalance between the pupils (e.g. Is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?)
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of

- abuse may not just be of a sexual nature)
- Whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or staff
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation

When we talk about Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children, we will refer to 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. This does not mean that we are taking sides nor making any judgement, but for the purpose of this policy we will refer to children involved in this way.

Victim - When we speak to the 'victim' we will:

- listen and take any disclosure seriously
- never make them feel that they are creating a problem or be ashamed
- reassure them that they will be kept safe
- handle the situation with sensitivity
- use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child
- ask open questions and not lead the victim
- ascertain where the abuse occurred as this may highlight vulnerable locations in our school or within the community which may need to be revisited by either ourselves (in school) or by alerting police/partners if it is in the community
- ascertain if other children witnessed this abuse
- consider ongoing support within our school
- consider any referrals for external support

We will also consider the following:

- The nature of the alleged incident(s) including might a crime have been committed and consideration of any display of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the pupils involved
- The developmental stages of the pupils involved
- Any power imbalance between the pupils (e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?)
- If the alleged incident is a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse (the sustained pattern of abuse may not just be of a sexual nature)
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or staff
- Other related issues and wider context, including links to any forms of child exploitation

Alleged perpetrator - When we speak to the 'alleged perpetrator' we will:

- listen to what they say and not dismiss their account
- handle the situation with sensitivity and a non-judgemental approach
- consider ongoing support
- record all conversations and all action taken
- consider ongoing support within our school
- consider any referrals for external support

A factual record should be made of the allegation, conversations with pupils and all records of this to

be recorded on our secure electronic system CPOMS.

8. Referring to Childrens Services (MASH)

In all cases of Child on Child abuse, but in particular with sexual violence and sexual harassment, consideration will be given to the reporting of the matter to Childrens Social Care via MASH Children's Advice and Support service on 02476788555. In making this decision, we must consider whether a child is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

At this referral stage, we will inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved need protection or other services. The police may also be involved.

Where statutory assessments are appropriate, we will work alongside, and cooperate with, the relevant lead social worker. This 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 requiring support.

We will not wait for the outcome, or even the start of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school. It will be important for us to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions we take do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

9. Working with our parents and carers

Whitmore Park Primary School will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of Child on Child abuse including sexual or sexual harassment. The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe that informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

We will carefully consider what information is provided to the respective parents or carers about other children involved and when to do so.

In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view on this aspect, and it will be important for us to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

It should be the case that we will meet the victim's parents or carers (with the victim present if appropriate) to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed. (See Post Incident Management – SECTION 11)

It is also likely that we will meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education.

We will be clear and transparent and explain the reason behind any decisions. Support for the alleged perpetrator will be discussed including any referrals, if appropriate.

We realise that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided at the end of the policy.

10. Sanctions

We will decide appropriate sanctions on a case by case basis in line with our Behaviour and Restraints Policy and any graduated response required. As already mentioned in this Policy, it may be that other children in our school start to 'take sides' and become involved and may behave in ways that cause upset and distress to other children. We will take their behaviour seriously and again use a graduated response to this, whilst also educating them the importance of resolving any conflict in a respectful and restorative way.

If there is police involvement, we will work closely with them to ensure that any disciplinary action taken by us, as a result of the incident, does not jeopardise the police investigation.

11. Post Incident Management

It is vital that all children involved in Child on Child abuse are given appropriate and ongoing support for as long as it is required/needed. This may include referrals to other agencies/professionals outside our school and this decision will be made in conjunction with parents/carers, and other professionals.

If there are other professionals involved, then we will liaise with those colleagues to ensure that we are working together and understand one another's role in this support.

It is imperative that following any incident the children involved continue to feel supported. Sometimes feelings of embarrassment, remorse, regret, or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage. We will do our best to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the pupils following the incident(s) will happen and further actions taken if necessary to support them.

Safety planning/Risk assessment

In situations where the school considers a Safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow up evaluation with everyone concerned.

When looking at this process, consideration should be given to the following:

- where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us to manage our safeguarding responsibilities.
- the importance in ensuring that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including continuing to receive a suitable education
- the importance of the alleged perpetrator in continuing to access education and support
- do the victim and alleged perpetrator share classes
- what measures need to be put in place if pupils are moving between classrooms/halls
- what measures need to be put in place for unstructured time (break and lunchtimes)
- what measures need to be put in pace for the arrival at the start of the school day and leaving at the end of the school day
- appropriate information sharing with staff in our school in order that the plan is manageable and as successful as possible
- if it is the case that the alleged perpetrator is moved to another educational institution (for any reason), then we will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any

ongoing support needs.

ANNEX A Risk Assessment/Safety planning guidance

Basic information	
Referrer Name and role	
Referrer Contact details (email	
address and phone number)	
Name of school(s) for victim(s)	
Name of school(s) for child/ren	
alleged to have caused harm	
Did incident occur on school	
premises? If not, where did the	
incident occur?	
Date for risk assessment/safety plan	
review	

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED HARM, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
□ What is the incident?□ Who was involved?□ Where did it happen				
Does this incident constitute a crime? Assault, sexual assault, rape, sharing of indecent images of children, etc. etc. As such has this been referred to the police?				

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED HARM, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
 Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges. 				
 Is there an actual or perceived threat from the child alleged to have caused harm to the victim and/or others? 				
 Is either the victim or the child alleged to have caused harm at risk of physical harm because of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)? 				
Do they share any classes/lessons?				
 Do they share break times? Do they share peer/friend ship groups? 				
 Do they share transport to/from school? 				

CONSIDERATIONS	RISK (CONSIDER VICTIM, CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED HARM, OTHER PUPILS AND STAFF)	RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)	ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK	REVISED RISK LEVEL (HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW)
 Are they likely to meet each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school? 				
How can this contact be limited?				
 Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip? 				

Further action taken by the school: Please complete for each child involved.

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support		
services		
Referral to internal support		
services		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support		
services (specify)		
Referral to internal support		
services (specify)		
Referral to CAMHS		
Referral to early help		
Other		