New Leaf Triangle
Child-on-child Abuse Policy

Version	1
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Introduction

This policy explains what child-on-child abuse is, and how we, at **New Leaf Triangle (NLT)**, will respond to any concerns or incidents.

Through this policy all staff will be clear as to our approach and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the role they have in preventing it, identifying it, and responding appropriately where they believe a child may be at risk – including providing support to all children affected by it.

We recognise that children can abuse other children, whether than be physical, bullying, sexual or online, and that it can happen in any setting, and often goes unseen.   We are committed to a zero-tolerance approach.

We are committed to aiming to have an open and supporting culture within NLT which encourages pupils to speak out if they are experiencing any peer-on-peer abuse. We also expect all staff to identify and respond to all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse that they observe and refer incidents to their Manager and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

When managing and responding to all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, we will aim to establish the nature of the risk by consultation and assessment. This will include considering concerns relating to contextual safeguarding.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges](#) All

staff in a school should be familiar with the relevant sections that deal with Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Harassment.

- [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges.](#) DfE, latest guidance for Headteacher, Principals, Senior Leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.

- The non-statutory UKCCIS guidance: ['Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'](#) and [KSCB](#) guidance: "Responding to youth produced sexual imagery"

- The non-statutory guidance: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

- [Teaching Online Safety in Schools, DfE 2019](#)

- [The Voyeurism Act, 2019 (Section Up skirting)](#)

In cases where child on child abuse is identified we will use the local safeguarding procedures as set out by Leicestershire County Council

Within this policy we will refer to other policies:
- NLT Safeguarding Policy
- NLT Behaviour Policy
- NLT Anti- Bullying Policy
- NLT E-safety Policy
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Types of child-on-child abuse

child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault ((this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual

harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Vulnerable groups

We recognise that all children are at risk but that some groups are more vulnerable than others and includes:

- 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 is being exploited (CRE, CSE)
- a looked after child
- a child who goes missing or is missing education
- children who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQ+ and/or any of the protected characteristics

Girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, and sexual harassment. They often are exploited by gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in gangs. However, it's important to be aware that boys can also be abused in all the above potential ways.

In addition, 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 as a result of gang culture.

NLT's zero tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse of any type will not be tolerated, minimised, or dismissed as 'just banter'; 'just having a laugh'; 'part of growing up'; 'boys being boys'; or 'just what girls do".

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause children considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through NLT's anti-bullying procedures.

All students and parents/carers have access to NLT's anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular points in the year.

All members of staff receive a copy of NLT's behaviour policy, and anti-bullying procedures, as part of their induction and are aware of the harm caused by bullying. We will respond to all incidents of bullying proactively.

NLT will also consider the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than our setting - eg for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities.

There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online. Online concerns can be especially complicated. Support is available from The UK Safer Internet Centre at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk and the Internet Watch Foundation at https://www.iwf.org.uk/

Online bullying behaviour

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets, and computers daily to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat, Tik Tok and Instagram. Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication, and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children and the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, radicalization and sexual predation.

The breadth of issues within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending, and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.
- **commerce**: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour. Many pupils own or have access to hand-held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

NLT's E-safety policy explains how we try to keep students safe in our setting and protect and educate students in the safe use of technology. Due to the nature of our one to one staff to student ratio, we are, in the main, able to closely monitor, support and restrict the way that our students access and use online content.

Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures (see 'Sexting' below). Serious incidents may be managed in line with our child protection procedures.

Responding to Racism

We acknowledge and celebrate that Britain is a multi-racial and multi-faith country, and everyone has the right to have their culture and religion respected by others. Racist bullying is not just about skin-colour, it can be about ethnic background or religion too.

We recognise that racist hate crime is a criminal matter. We will, therefore, notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

We will use a whole setting approach of tackling and eradicating this type of behaviour, including education around racism in our weekly theme and on a targeted basis for individuals where a need has been shown.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our setting. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

We aim to respond to concerns relating to contextual safeguarding by:

- creating a safe culture at NLT by implementing the child-on-child abuse policy and ensuring that all staff and students are aware of the policy
- demonstrating an awareness of contextual safeguarding issues in the local area to and how this may impact upon our students
- remaining vigilant to changes in students' behaviour, taking note of attendance/ punctuality and presentation.

Hate crime

A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'

A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that these are reported and recorded by the police.

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.

Hate crime can happen anywhere - at home or school. It can be frightening for the victim and witnesses. Hate crime is an offence and we will notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Sexual harm, violence and/ or sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and gender. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, it can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, adversely affect their educational attainment. While it is important that all victims/survivors are taken seriously and offered appropriate support, staff are aware that it is more likely that girls, children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment and that it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by boys.

When referring to sexual violence, this policy uses the definitions of sexual offences in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as follows:
- 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 Penetration: 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.
- Sexual Assault: 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.

We may use the AIM model (2016) or Hackett's Continuum of Children and young people's sexual behaviours (2010). These are nationally recognised and accredited tools to assist in determining healthy, problematic, and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

We use these tools to support with assessing risk in each individual case by:

- Decide next steps and make decisions regarding safeguarding children;

- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in pupils;

- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from problematic/ harmful behaviour;

- Assist with communicating with parents/cares about the concerns we have about their child/children;

- Assist with communicating with our partners and agencies about the concerns we have regarding a pupil in the school.

Informed consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose and not subject to fear or pressure. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g.to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal, or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity

- A child under 18 cannot consent to any sexual activity with a person in a position of trust

- The age of consent is 16.

- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. 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. Online sexual harassment may happen on its own or as part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
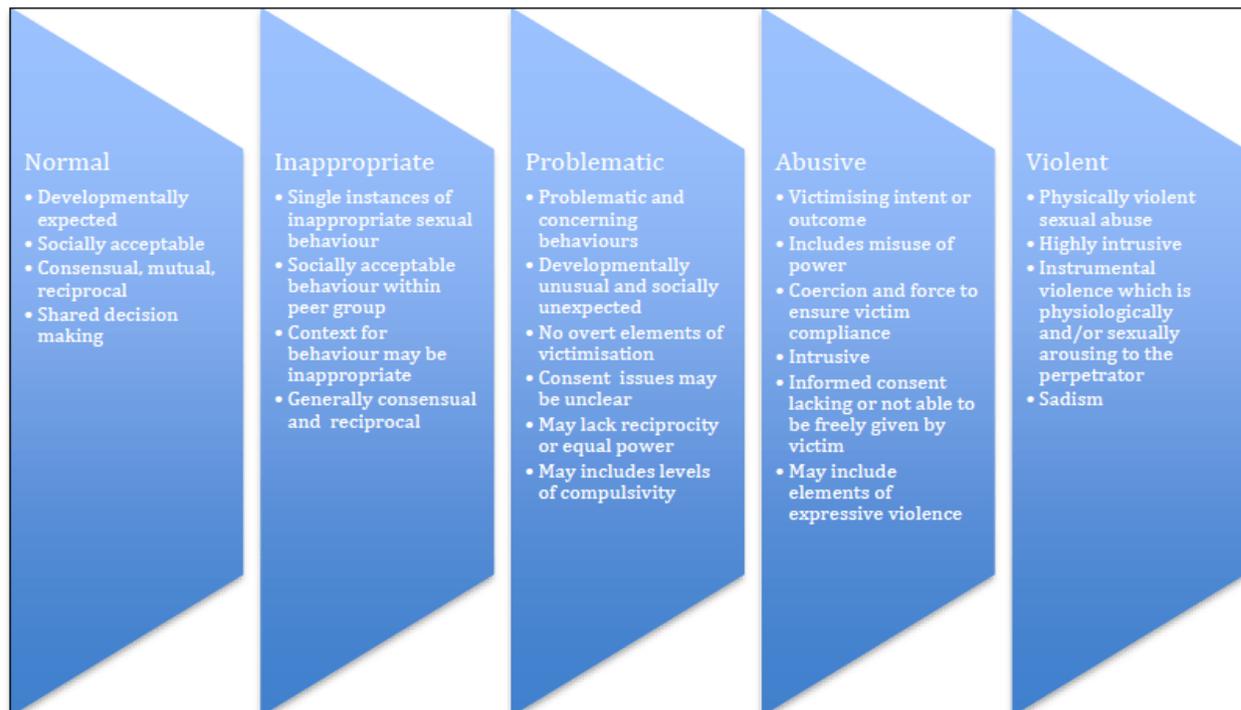
Sexual harassment creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. [School / college] therefore recognises the importance of recognising the nature of identifying and challenging sexual violence and sexual harassment in its wider approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; through policies; and through the curriculum. All staff recognise the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"

- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, flicking bras, lifting skirts and up skirting.

- Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

NLT will respond to reports in accordance with Part 5 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) 2023. All responses to reports of sexual violence will be subject to an immediate risk and needs assessment undertaken by the DSL (or a deputy), using their professional judgement, and supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the Police. The need for a risk and needs assessment in relation to reports of sexual harassment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour is outside the parameters of normal, healthy sexual development. Please see Hackett's Continuum of Children and young people's sexual behaviours (2010) for reference to the continuum of responses. (summary below)

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Problematic and concerning behaviours • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May includes levels of compulsivity	• Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by victim • May include elements of expressive violence	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator • Sadism

Risk assessment
- The risk and needs assessment will consider:
  - the victim, especially their protection and support

- the alleged perpetrator/s (if she/he/they attend the same school/college/setting)

- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

- The DSL or DDSL should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required.

- Police are notified when a crime may have occurred.

- Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required.

Action following a report of sexual harm, violence and/or sexual harassment- things to consider

The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will therefore be the most appropriate person to lead NLT's initial response.

Important considerations will include:
- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. However, if the victim asks the school/college not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL (or a deputy) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. It is likely to be justified and lawful to share the information if doing so is in the public interest, e.g., to protect the victim and other young people from harm and to promote the welfare of children.
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour
- the ages of the children involved
- the developmental stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse
- whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or school/college staff
- informing parents/carers unless this would put the victim at greater risk
- only sharing information with those staff who need to know in order to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation. For instance, vocational staff

may be asked to monitor the victim's welfare without needing to know that they are a victim of sexual violence or harassment.

Children sharing indoor spaces - initial considerations following a report of sexual violence

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim/ survivor and proximity with the alleged perpetrator is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst NLT establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with Children's Social Care and the Police, the alleged perpetrator will usually be removed from any spaces they share with the victim/ survivor. Consideration will also be given to how best to keep the victim/ survivor and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on NLT premises. These actions are in the best interests of both children.

NLT will act in accordance with advice endorsed by DfE Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UK Council for Child Internet Safety 2017). All incidents of youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI) will be dealt with as safeguarding concerns. The primary concern always will be the welfare and protection of the young people involved. Young people (under 18) who share sexual imagery of themselves or their peers are breaking the law. Still, authorities will avoid criminalising young people unnecessarily.

All incidents of sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos should be reported to the DSL. If there is a concern in relation to a device (e.g., mobile phone, tablet, digital camera), the member of staff will secure the device (i.e., it should be confiscated). This is consistent with DfE advice Searching, Screening and Confiscation - Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies 2018. Staff will not look at (unless directed to do so by police), copy or print any indecent images as this would be a criminal offence. The confiscated device will be passed immediately to the DSL. The DSL will discuss the concerns with appropriate staff and speak to young people involved as appropriate. Parents/carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm. If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police via the MASH immediately. The Police will always be informed when there is reason to believe that indecent images involve sexual acts and any child in the imagery is under 13 years of age.

The DSL will make a judgement about whether a reported YPSI incident is experimental (e.g., a child sending an image to a child with whom they are romantically involved) or aggravated. Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of sexual images created by young people. These include possible adult involvement or criminal or abusive behaviour by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a young person who is pictured.

Reporting

Any incident of racism, race hate or incitement to hate will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence many have been committed.

Any incident of alleged or an actual incident of sexual harm, violence and/or sexual harassment will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence may have been committed. In all cases consideration is given to reporting the matter to Children Social Care Services.

There are circumstances in some cases of sexual harassment/touching which dependent upon age and understanding/age of criminal responsibility, (e.g., one-off incidents), which we may decide that the child/ren concerned are not in need of Early Help or statutory intervention.

In these situations, it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, for example by utilising the behaviour and bullying policies, providing pastoral intervention and support. We may also decide that some child/ren involved do not require Statutory Interventions; however, they may benefit from Early Help.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, this can be at any point in a child's life. We will decide if an early help approach will benefit a pupil following any outcome of assessment that we may use. This may mean the development of a safety and support plan as part of the early help process.

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. We acknowledge that an Early Help Assessment can be useful to address non- violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Sanctions

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of peer-on-peer abuse and NLT will consider all courses of action and intervention. We will refer to our Behaviour Policy when making decisions.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any pupil, other pupils, parents, and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to attempt to resolve these.

The Role of the Board of Management

The Link Safeguarding person on the Board of Management will need to be aware of the complexities when an incident or incidents come to light, and when staff in the school are trying to manage these behaviours. This includes the use of sanctions, exclusions, pressures from parents to exclude and dealing with the parents of the alleged abuser or any alleged victim/s.

It is important that The Board of Management is informed and can help with a consistent approach on such matters.

Multi-Agency Working

NLT will work with our partners and agencies; Schools, LA, Children's Social Care, the Police, Health and CAMHS to ensure all incidents are responded to appropriately, where necessary.

Prevention and Training

We are always working hard to create a culture where child on child abuse does not happen. We aim to create an ethos of good and respectful behaviour.

We will ensure that all our students know who to talk to and how to receive advice and help. We will be able to signpost children to relevant local and national helplines and websites.

Management of the Policy

We will ensure all our staff are trained in the awareness and response to all forms of child on child abuse.
In addition, we will ensure all our staff are aware of this policy and the supporting guidance, in order that they are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.

We will ensure that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and its availability on our website.

Useful Contacts

Haven Network for Survivors of Abuse (historic and current sexual abuse)	020 8520 0755 https://www.havennetwork.org.uk
Contextual Safeguarding Network Beyond Referrals- Schools	https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/beyond-referrals-levers-for-addressing-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools
NSPCC **Keeping children safe online**	0808 800 5000 https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/ https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-games/
THINKUKNOW **Online safety**	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
Childline **online safety** **Blocking and reporting**	0800 11 11 https://www.childline.org.uk/ https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-social-media/#Blockingandreporting
The Mix	0808 808 4994 https://www.themix.org.uk/
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247 http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/
Stalking Helpline	030 0636 0300 https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/Category/national-stalking-helpline
National LGBT DV Helpline Broken Rainbow Galop (LGBT+)	030 0999 5428/ 020 7704 2040 Galop - the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity - Galop has provided advice, support, research and lobbying around the issues of LGBT+ policing for over 30 years.
Honour Network Helpline	0800 5999 247 https://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/
Rape Crisis	0808 802 9999 https://rapecrisis.org.uk/
Eaves Poppy Project (for trafficked survivors)	020 7735 2062 http://www.eavesforwomen.org.uk/about-eaves/our-projects/the-poppy-project/
Deaf Hope UK	07970 350 366 (SMS) http://www.signhealth.org.uk/our-projects/deafhope-projects/

Ascent Legal Advice Line	020 7608 1137 https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/family-law/
Refuge	0808 2000 247 www.refuge.org.uk
Women's Aid 0808	0808 2000 247 https://www.womensaid.org.uk/

Please print your name, date and sign below to confirm you have read and understood the NLT Child on Child Abuse Policy above and agree to follow it.

Name	Signature	Date