

PACE Northwest — Sexual Harassment (and Sexual Violence) Policy

Alternative Education Provider · Liverpool, England

PACE Northwest is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable, will not be tolerated, and will be addressed as a safeguarding, behaviour and equality issue. We follow Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), and we work closely with commissioning schools and Liverpool City Council safeguarding partners.

1. Scope & audience

Applies to all pupils and to all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, on-site and off-site/online. Covers child-on-child sexual harassment/violence, adult-on-pupil concerns, and online behaviours.

2. Definitions (plain English)

- Sexual harassment: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a child's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment (e.g., sexual comments/jokes, taunting, upskirting, unwanted touching, sharing sexual images, coercive pressure, including online).
- Sexual violence: offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (e.g., rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault).
- Child-on-child abuse: harm caused by other children. We adopt a zero-tolerance approach while recognising children may need support both as victims and as alleged perpetrators.
- Consent: agreement by choice, with the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

3. Roles & responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Rebecca Hambleton — becs@pace-com.org. DSL leads response, risk assessment, referrals and record-keeping. All staff: stay vigilant; know how to respond to disclosures; record and report to DSL immediately. Board: ensures policies, training and oversight.

4. Prevention: culture, curriculum and environment

- Clear behaviour standards; staff model respectful conduct.
- RSHE curriculum includes consent, respectful relationships, online safety and reporting routes; adapted for SEND.
- Supervision of hot-spots; proportionate mobile-phone rules; clear signage of reporting routes.
- Online safety meets DfE Filtering & Monitoring Standards; alerts reviewed and acted on by DSL/IT lead.
- Staff training: induction and regular updates; all staff read KCSIE Part 1/Annex A; DSL/Deputies receive advanced training.

5. Responding to a report or concern

- Take every report seriously; listen non-judgmentally; do not promise confidentiality; explain next steps.
- Record facts in the child's words the same day; include time/date/who was present; sign and date.
- Immediate safety first: consider medical needs and supervision/separation; consider temporary removal from classes/areas where lawful and proportionate.
- DSL completes a risk assessment with the commissioning school where appropriate; agree safety measures and support.

6. Next steps and referrals (DSL decision-making)

- Early help for low-level concerns with parental involvement where appropriate.
- Referral to Children's Social Care where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger; strategy discussion as required.
- Report to the police (usually via Children's Social Care) for potential criminal offences (e.g., sexual assault, upskirting). Do not investigate or contact families before consulting DSL/social care/police.
- Inform parents/carers unless this places a child at additional risk; document rationale.
- Manage anonymity and information sharing sensitively; keep records secure.

7. Support for children

- Support for victims: safe spaces, trusted adults, timetable adjustments, supervision.
- Consider SEND/vulnerabilities; involve specialist services where appropriate.
- Support for alleged perpetrators alongside proportionate behaviour consequences.
- Review risk assessments regularly; avoid contact that increases distress.

8. Behaviour, sanctions and re-integration

Breaches are addressed via the Behaviour Policy. Sanctions are lawful, reasonable and proportionate (up to and including suspension/exclusion). Re-integration focuses on safety, learning and respectful conduct.

9. Searching, screening and confiscation

Authorised staff may search/screen/confiscate where lawful and proportionate, recorded per DfE guidance.

10. Recording, information sharing and data protection

All concerns, decisions and actions are recorded chronologically on our secure system. Information is shared lawfully and proportionately; records retained per statutory requirements.

11. Off-site, online and transport contexts

This policy applies to off-site learning, trips, transport and online spaces. Online sexual harassment is treated the same way; evidence is preserved swiftly.

12. Concerns/allegations about staff/volunteers

Report the same day to DSL/Head. DSL/Head consults the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay; low-level concerns are recorded and reviewed.

13. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Leaders monitor incidents, patterns and pupil voice; policy reviewed at least annually and after incidents; approved by the Board.

14. Linked policies and documents

- Child Protection & Safeguarding (including child-on-child abuse)
- Behaviour Policy; Searching/Screening/Confiscation
- Online Safety (Filtering & Monitoring)
- RSHE; SEND; Attendance and CME
- Whistleblowing; Staff Code of Conduct; Low-Level Concerns

Statutory/Key guidance followed:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (from 1 Sept 2025); Working Together 2023; Behaviour in Schools (Feb 2024); Searching, Screening and Confiscation (July 2022); DfE Filtering & Monitoring Standards; RSHE statutory guidance.

Policy owner: DSL (Rebecca Hambleton) · Approved by: Board · Review cycle: Annual · Next review due: 14/11/2026.