

Best Foot Forward – Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Author: Andrew Russell

Approved By: Bethany Russell

Date Approved: October 2025

Assigned Review Period: 1 Year

Next Review Due: October 2026

Purpose: To ensure that all students and staff at Best Foot Forward understand what child-on-child abuse is, how to recognise it, how to respond, and how the organisation works to prevent and address it.

Contents

1. Feeling Safe at Best Foot Forward
2. What is child-on-child abuse?
3. Bullying
4. Sexting
5. Sexual violence and sexual harassment
6. Relationships
7. How do I know if someone is being abused?
8. What do I do if someone else is being abused?
9. What do I do if I am being abused?
10. Who can I talk to?
11. How can I help stop abuse from happening?

Feeling Safe at Best Foot Forward

At Best Foot Forward we want to make sure that you feel looked after and safe when you are in and out of sessions. Sometimes we don't know if something bad is happening, so you need to tell us.

This policy looks at child-on-child abuse, and what you can do when you feel you are being abused, or when you notice someone else being abused.

We can help you by:

- Teaching you what child-on-child abuse is.
- Teaching you what to do if you feel like you are being abused, or if someone else is being abused.
- Making sure you know who you can speak to if you are worried.

1. What is child-on-child abuse?

A peer is someone who might be your friend, a pupil at school with you, or another young person you may know. You may often hear child-on-child abuse referred to as 'peer-on-peer' abuse.

Abuse is something which usually physically or emotionally hurts another person by using behaviour that is meant to scare, hurt or upset the victim, or decrease their self-worth. Child-on-child abuse can happen inside and outside of school – it can happen online, or in-person and it is important to let someone know if you think that you or someone else is being affected by it.

2. Bullying

Bullying is a type of abuse that takes place when someone tries to hurt another person on purpose. People can be bullied in many ways:

- Emotional bullying – making someone feel bad about themselves or manipulating them to get your own way.
- Physical bullying – hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, or hurting someone physically.
- Verbal bullying – using insults or prejudice against someone because of their looks, personality, or background.
- Racist bullying – bullying someone due to their race, religion, or ethnicity (a hate crime in the UK).
- Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying – targeting someone for their sexuality or gender identity (illegal under UK law).
- Sexist bullying – abusing someone because of their gender, often involving misogyny or sexual objectification.
- Cyberbullying – bullying online through messages or sharing harmful information or images.
- Bullying may involve more than one person. Always report it if you see it happening.
- Best Foot Forward does not tolerate any form of bullying and takes all reports seriously.

3. Sexting

Sexting is sending sexually explicit pictures, videos, or messages via social media, text, gaming platforms, or streaming sites.

Pressuring someone into sending these is abuse. Sharing nude images or videos of or with anyone under 18 is illegal, even if consent is given.

Types of sexting incidents:

- Aggravated incidents – where there is intent to harm, blackmail, or adult involvement (criminal offence).
- Reckless misuse – sharing images without consent, causing harm or distress.
- Experimental incidents – between peers in a relationship with consent, still illegal but treated differently.

4. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual harassment involves unwanted sexual behaviour that makes someone feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or violated. It can be physical, verbal, or online, and it is never acceptable.

- Making sexual comments or requests for sexual favours.
- Calling someone sexual names or making sexual jokes.
- Touching someone without consent or showing sexual material.
- Sharing sexual pictures or videos online.
- Threatening or pressuring someone into sexual acts.

Best Foot Forward has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment – it is never ‘banter’ or ‘just having a laugh’. If you experience it, tell a responsible adult immediately.

5. Relationships

Any relationship should make you feel safe, happy, and respected.

Positive relationships:

- You feel comfortable and safe.
- You can be honest and express your feelings.
- You support each other and treat each other well.
- You are never pressured to do anything that makes you uncomfortable.

Negative relationships:

- You feel scared, pressured, or controlled.
- You are insulted or made to feel worthless.
- Someone pressures you to do things you don't want to do.
- Someone doesn't respect your boundaries or says hurtful things.

6. How do I know if someone is being abused?

- Not going to school or avoiding people.
- Unexplained injuries or changes in behaviour.
- Feeling sad, withdrawn, nervous, or unable to sleep.
- Acting differently or appearing scared.

7. What do I do if someone else is being abused?

- Tell a responsible adult (tutor, mentor, parent).
- Never ignore it or join in.
- If safe, ask the abuser to stop, but never use violence.
- Always report it, even if you are unsure.

8. What do I do if I am being abused?

- Tell someone you trust – a tutor, mentor, friend, or family member.
- Do not ignore it or respond with violence.
- Remember: it is not your fault, and you are never alone.

9. Who can I talk to?

- You can speak to:
- Bethany Russell
- Andrew Russell
- Or any trusted adult at Best Foot Forward.

10. How can I help stop abuse from happening?

- Be kind, respectful, and supportive of others.
- Think before you act or speak.
- Report anything that doesn't feel right.
- Remember: abuse is never OK, and Best Foot Forward will take action.