


Cambian New Elizabethan School Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

	Policy Review Date	November 2021
	Date of Next Review	November 2022
	Who Reviewed the Policy	Sara Ferguson
	Name of Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sara Ferguson
	Name of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Martin Roadknight Jessika Pearson

Context and Definition

It is essential that all our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. (KCSIE, 2021)

Cambian New Elizabethan School staff are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

Peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.
All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm • sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help. Failing this, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies are always available to give further support.

2. Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2021 states that:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with'.

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard.

Peer on Peer abuse is referenced in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer necessitate separate policy guidance. At Oakwood School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

This Policy Applies To:

- the whole school including any activities provided by the school, as well as those outside of the normal school hours;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), pupils on placement, the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Availability:

- The Peer on Peer Abuse policy is provided with the information for prospective pupils, parents and guardians, when an enquiry for admission to the school is made.
- This policy is also made available to parents or guardians of pupils on request to the school office, during the school day and on the school website (if applicable)

Other Relevant Document for Employees:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- SRE policy
- PSHE policy

Monitoring and Review:

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all allegations received by the school are logged and records of how they were resolved. The record includes, at least: the pupil making the allegation, the other pupil(s) involved, the date of the allegation, the nature of the allegation, any action taken and the outcome of the allegation
- The Proprietor monitors the allegation procedure, to ensure that all allegations are handled properly, considering any local or national decisions that affect the process, and making any modifications necessary to this policy. They also retain details of the number of allegations registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- The Proprietor will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Definition

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive, and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc. This is a matter of professional judgement.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- The young person in question has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

It is also important to recognise the specific difficulties that children and young people with SEND may have in recognising appropriate behaviour. In this context it is important to focus on intent and the young person's understanding of this. Developmental age as opposed to chronological age should also be taken into consideration when reflecting on age appropriate behaviours.

Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. (Working Together, 2018:21) This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Abuse and harmful behaviour

It is necessary to consider:

- what abuse is and what it looks like
- how it can be managed
- what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

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- Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.
- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

Prevention

As a school we will minimise the risk of allegation against other pupils by:-

- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHCE/British Values/SMSC curriculum which develops pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping safe;
- Having a robust online and technology safety programme which develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self-protection when using the internet and social networking (in connection with Education and the Connected World 2018 KCCIS);
- Having robust monitoring and filtering systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and act appropriately when using information technology;
- Having systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued;
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk;
- Developing robust risk assessments and providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Allegations may be made against pupils by other young people in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, teenage relationship abuse, sexually harmful behaviour, sexual exploitation, bullying, cyber bullying, gender-based bullying and sexting. If some of the following features are present, the allegation should be regarded as of a safeguarding nature.

The allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil;
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school;
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by the pupil's behaviour;
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by the pupil's behavior.

The definitions of different types of abuse can be found in New Elizabethan School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Peer on Peer Abuse

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed immediately. The following points should also be noted:

- It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe;
- Confidentiality should not be promised as it is likely a concern will have to be shared further;
- It should be recognised that the young person has placed the staff member in a position of trust and therefore they should be supportive and respectful;
- The young person should be listened to carefully, whilst remaining non-judgmental, clear about boundaries, open about how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions, and only prompting the young person where necessary with open questions (where, when, what, etc);
- A written record should be made;
- The facts should be recorded as the child presents them and the notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker;
- If not absolutely necessary staff should not view or forward illegal images of a child (See UKCCIS Sexting for advice).

Support for pupils

Support should be provided for those raising concerns throughout the process and afterwards. At Cambian New Elizabethan School we will do this by providing access to a number of interventions such as:

- Targeted support from pastoral team within school;
- Key worker sessions with home staff;
- Referral to clinical team (if appropriate);

Pupils will be informed at each stage of the process of next steps and ultimately of the outcome of any investigation.

Further guidance can be found in the following documents:

- Safeguarding – Child Protection policy
- Behaviour Management including discipline and sanctions policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy

Signed:



Sara Ferguson
Head Teacher
September 2021



Andrew Sutherland
Representative, Proprietor- Cambian Group
September 2021