



Potterspurry Lodge School and Children’s Home Child on Child Abuse Policy

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	Date of Next Review	September 2023
	Who Reviewed the Policy	Sharon Taylor
	Name of Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sharon Taylor
	Name of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Rhett Cameron Jenny Nimmo Charlotte Utaipiboon – Residential Henry Parker - Residential

Context and Definition

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

All staff should be clear as to the school’s or college’s policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are 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 2022)

Potterspurry Lodge 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 child on child abuse including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes 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)

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- 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 videos¹¹ (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).

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), 2022 states that:

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

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

Child on Child 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 Potterspurty Lodge 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 Child on Child 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 (Safer Recruitment in Education)
- PSHE policy

Monitoring and Review:

- All staff are responsible for reporting allegations received by the school and record 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 senior leadership team are responsible for actioning allegations, taking the correct actions and reporting outcomes.
- 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.

3. Definition

Child-on-Child abuse is when children abuse other children same age or difference in age. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online.

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.

It is necessary to consider:

- 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.
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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 that the fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

- 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.

4.Prevention

As a school and children's home we will minimise the risk of allegation against other pupils by:-

- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE/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.
- Using restorative practice to ensure pupils are heard, giving each pupil the opportunity to speak and to know that there has been a resolution and a way forward.

5. 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 Potterspurty Lodge Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6. 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) unless advised to do so by an outside agency for example the police or children social care.

7. Support for pupils

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

- Provide a culture of safety to discuss peer-on-peer abuse as a group
- Targeted support from pastoral team within school
- Key worker sessions with home staff
- Referral to clinical team (if appropriate)
- Restorative Justice Meetings by offering a safe environment for those conversations to be had
- Addressing through the PSHE curriculum
- Addressing through Tutor times as a whole school approach
- Provide a safe, non-judgmental environment where students views are accepted and validated
- Empower students to validate what has happened (both victim and perpetrator) to feel that a resolution has been met

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

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, 2022 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Further guidance can be found in the following documents:

- Child Protection Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Children At Risk Of Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Self-Harm Policy
- E-Safety Policy

