

St Katherine's School



Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Policy Number SKP A042

Next Review: July 2023

**Signed : Justin Humphreys
Headteacher**

Dated : 15 July 2021

**Signed: William Harding
Chair of Governors**

Dated : 15 July 2021

St Katherine's School
Policy No. SKP A042
Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

1. Introduction

Everyone at St. Katherine's School is committed to the prevention and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse both within and beyond the school.

We believe that in order to tackle peer on peer abuse proactively, it is necessary to focus on:

- Prevention through education and awareness rising for staff, governors, pupils and their parents.
- Systems and structures that allow staff and governors to report, record, monitor and analyse data and information about peer on peer abuse
- Response, investigation, intervention and support for all involved.

We recognise that there is increasing concern about peer on peer abuse, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and behaviours and encourage pupils and parents to hold us to account on this issue, so that if a child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they know that they will be listened to and supported but also it is their responsibility to inform the school so that it can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response.

A one page student summary of this policy (Appendix A) is available to students on the school website and a paper copy is displayed on tutor group notice boards. Students were invited to contribute to the writing of this policy and their views and opinions have been taken into consideration.

2. Ethos

Our school values include acceptance, honesty and respect. The school's Peer on Peer Abuse Policy is therefore designed to support all members of the school to feel happy, safe and secure. It aims to make clear that:

We take peer on peer abuse seriously;

- We will prioritise support for children affected by peer on peer abuse and listen to them and consider their thoughts and feelings.
- There are serious sanctions for children whose behaviour negatively impacts on their peers.
- We will offer additional educational and pastoral support and work with external agencies to support children who abuse their peers.
- We will seek opportunities to use restorative justice where appropriate and provide education for children whose behaviour is harmful so that they understand the impact of their behaviour on others and so that children affected by peer on peer abuse have the opportunity to have

their voice heard.

At St. Katherine's School **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. This includes all adults who work at the school, including the governing body, volunteers, visitors, the pupils themselves and their parents. All of our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.

We wish to make it clear to parents, pupils and staff that we have effective prevention measures in place to tackle peer on peer abuse including racist abuse, homophobic abuse and all other forms of prejudice based peer on peer abuse. Our approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment is reflected and is part of our wider approach to safeguarding.

When an incident arises, we will deal with it robustly, quickly and appropriately. We will not tolerate any form of peer on peer abuse within our school or by association.

We will seek support for children who have been abused, and children who have abused their peers including making referrals to external agencies as part of our multi-agency approach to safeguarding. We take peer on peer abuse seriously and do not flinch from issuing sanctions, including the most serious sanctions of fixed term and permanent exclusion for the most serious incidents of peer on peer abuse or where there are repeat incidents of peer on peer abuse by the same individual. We are also committed to restorative justice and education and will always seek opportunities for children who have been abused, and children who have abused their peers to engage in a restorative justice meeting so that children's voices are heard.

Pupils are taught that they have a safeguarding responsibility to their peers and they must 'Tell Someone' if they are affected by or witness racism, bullying, sexual harassment or other forms of peer on peer abuse. They can do this in a number of ways:

- in person by talking to any member of staff
- emailing tellsomeone@skdrive.org
- completing the 'Tell Someone' form that is found on our main school website. This can be submitted anonymously.

It is the fundamental aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued, cared for and respected, and that each person is treated justly and compassionately.

2.1 Contextual Safeguarding

This policy is written using a contextual safeguarding approach. Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives. Any response to peer on peer abuse therefore needs to capture the full context of a child's experiences.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and procedures a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or 'pupil' and they are normally under 18 years of age.

Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carers, legal guardians etc.

Wherever the term 'Headteacher' is used this also refers to any Senior leadership colleagues with the equivalent responsibility for children.

This policy does not use the terms 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. This is because our school takes a contextual safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in peer on peer abuse, including children who have been abused and children who have abused their peers. Research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer on peer abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers (NSPCC).

4. Entitlement

We accept and embrace our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments). Each child in our school, regardless of their background or home circumstances could be affected by peer on peer abuse. They are therefore all entitled to the same degree of protection and support. Each child in our school will also develop the skills appropriate to their age and understanding which could enable prevention of abuse by learning about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

5. Implementation

This policy and supporting procedures applies to all who come into contact with children in our school, including: teachers, supply teachers, support staff, governors, volunteers and other visitors including contractors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related documents, school policies and procedures including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Working together to safeguard children 2018
- Preventing and tackling bullying 2017
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools 2014
- Sexting in Schools and Colleges : Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people
- Safeguarding statement
- Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Online Safety Policy and procedures
- Whole School Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sex Education Policy

- Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs Policy/Information Report
- Attendance Policy

6. Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually and more often should legislation or statutory guidance change.

7. What is Peer on Peer Abuse?

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms including serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, financial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups steered by a dislike for a person's:

- race
- religion
- gender
- sexual orientation
- special educational needs or disabilities

Or where a child:

- is adopted or in care
- has caring responsibilities
- is suffering from a health problem
- is frequently on the move (e.g. those from military families or the travelling community)
- is experiencing a personal or family crisis
- has actual or perceived differences, (e.g. physical or cultural differences)

Online peer on peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, youth involved sexual imagery, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer on peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. Equally, abuse can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually assaulted and boys being subject to initiation or hazing type violence. Preventing violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our school's first priority but we also acknowledge that emotional abuse can be just as damaging if not more so than physical violence. We recognise that abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the children involved. This could involve a child or group of children having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for others to defend themselves.

Peer on peer abuse can have a devastating effect on children and their families. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious

consequences for their mental health. Peer on peer abuse which takes place during childhood but can have a lasting effect on a child's life well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where children are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and those that are more properly dealt with as arguments, conflict, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement. If one child causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- there is a significant difference in power (e.g. age, size, ability, development etc.) between the young people concerned;
- they repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children;
- there are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person.

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

8. Types of Abuse

There are many forms of abuse that can occur between peers and the following list is not exhaustive.

8.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

8.2 Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Children who bully and those who are bullied can suffer long lasting negative effects on their mental health and wellbeing.

To be considered as bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- an imbalance of power: young people who bully use their power, such as physical strength, intellect, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others.
- repetition: bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

8.2.1 Bullying which occurs outside the school premises

We will follow the procedures outlined in the Whole School Behaviour Policy to address the conduct of pupils when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, during the evening at weekends or during the school holidays.

Where abuse outside of school is reported to the school, we will investigate and take appropriate action. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police if we believe an offence has taken place.

8.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile devices, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites to harass, threaten or intimidate someone.

Cyberbullying can fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1) which states that a person who sends electronic communications which are *'indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety'* would be deemed to be have committed an offence. The Communications Act 2003 (Section 127) further supports this and states that *'a person is guilty of an offence if they send by means of public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or if for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another he/she sends a message by means of a public electronic communications network knowing that the message is false'*.

If the behaviour involves the taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will involve the Police to investigate these allegations. Further information on our response to such incidents can be found below in section 8.5 Youth Involved Sexual Imagery.

8.4 Prejudice Based Bullying

The term prejudice based bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviours, which can cause someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised. Prejudiced based bullying sometimes reflects prejudice in wider society related to race, religion, cultural background, sex, gender, sexual identify, disabilities, special educational needs and home life, (e.g., in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class).

Staff are trained to recognise prejudice based bullying and are trained to know that they must challenge any offensive language or comments as part of their safeguarding responsibilities. We reinforce this principle through regular safeguarding updates to staff, displays, newsletters, notice boards

and published information to parents and pupils.

8.4.1 Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service have an agreed definition of hate crime 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.’* There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident. *‘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.’*

The type of conduct which will be considered as a hate incident is wide ranging and includes the following:

- verbal abuse;
- harassment;
- bullying or intimidation;
- physical attacks;
- threats of violence;
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail;
- online abuse;
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters;
- graffiti;
- arson;
- throwing rubbish in a garden; and
- malicious complaints

We will always report hate crimes to the police.

8.4.2 Racist Bullying

St. Katherines is an anti-racist school which takes racism and racist bullying extremely seriously. Racist bullying can range from ill-considered remarks, which are not intended to be hurtful, to deliberate physical attacks causing serious injury. Racist bullying can be identified by the motivation of the bully, the language used, and/or by the fact a child is singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their race or ethnicity or by their religious or cultural practices. Racist bullying can take place face to face and online.

8.4.3 Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying is behaviour or language that makes a child or young person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity. Homophobic bullying often occurs as a result of others' prejudice being directed at a child or young person because:

- They are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- they are perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual because they fit certain stereotypes (e.g., softly spoken boys, girls that like football, etc.)
- they have LGBT friends or family members
- they are perceived as being different.

Like other types of bullying, homophobic bullying can take many different forms and can happen face to face or online. Examples of homophobic bullying can include:

- Calling someone names, teasing or humiliating them using homophobic language
- hitting, kicking, punching or physically hurting someone
- mocking or imitating someone's voice, mannerisms, etc.
- refusing to work or cooperate with someone because of their real or perceived sexual orientation
- vandalism of property, offensive graffiti or displaying symbols
- outing someone (telling their family and/or friends they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender whether they are or not) or spreading rumours about their sexual orientation
- inappropriate sexual comments or gestures.

8.4.4 Other Prejudiced Bullying

Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual's actual or perceived identity; it can be based on characteristics unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance including their:

- race
- religion
- gender
- sexual orientation
- special educational needs or disabilities

or where a child:

- is adopted or in care
- has caring responsibilities
- is suffering from a health problem
- is frequently on the move (e.g. those from military families or the travelling community)
- is experiencing a personal or family crisis

- has actual or perceived differences, (e.g. physical or cultural differences)

8.5 Youth Involved Sexual Imagery - sometimes referred to as sexting

Youth involved sexual imagery (sometimes referred to as sexting) is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics' or 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference

Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and the image could end up anywhere. By having in their possession or distributing to others indecent images of a person under 18, many young people are not aware that they could be committing a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

When an incident of youth involved sexual imagery comes to a school's attention we will follow the guidance as set out in the [UKCCIS publication Sexting in Schools and Colleges : Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.](#)

- the incident should be referred to the DSL (or DDSL in their absence) as soon as possible
- there should be subsequent interviews with the children or young people involved (if appropriate)
- parents and carers should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process in order to best support the child or young person unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put the child or young person at risk of harm
- a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately if there is a concern that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of immediate harm at any point in the process.

8.6 Teenage Relationship Abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse caused by a child (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse can occur online and offline and is never acceptable.

8.7 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any gender. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children

who experience sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. A model continuum to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children can be used when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it. This model is replicated in Appendix B.

In relation to any reports or disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children we will:

- make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and other private areas of the body.

Ultimately any decisions on how to proceed with an allegation of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be made on a case by case basis with the DSL (or deputy) taking a leading role, listening to the children involved, and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the Police as required.

Some situations, however, are statutorily clear:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (see section 8.5 Youth Involved Sexual Imagery). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

8.8 Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school or sports team etc. Hazing can also be used as initiation into a street or other 'gang'. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older or established members of the organisation or 'gang', because they have all experienced this as part of a 'rite of passage'. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.

9. Managing a Disclosure

Our initial response to a disclosure from a child is that they will be taken seriously. All our staff know that they must report a concern about peer on peer abuse to the DSL (or the DDSL in their absence) as soon as they are able. All staff also know that they must record concerns about peer on peer abuse on CPOMS and Class Charts.

All of our staff know how to complete a TED (tell, explain, describe) conversation with a child which is a vital part of gathering information from a child relating to their disclosure. Our staff receive annual safeguarding update training which addresses how to deal with disclosures effectively.

The DSL will follow our schools safeguarding policy which will ensure they gather information and context pertaining to the disclosure. If appropriate this information will then be referred to childrens' social care and/or the Police.

9.1 Managing an Investigation

It is essential that all concerns of peer on peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly.

Any response will:

- include a thorough investigation of the concerns and the wider context in which they may have occurred
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk – whilst the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. We will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it.

We will take into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, and consider and address any wider contexts such as the childrens' peer group (both within and outside the school) family, the school environment, the experiences of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence.
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so. The DSL should discuss the proposed action with all those involved and their parents and obtain consent to any referral before it is made, unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents will generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the Police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed

- the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, or at risk of significant harm, a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police will be made immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

If a member of staff believes for whatever reason that child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay so that a course of action can be agreed.

All of the children involved in the alleged incident should be spoken to individually and separately. Investigations will most often be carried out by Heads of House, Deputy Heads of House or Senior Leaders. The person leading the investigation will gain a statement of facts from the children involved using open questions to get a clear account.

A written record will be made immediately by the person to whom the disclosure is made and reported in person to the DSL as soon as is practicable.

9.2 Considering Confidentiality and Anonymity

Staff will never promise confidentiality.

If the victim asks the school not to tell anyone about peer on peer abuse, staff may still lawfully share information, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. In this event, the DSL will consider the following:

- parents should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. The starting point is that reports should be passed to the Police.

Ultimately, it is for the DSL (or DDSL) to balance the wishes of the child who has been affected against their duty to protect other children. If the decision is taken to report the incident to the Police and/or Children's Social Care, the reasons should be explained to the child/children and appropriate specialist support offered.

- Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available from DfE advice ['Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young](#)

- people, parents and carers' and 'NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners'.

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of children involved in any report of peer on peer abuse and will carefully consider which staff should know about the report and any support that will be in place for the children involved.

Full consideration will also be given to the potential impact of the potential of social media to spread rumours and expose childrens' identities. We will consider the support which may be required by the children and their family should this situation arise.

9.3 Individual Risk and Needs Assessment

Where there is an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school may undertake a risk assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse. Such risk assessments will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and/or faced by the child
- engage the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term (unless informing the parent will put the child at risk of harm)
- consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child involved
- be reviewed at regular intervals in the light of the child's ongoing needs to ensure that progress is being made which benefits the child.

If at any stage the child's needs escalate, the DSL should contact Children's Social Care to determine the appropriate course of action.

9.4 Sanctions

Before deciding on appropriate action, the school will always consider its duty to safeguard all children from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the peer on peer abuse and the causes of it.

The school response might include a sanction (in accordance with the Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures) such as a detention, SLT supervision, internal exclusion or a fixed-term exclusion to allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour.

The school will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or exclusion as a response, and not

as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this Policy may still be required.

A permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children in the school or, where the Head teacher, in their absolute discretion, considers the actions of the pupil(s) has damaged the school's ethos or reputation.

Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer on peer abuse, and the school will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forward.

10. Whole School Approach to Prevention

Our school's response to peer on peer abuse will not begin at the point at which a child has been abused. We will proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. In addition, our school will:

- involve parents to ensure they are clear that the school does not tolerate any form of peer on peer abuse. We will make parents aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being abused by their peers. We want parents to feel confident that our school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. We will expect parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent peer on peer abuse, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' agreements for computers and consideration of what can still be improved
- consider how (if at all) the school's physical environment contributed to the abuse, and how this can be addressed going forward, for example by improving the school's safety, security and supervision ensure that any lessons learnt are acted upon swiftly – were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the school
- implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of peer on peer abuse will reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that abuse is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned
- openly discuss differences between people that could motivate abuse, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or

appearance related difference. We will also include children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. We teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable

- provide effective staff training on how to deal with peer on peer abuse. All school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's Policy and procedures, how to resolve and respond to problems, and where and when to seek support from others in the school
- make it easy for pupils to report bullying of any description so that they are assured that they will be listened to and that incidents will be acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report abuse which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying
- create an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss their experiences of peer on peer abuse, without fear of further abuse or discrimination
- recognise that some children with special educational needs or disabilities may lack the social or communication skills to report peer on peer abuse incidents and we ensure our training builds in regular awareness of this
- frequently address the impact of abuse within the school and what constitutes appropriate, safe and acceptable behaviour with our children and staff.

References

The following documents were used in the creation of this Policy and procedures and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2020 (DfE)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (July 2021)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers – July 2018 (HM Government)
- NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners – 2015 (NSPCC)
- Working together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 (HM Government)
- Managing sexual behaviours - A Guide for schools

Appendix A - Student Summary

It is the fundamental aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued, cared for and respected, and that each person is treated justly and compassionately. We work hard on creating trusting, safe and consistent relationships with all children.

Peer on peer abuse can have a devastating effect on children and their families. It can be a barrier to learning and can have serious consequences for mental health and wellbeing. Peer on peer abuse which takes place during childhood but can have a lasting effect into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where children are able to learn and fulfil their potential. You have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.

At St. Katherine's School Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This includes all adults who work at the school, the pupils themselves and their parents.

We take peer on peer abuse seriously and if you are affected by peer on peer abuse we will:

- take every child affected seriously, **listen and validate your experience**
- strive to understand your thoughts and feelings about what has happened
- prioritise support for you
- issue serious sanctions for children who abuse their peers
- offer educational and pastoral support for children if you are affected
- work with external agencies to you and your family
- use restorative justice where appropriate so that your voice is heard

There are many forms of abuse including:

- physical abuse
- bullying including cyber bullying
- hate crimes and hate incidents
- racist bullying
- homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and other forms of prejudiced based bullying
- youth involved sexual imagery (sometimes referred to as sexting)
- teenage relationship abuse
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- initiation/hazing

We will take action and support children whether incidents take place on the school grounds or in our community, during the school day or after school, in the evenings, weekends or school holidays.

We will handle concerns of peer on peer abuse sensitively and carry out a thorough investigation which takes into account:

- your views
- that the abuse might indicate wider concerns about those involved.
- what additional educational/pastoral support school should provide you
- which external agencies could offer support you
- whether it is appropriate to inform Children's Social Care/the Police

Staff will never:

- promise confidentiality. We will always inform parents unless doing so puts you at greater risk.
- dismiss or minimise your experience
- expect you to be 'back to normal'
- assume to know how you feel.

Appendix B

Model Continuum for Sexual Behaviour



- Normal
 - Developmentally expected
 - Socially acceptable
 - Consensual, mutual, reciprocal
 - Shared decision making
- Inappropriate
 - Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour
 - Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group
 - Context for behaviour may be inappropriate
 - Generally consensual and reciprocal
- Problematic
 - 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 include levels of compulsivity
- Abusive
 - 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
- Violent
 - Physically violent sexual abuse
 - Highly intrusive
 - Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
 - Sadism

Distinguishing between appropriate non-abusive behaviour and inappropriate or abusive behaviour can be a complex task that requires practitioners to have an understanding of what is healthy and informed consent and what is abusive or coercive.

There is a range of common and healthy behaviours at different developmental stages. When a child or young person behaves in ways considered to be outside this range, their behaviour may be called 'harmful' because it is harmful to themselves or others.

Type of sexual behaviour	Age appropriate, mutual, exploratory	Not age appropriate, sexualised language, touching under clothing	Penetrative, aggressive, violent, highly coercive
Context	Open, spontaneous, playful, light hearted	No secrecy or force but other child/ren are uncomfortable	Planned, secretive, elements of threat or coercion
Child's emotional response when challenged	Embarrassed, takes responsibility, understands the impact on others	Ashamed, may struggle to accept responsibility but can show empathy / remorse	Angry, denying, aggressive - cannot take responsibility, blames others
Response of other children / adults	Engaging freely, happy, may be embarrassed	Uncomfortable but not fearful	Unhappy, distressed, frightened - possible physical injuries
Relationship between the children	Similar age / ability, would normally play together	Would not normally play together and / or one child may be more in control than the other	Clear power differences - age, size, status, gender, strength, personality, ability
Frequency of the behaviour	Ad hoc or single incidents	Intermittent but may be increasing in frequency	Frequent and disproportionate to other aspects of their life
Persistence	Behaviour is ad hoc and the child is easily diverted	Recurring behaviour and difficult to distract / deter but child is responsive	Compulsive / cannot be distracted / appears to be a means to gain comfort or attention
Background information	No known concerns	Few or some concerns about the family / other difficult behaviours	Poor attachments / previous abuse / trauma / fire setting / abuse of animals / poor peer relationships

Responses can be 'plotted' on the graph above to reach a decision across all 8 areas of behaviour