

Peer on Peer Abuse (A4)

Scope:	Senior School (Including Boarding)
Release date:	September 2021
Review date:	September 2022
Author:	Senior Deputy Head Senior School
Reviewer:	Senior Deputy Head Prep School
Approval body:	Board of Directors

Linked documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following published documents

- SEND Policy (A2)
- Behaviour Policy (A4)
- PSHCE Policy (A5)
- Safeguarding and Child protection Policy (A6)
- Online Safety Policy (A8)
- Complaints Policy (A14)
- Teachers' Guide
- Who to Talk To (document for pupils)

Acronyms

N/A

Availability

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the School website, and a printed copy may be requested from the School Office/Pupil Services Team.

Introduction

Our aim is to minimise the risk of any form of peer and peer abuse (in accordance with the DfE (Preventing and Bullying 2017 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021) in order to ensure the safe passage of every pupil through the School.

The School will not tolerate peer on peer abuse and therefore takes a zero tolerance approach regarding it. This message is periodically reinforced in whole school and section assemblies, PSHCE schemes of work and form periods, in order to foster the positive qualities of altruism and community spirit. The content of lessons such as drama, English and history, also affords opportunities to discuss and to promote measures for recognising and dealing with peer on peer abuse. Our Prefect Teams and Peer Mentors also play an important part in promoting positive behaviour and reporting any peer on peer abuse. Staff attend peer on peer abuse and safeguarding courses when appropriate. All pupils are reminded to behave safely in unstructured time, i.e. show proper consideration and respect towards others and be aware of different age groups, their needs and the feelings of others. All staff, particularly those on duty, are aware of the need to be vigilant and proactive, especially in places such as locker areas. Staff duty areas and timings are clearly identified on the Staff Duty rota.

Definition of Peer on Peer Abuse

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying),
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- The sending of consensual and non-consensual nude and semi-nude images and or videos (sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (these may include harassment abuse or humiliation)
- Physical abuse (which includes hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm),
- 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)and
- Upskirting (part of the Voyeurism (Offences) Act, April 2019) which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

The school recognises that there is a gendered nature of peer abuse, with girls more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators. However **All** forms of peer on peer abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, it is recognised that peer on peer abuse can be a safeguarding issue and will be treated as such.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is one of the broadest examples of peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. We define bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, which may be repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying is serious and can cause psychological damage and even suicide.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying), for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. The school recognises its responsibility that bullying can manifest itself physical but that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical;

All forms of bullying will be dealt with on a case by case basis, taken seriously and not tolerated.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online or both. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay or 'boys being boys' it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

The School recognises that early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyber-bullying The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The school recognises that Cyber-bullying can be even more invidious because of the potential to extend to home and personal space, and the opportunities it offers perpetrators for anonymity. Cyber-bullying can be via websites, mobile phones, text messages, photos and email. The School has an IT security system in place to detect any misuse of IT facilities within the School. Pupils are regularly reminded of the regulations regarding the proper use of IT in school and how to behave appropriately on line.

Dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse

The whole school community has a role to play in preventing peer on peer abuse in our School.

Schools has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of peer on peer abuse. There are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and both physical and sexual violence.

Staff must understand that abuse is abuse, Instances of peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment should never be dismissed as banter, just having a laugh, 'boys being boys' or an inevitable part of growing up, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children

The school uses its existing pastoral structure to log, identify, monitor and deal with all forms of peer on peer abuse.

If staff have any safeguarding concerns due to discovering evidence of peer on peer abuse they should report this on www.MyConcern.education or by (completing a safeguarding 'log of concern' in the case of support staff who are not pupil-facing) as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All other concerns should be reported to the Form Tutor in the first instance although pupils are encouraged to approach any member of staff they wish. Pupils may refer to the "Who to Talk to" document posted on notice boards for advice on who to speak to. External agencies can help and advise pupils, such as, Childline (0800 1111), the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Kidscape.

Any report of peer on peer abuse will be taken seriously and investigated; a persistent peer on peer abuse log is kept in the school shared drive to enable possible patterns to be identified. An opportunity will be given for all involved to give their perspective. Where appropriate, a meeting might be arranged as a form of mediation or reconciliation between the two parties involved.

When disciplinary measures are applied this is done in order to show that such behaviour is wrong. These are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. Staff also need to consider the motivations behind pupils' behaviour and have an awareness and concern for the safety of the perpetrator.

Applying the school's behaviour policy effectively. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred. We sanction the behaviour not the pupil.

Appropriate action will be taken against peer on peer abuse, depending on its seriousness and persistence. This can range from a logged Deputy Head reprimand, Saturday detention, suspension or permanent exclusion from school; this is outlined in the school's behaviour policy.

Once reported to the Head of Section Form Tutors (in the case of Boarders, The Head of Boarding may also be involved) will normally investigate the initial concern and then refer upwards to the appropriate Head of Section/Deputy Head of Section, who will ensure that the Senior Deputy Head or appropriate Senior Team member is fully informed. In cases of serious and/or persistent peer on peer abuse the Senior Deputy Head and Head would be involved. If necessary the school will consider the involvement of external agencies such as Early help, Children's Social Care or the Police. In the event of a safeguarding concern this will be referred to the Integrated Front Door (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Help) for the county in which the child is resident by the safeguarding team. In the case of Boarders Cambridgeshire MASH will be contacted.