

Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

St John the Baptist RC School

June 2022

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1 Aims

1.1 St John the Baptist RC School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other young people. This is known as ‘peer on peer abuse’ or ‘child on child abuse’. The school is committed to preventing peer on peer abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that peer on peer abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

2 Definitions

2.1 The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- **‘Staff’ or ‘members of staff’** refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
- **Child/children** refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.¹
- **Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse)** refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse) could include (but is not limited to);
 - bullying (including cyberbullying);
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
 - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
 - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
 - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
 - sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.²

¹ Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

² Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

- abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse;

3 Purpose

3.1 This policy has been written to

- ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how St John the Baptist RC School works to prevent peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how St John the Baptist RC School responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to peer on peer abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how St John the Baptist RC School continues to support victims of peer on peer abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

4 Legislation and relevant documentation

4.1 This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

4.2 All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns.

4.3 This policy is part of a suite of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see the website and school policies www.st-johns-dartmouth.devon.sch.uk

4.4 This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

4.5 The school will also refer to the government guidance documents '[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges \(May 2018\)](#)' and '[Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(January 2018\)](#)' advice when managing reports or disclosures of peer on peer abuse of a sexual nature.

4.6 Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) in this policy, it should be understood that will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

5 Scope

5.1 This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of St John the Baptist. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Role of the Governors

6.1.1 The governors/proprietors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

6.2 Role of the Headteacher/Principal

6.2.1 The Headteacher/Principal will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimize incidents of peer on peer abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimizes the opportunity for peer on peer abuse.

6.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

6.3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to peer on peer abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about peer on peer abuse.
- Make referrals to Children's Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.

6.4 Role of all staff

6.4.1 All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of peer on peer abuse or become aware of cases of peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.
- Report any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of ‘sexting’. Where incidents involve sexting or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.³

7 Training

7.1 The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognize and respond to peer on peer abuse.

7.2 SSS suite is used for staff to do individual training modules. Safe guarding scenarios are regularly discussed which involve peer on peer abuse.

7.3 We recognise the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse. However, all staff will be trained to understand that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

8 Procedures to minimise peer on peer abuse

8.1 The school have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for peer on peer abuse. We do this by

- **Include early identification of concerning behaviours working with external agencies including Early Help.**
- **School counsellor who works with some of our most vulnerable children and families on specific issues**

8.2 We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face peer on peer abuse than other children. We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities.

³ For further guidance, see [‘Sexting: How to respond to an incident’](#), UKCIS.

8.3 We address peer on peer abuse through our curriculum, in line with [Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education and Health Education](#). The curriculum covers the following issues: Online safety, Healthy relationships, Bullying including Cyber bullying, Different forms of Abuse, Risk taking Behaviour and where to go to get support.

9 Responding to concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse

9.1 The school takes peer on peer abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse immediately.

9.2 If a member of staff has a concern about peer on peer abuse, or if a child discloses peer on peer abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

9.3 Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of peer on peer abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

9.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following;

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
- the impact on the victim;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- if there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff.

9.5 Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services via a MASH referral.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.

9.6 Supporting the victim

- 9.6.1 The school recognises that peer on peer abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.
- 9.6.2 Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of peer on peer abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- 9.6.3 The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- 9.6.4 The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
- 9.6.5 If a victim of peer on peer abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

9.7 Supporting the alleged perpetrator

- 9.7.1 The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision.
 - 9.7.2 We recognise that children who perpetrate peer on peer abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.
 - 9.7.3 A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.
 - 9.7.4 If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.
- 9.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- 9.9 The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of peer on peer abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.
- 9.10 Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school will work fully with external agencies.

10 Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

- 10.1 The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by Devon Children and Families Partnership.
- 10.2 For further details of how the school works with partner agencies in responding to safeguarding incidents (including incidents of peer on peer abuse), please see Plymouth CAST Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.

11 Record-keeping

- 11.1 All records are kept on Cpoms and any risk assessments are attached to CPOMS files.
- 11.2 Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

11 Parent/s and Carer/s

- 12.1 Parent/s and carer/s will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm.

Appendix A: Further Resources

The school use a range of resources (in addition to those referenced in the main body of the policy) to support in minimising peer on peer abuse, training staff and responding to concerns or disclosures. This appendix details this additional documentation.

Insert list of documents here. See below for suggestions.

Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/training/wider-professional-training/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55>

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015), HM Government

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

Sexting: How to respond to an incident. An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges, UKCCIS

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview of Sexting Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf)

Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people UKCISS

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939 SP NCA Sexting In Schools FINAL Update Jan17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

School Exclusion Statutory Guidance (including changes to the exclusion process during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Procedures, Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

http://northamptonshirescb.proceduresonline.com/p_sexually_harm_behav.html

Behaviour and discipline in schools (2016), Department for Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>