



BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE (PEER ON PEER) POLICY

All that happens in Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School occurs within the context of the school's Mission Statement (in accordance with the Trust Deed for the maintenance and advancement of the Catholic religion).

Written: July 2019

Updated: February 2022

Adopted: March 2022

Persons Responsible: SLT and Headteacher

Committee: Full Governing Body

Review Due: March 2023 - Annual

As a Catholic school, founded on, and committed to upholding the teaching of the Church, we believe that Jesus is present in the day to day life of our community and that each member of our community has a divine origin and an eternal destiny. In discharging our responsibilities, we are guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching [CST], in which the following core values are constituted: dignity, solidarity, the common good, the option for the poor, the promotion of peace, care for creation, the dignity of work and the value of participation in society. These principles are demonstrated in our core, and wider, curriculum, in our care of students, in our work with the disadvantaged and in the outward-facing approach to our local community, our nation and to the world. As our moral compass, CST guides us in all our school activities, including the formulation, upholding and reviewing of school policies.

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Sue Matthews (Assistant Headteacher)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Miss K Harris (KS3) and Ms E Smith (KS4 and KS5)

Nominated Governor: Dr Andrea Johnson-Mitchell

Introduction

We are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the school.

We recognise that Child on Child Abuse can include sexual harassment, abuse or violence and have procedures in place to allow students to confidently report such issues and mechanisms to respond swiftly and appropriately.

We recognise that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm.

This policy applies to all Governors, all staff (teaching and support staff), temporary and supply staff, volunteers, and staff working on the site employed by other services and agencies and those working with children and families in the community.

This policy is in line with the statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019.

'All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy)' - KCSIE September 2019 '.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, is responsible for:

- Adhering to the procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible child-on-child abuse.
- Ensuring written records of child-on-child abuse and concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral for action;
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records
- Ensuring, directly and indirectly, that students have a full and complete understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour towards other children.

Purpose and Aim: Young people may be harmful to each other in ways which would be classified as child-on-child abuse. This policy explores the many forms of child-on-child abuse and includes planned and supportive responses to the issues.

Abusive behaviour can happen to students. It is important to be clear:

- What abuse is/ looks like
- How it can be managed
- What support/ intervention can be put in place
- What preventative strategies may be established.

The school recognises the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all such abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific (girls being sexually touched, boys being subject to hazing type violence). It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

Types of Abuse: There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive.

Physical Abuse: 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 or sanction to be undertaken.

Sexual, Harassment, Abuse and violence: Inappropriate sexual language, name calling, inappropriate role play, touching, assault etc. Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others and we work to educate students on appropriate behaviours and interactions towards each other. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. We take robust steps to unpick and address such concerns working with external agencies, the police and parents as appropriate to the individual case.

Bullying: physical, name calling, spreading rumours, making threats. It may be connected to gender, religion, race, sexual orientation or even hair colour, etc. 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. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. Cyberbullying is the use of electronic media and instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. bullying can become criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003, Section 127.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery in Schools: Sending/ receiving sexually explicit text, images or video. This includes sending nude or semi-nude selfies. Pressurising a child into sending nude pictures is a form of sexual abuse. Having possession of, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Staff should be conversant with the school's E-Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

Initiation/Hazing: a form of initiation ceremony used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a sports team etc. This takes a number of 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 members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Prejudiced Behaviour: a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. In particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Teenage Relationship Abuse: a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (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. The

abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

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 and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to child-on-child abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of child-on-child abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. This can be done by adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach and by ensuring that our response to such incidents takes into account any potential complexity.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach which:

- Recognises children's experiences of significant harm in extrafamilial contexts, and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities;
- Recognises that, as children enter adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home in public environments (including on the internet) within which they may experience abuse; and
- Considers interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse has occurred.

School Response to child-on-child abuse: All staff within school need to be able to recognise potential child-on-child abuse and report it to the DSL/DDSLs bearing in mind the following:

- It is important to deal with situations quickly and sensitively.
- Prompt information gathering is important to avoid key points being forgotten.
- Sensitivity is needed - the word 'perpetrator' can create a blame culture and leave a student labelled.
- Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with sensitive matters.

The DDSL will:

- Gather the facts
- Speak to all the young people involved separately to gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened.
- Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions including:
 - What happened?
 - Who observed the incident?
 - What was seen?
 - What was heard?
 - Did anyone intervene?

- In our school, students are encouraged to produce a written statement. These should be collected from all parties and attached to the main report.
- Consider the Intent (Risk Assess): Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another? Include your justified professional perspective in your report.
- Decide on the next course of action in discussion with the DSL. The situation may be one that is covered within the school's formal policies. If so, the guidance within them will be followed.

Action, follow-up and informing parents: Actions should be appropriate and in line with the school's behaviour policy which includes a use of sanctions. It is important that situations are further monitored to ensure all students involved remain safe and protected. It will normally be appropriate to keep parents informed of how a matter has been resolved.

Further points to consider:

- What is the age of the students involved?
- Is there any significant age difference between those involved?
- Where did the incident or incidents take place?
- Do all students give the same explanation of the incident?
- Do the students know/understand what they have been doing?
- Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived?
- Does the student have an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?
- Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion?

Supporting Students: The support required by all students involved will depend on those young people. We will work to find the most appropriate forms of support for them. This support may include:

- Therapeutic interventions/referral to the School Counsellor or a Mental Health First Aider
- One to one support via a mentor (in-house)
- Support via family and friends
- Support from external services (CAMHS, Children's Services, Victim Support etc)
- Restorative justice
- Input into relationship development.

Preventative Strategies: Whilst we recognise that child-on-child abuse can and will occur in our school, the school continually works towards being a place of safety. Our ethos, pastoral system, the use of PSHE, assemblies, our behaviour system and the continued responsiveness of students and parents all enable us to build an environment

where students can remain safe. We will ensure our safeguarding agenda retains a high profile within school.

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect changes to and the 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' Document and related publications.