



BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE 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).

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Persons Responsible: SLT and Headteacher

Committee: Full Governing Body

Review Due: March 2026 - 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.

As a Catholic school, we regard the following characteristics as central to the human flourishing of everyone – students, staff and Governors – in our community. Our aspirations for our students are that their experience of teaching develops in them a lived belief, an authentic sense of true happiness, a lived sense of family, an experience of care and a vocation for service.

To achieve these aspirations, teaching and learning will privilege the following core virtues for every member of our community.

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.

Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.

Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

Curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: (KS3) and (KS4/5)
- Nominated Governor

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 2024 (Part 1, Paragraphs 30 – 32).

‘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 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 abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when 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 that are abusive in nature.’

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. The list below gives guidance on types of abuse and how we respond to and deal with them in our school.

Abuse referred directly to the safeguarding team:

Such abuse is recorded on our safeguarding system.

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.

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.

NB: Staff are required to read and acknowledge the school's E-Safety and Safeguarding Policies in addition to KCSIE Part 1 as part of induction and annually thereafter in order to ensure a full understanding.

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.

Abuse dealt with via our behaviour procedures:

These are logged on our data management system and are referred to the safeguarding team where a safeguarding concern is/becomes apparent:

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.

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.

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).

Contextual Safeguarding

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, whatever its nature, 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 or pastoral team (see above) 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 following approach should be taken to exploring all reports of Child on Child Abuse in order to gather the facts and inform the next steps:

- 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. Where a child has known literacy difficulties and writing would be challenging, the account may be dictated to a responsible adult taking care to record precisely what the child has said.
- 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.

Where the matter is behavioural, the procedure above will be actioned by the Year Team (Year Leader, Pastoral and Achievement Co-ordinator, Tutor), records kept on the child's file and our data management system and are referred to the safeguarding team where appropriate/relevant.

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. In terms of sanctions, mitigation may be considered and applied as appropriate to the circumstance. For example, if a child has a special need or there are particular safeguarding concerns which are relevant. consideration. Sanctions will be complemented by therapeutic input as appropriate to the child and the situation (see below). 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 (MHST, 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.