

Peer on Peer Abuse



Chaloner Primary School

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Review frequency	Every year
Next review date	On or before March 2020
Approving body	Full Governing Body

Context and Definition

Peer on peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt other children.

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.

All staff should be aware of the types of peer abuse including:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hairpulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sexting; and
- Initiating/ encouraging violence acts on others

This type of abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim.

Children or young people who harm other children may have additional or complex needs e.g.

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and /or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2018 states that,

'Governing bodies, proprietors and school and college leaders should ensure that child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with.'

Peer on peer abuse is referenced in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer abuse necessitates separate policy guidance.

At Chaloner Primary School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the

child, with full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Abuse and harmful behaviour

It is necessary to consider

- What abuse is and what it looks like?
- How it can be managed?
- What appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual/s?
- What prevention strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm?

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

At Chaloner Primary School:

- Staff understand that children can abuse other children and such abuse will be taken seriously,
- Staff are aware of the potential use of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between children.
- Staff are aware of the added vulnerability of children who may have been victims, including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator may have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. In such cases, any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken

Physical Abuse

This includes physical acts towards another child that cause significant physical and emotional harm. This is a premeditated act carried out on purpose to cause physical pain for the victim. There may be many reasons why a child physically harms another child, including accidentally, and it is important to investigate why the person has engaged in such behaviour before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Sexual Violence and sexual harassment

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to investigate and decide on the appropriate action or punishment to be undertaken. The

DSL will follow the DfE Guidance; sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2018 with consideration of managing internally, Early Help, referral to Social Services or reporting to the police.

Sexual harmful behaviour may include:

- Inappropriate sexual language
- Inappropriate role play
- Sexual touching
- Sexual abuse/assault

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children 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.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Online Bullying/Cyber Bullying

Online bullying and cyberbullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, emails, chat rooms etc.) to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reason stated as above. This usually takes place at home but the impact is often seen in school. It is really important for teachers to be vigilant to a concerning atmosphere and behaviours between peers at the start of the day.

Children are encouraged to report any online or cyberbullying incidents to their parents or school as soon as they happen. All children are taught about online bullying and the effects on children as part of their curriculum. We also hold regular training sessions for parents about how they can protect their child from this type of abuse.

If incidents are reported parents are always included in the investigation about what happened and the action required for both the victim and perpetrator.

Sexting

The term sexting relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and or/ written messages with sexually explicit content: these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services. This must be referred immediately to the DSL.

Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudiced-related bullying refers to 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.

Expected staff action

Staff should consider the seriousness of the incident and decide whether to inform the DSL immediately before taking any further in-school actions. If unsure always seek advice from your colleagues.

Recognising peer abuse

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, gender, race, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation and threatening behaviour
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempt to ensure the behaviour is kept secret
- The child's motivation or reason for the behaviour and their admittance of guilt.
- Whether it was a one-off incident or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of the language on both the children and parents when they become involved.

Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Taking action

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupils
- Assess needs of the victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to police or social services
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk assessment meeting
- Record all incidents and actions taken using CPOMs.
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible and stick to facts, not opinions.
- Use proper name for body parts but use exact language or vocabulary used by the child.
- Note time, place and who was around.

Gather the Facts- Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the intent- has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a child to be able to harm another child.

Decide on the next course of action- If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the DSL immediately and they will follow the school's child protection procedures.

Informing parents- All parents of both the victim and perpetrator will be informed of accusations of peer on peer abuse. This may be by phone call or face to face depending on the severity of the situation.

Next Steps- Once the outcome of the incident has been established, it may be necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

Preventative Strategies

At Chaloner Primary School we believe we have created an environment where children feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. Our school curriculum teaches them about abuse and what to do if someone hurts you physically or emotionally. We have many systems in school where pupil voice can thrive, providing forums for children to instigate change that may be needed.