

The Friars Primary School
Cannon Street
Salford
M3 7EU



Peer-on-Peer & Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Happiness – Achievement – Respect - Determination

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1. Introduction

This policy is written to keep children safe. Staff should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated at The Friars. If an incident occurs it will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

It is understood that there is a gendered nature to abuse; that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all peer-on-peer and child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse and recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be clear about their school’s policy and procedures with regard to peer on peer abuse.

We acknowledge that Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 places an emphasis on ensuring children are safe from abuse from peers online and from Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) pg 69)

We also have awareness and access to the document below which gives schools detailed support and advice.

Minimising risk

The school will take positive steps to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse.

- Work and assemblies will highlight the importance of treating each other with dignity and respect
- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops pupils understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe
- Having a robust e-safety programme which develops pupils knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self-protection when using the internet and social networking
- Having robust monitoring and filtering systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and act appropriately when using information technology in school
- Having systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe those pupils identified as being at risk
- Developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by other young people in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, teenage relationship abuse and sexual exploitation, bullying (including cyberbullying), upskirting, 10 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), initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

It should be considered as a safeguarding allegation against a pupil if some of the following features are present.

The allegation:-

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may include, 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 sanctions to be undertaken.

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.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control

or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

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

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could be deemed to be criminal behaviour. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, regardless of their age, gender or sexual preference. However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual Abuse

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. 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. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching

another or sexual assault/abuse. . It can also include indecent exposure, indecent touching /serious sexual assaults or forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting.

Emotional Abuse

Can include blackmail or extortion and may also includes threats and intimidation. This harmful behaviour can have a significant impact on the mental health and emotional well- being of the victim and can lead to self harm.

Teenage Relationship Abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as 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.

Sexual Exploitation

This can include encouraging other young people to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour or grooming and recruiting members of the peer group into being sexually exploited by other young people or adults. It can also include photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.

Initiation / Hazing Rituals

Hazing is any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Peer on Peer Abuse

Allegations of Peer-on-Peer abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with appropriately

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed.

- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should contact The Bridge Partnership to discuss the case. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, through the Bridge Partnership, the police will become involved.
- Parents, of both the student/s being complained about and the alleged victim/s, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the Secure Safeguarding Records.
- If the allegation highlights a potential risk to the school and the pupil, the school will follow the school's behaviour policy and procedures and take appropriate action.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

Support for the victims of peer-on-peer abuse

If a child has been the victim of peer-on-peer abuse then the school will support the child in any way necessary. This can include, but are not limited to:

- Referrals to appropriate counselling sessions
- In-school mentors (both adults and children)
- Support sessions
- Referrals to GPs and other external professionals
- Careful monitoring

- Family support
- Restorative justice
- Removal of perpetrator from their environment (this could take multiple forms such as moving class group or exclusions)