

Grange Primary School



Grange Primary School
Pursuing excellence for every child

Peer to Peer Abuse Policy

Date Completed: July 2024

Review Date: July 2027

Introduction.

At The Grange Primary School, the Governors, all staff and volunteers are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond School.

What is Peer to Peer abuse?

Peer-on-peer abuse is defined as 'any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate)' (Abuse between young people: a contextual account (Routledge 2017)).

Peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

(See Appendix 1 for a more detailed definition of each term)

This 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; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm Children or young people who harm others 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
- involved in crime 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 their 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 of our school.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2023 states that:

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their 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'.

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard:

'Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.'

Safeguarding allegations.

Very occasionally, allegations may be made against children by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Though very rare, safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse both in person and via social media, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

At Grange Primary we recognise that children who have disabilities and/ or SEND may have additional barriers to disclosing incidents of a Child Protection nature. Similarly, professionals may also experience barriers when recognising signs of abuse and neglect with these particular children. Staff are trained to a high level in recognising signs of abuse and neglect and are fully aware of the policies and procedures to be followed in these instances.

It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a child, some of the following features will be found:

The allegation –

- is made against an older child and refers to their behaviour towards a younger child or a more vulnerable child.
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence. Raises risk factors for other children in the school.
- indicates that other children may have been affected by this child.
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this child.
- Peer on peer abuse can take many forms (See Appendix 2 for examples of what form this could take)

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 that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

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

Taking Action

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

Recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Record all details on CPOMS as soon as possible.
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.
- 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. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the Intent

- Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

- If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- If MASH and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

Informing parents/carers

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via our Learning Mentors. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on online bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of Relationship and Sex Education (from 2020), PSHE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person

cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

How will the School respond to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse?

The DSL will discuss the concerns or allegations with the member of staff who has reported them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child(ren) affected. Where the DSL considers or suspects that the behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic), the DSL should contact the local Safeguarding Children Partnership as well as the Safeguarding Children Partnership(s) in which the pupil(s) reside immediately, and in any event within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of it. The DSL will discuss the allegations / concerns with the local Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Children Partnership(s) in which the pupil(s) reside and agree on a course of action, which may include:

- a) Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible. Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic), scenarios (b), (c) or (d) should ordinarily apply. However, where support from local agencies is not available, the School may need to handle allegations / concerns internally. In these cases, the School will engage and seek advice from external specialists (in the private and / or voluntary sector).
- b) Undertake / contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of a child(ren) and their family. These services may, for example, include CAMHS, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team, and / or youth offending services.
- c) Refer child(ren) to children's social care for a Section 17 (Child in Need) and / or Section 47 (Child Protection) statutory assessment. As a matter of best practice, if an incident of peer-on-peer abuse requires referral to and action by children's social care and a strategy meeting is convened, then the School will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it, and the contexts to which the abuse was associated.

- d) Report alleged criminal behaviour to the Police. Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police. However, there are some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police. All concerns / allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis, and in light of the wider context.

Individual risk and needs assessment

Where there is an incident of peer-on-peer abuse, the School will carry out a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse. These risk assessments will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and / or faced by the child
- engage the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term
- consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child
- be reviewed at regular intervals in light of the child's on-going needs to ensure that real progress is being made which benefits the child.

If at any stage the child's needs escalate, the DSL should contact the local Safeguarding Children Partnership to determine the appropriate course of action.

Preventative work and whole school-approach

The School is committed to ensuring that its response to concerns / allegations of peer-on-peer abuse is part of on-going proactive work by the School to embed best practice and take a contextual whole-school approach to such abuse. The School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- educating all staff, governors, contractors and volunteers, parents and pupils about this issue.

This includes:

- training all Governors, members of the School Leadership Team (SLT), staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it
- educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via PSHE, assemblies, form time and the wider curriculum. Pupils are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.
- engaging parents on this issue **through updates to the Online Safety section of our Website.**
- ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are recorded on CPOMS and fed back to the DSL and Safeguarding team immediately so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may need additional support.

- working with Governors, the SLT, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of respect amongst all members of the School community.
- creating conditions in which pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships. This is done through PSHE, assemblies and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).
- creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to.
- responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

Date ratified by the Governing Body:	July 2024
Date last reviewed:	July 2024
Next review date:	July 2027

Virtually Signed by Chair of Governors: <i>Mr S. Ryley</i>	Date: 1 st July 2024
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1

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.

1.1. Physical abuse

This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, 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 punishment to be undertaken.

1.2. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance: ~~Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges May 2018~~ **Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

with consideration of

1. Managing internally **488 page 119**
2. Early Help **491, page 119**
3. ~~MASH referral 65.3. page 28~~ **Referrals to Local Authority 498 Page 120**
4. Reporting to the police **506 Page 121**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

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 to the young person it is intended towards. **Sexually harmful behaviour may include:**

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them
- Upskirting: where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

1.3. 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, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

1.4. Online Bullying

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

1.5. Sexting / Sharing nude or indecent imagery

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.

Upskirting: 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. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim. Peer on Peer Abuse - Policy and Procedural Guidance

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

DSL will follow the UKCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges 2016 **2020** guidance. ~~(An updated copy of this guidance is due autumn term 2020)~~

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB__1_.PDF

1.6. Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The ceremony 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.

1.7. Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudice-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 - for example 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.

1.8. Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is 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. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

Appendix 2

Examples of safeguarding issues against a child could include:

(We appreciate that the risk of this happening in primary school is low, however it is still deemed a risk).

- Physical Abuse Violence, particularly pre-planned
- Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- Emotional Abuse Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation either in person or via social media platforms.
- Sexual Abuse Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting Sexual Exploitation Encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.
- In areas where gangs are prevalent, older children may attempt to recruit younger children using any or all of the above methods.
- Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Appendix 3

What is meant by sexual violence and sexual harassment between children?

Taken from: ~~Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges~~ 2018

Taken from: KCSIE (2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

~~<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>~~

~~Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and school staff are supported and protected as appropriate.~~

"Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report."

Evidence highlights why it is important that all staff have an understanding of what sexual violence and sexual harassment might look like and what to do if they have a concern or receive a report. Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.

The Women and Equalities committee (WEC) found a number of large scale surveys find girls consistently reporting high levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.

Girl guiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey 2017 found 64% of girls aged 13-21 had experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment at school or college in the past year. This included 39% having their bra strap pulled by a boy and 27% having their skirts pulled up within the last week.

Over a third (37%) of female students and 6% of male students at mixed-sex schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school.

Almost a quarter (24%) of female students and 4% of male students at mixed-sex schools have been subjected to unwanted physical touching of a sexual nature while at school.⁸ Girls (14%) were significantly more likely than boys (7%) to report that their partner had pressured them to share nude images of themselves in the last year.

Girls are significantly more likely to be victimised with unwanted sexual messages and images from their peers online, with 31% of female respondents aged 13-17 years saying they had experienced this in the last year compared to 11% of male respondents.

In 2016/17 the NSPCC child line service provided over 3000 counselling sessions to children and young people concerned about being sexually assaulted by their peers.

