

Mawsley Community Primary School



PEER ON PEER ABUSE POLICY

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1 Aims

1.1 Mawsley Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other young people. This is known as ‘peer on peer abuse’ or ‘child on child abuse’. The school is committed to preventing peer on peer abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that peer on peer abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. We maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

2 Definitions

2.1 The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- **‘Staff’ or ‘members of staff’** refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
 - **Child/children** refers to any young person under the age of 18.
 - **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.¹
 - **Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse)** refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Abuse may be defined by the severity of a singular incident or nature of an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s and the victim. It may also be defined by the intent being of cruelty or significant intent to harm another child either physically or emotionally. Abuse may also be defined as repeated incidents perpetrated from one child/group of children on another. Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse) could include (but is not limited to);
 - bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party);
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
 - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
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- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

3 Purpose

3.1 This policy has been written to

- ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how Mawsley Primary School works to prevent peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how we respond to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to peer on peer abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how the school continue to support victims of peer on peer abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

4 Legislation and relevant documentation

4.1 This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

4.2 All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns.

4.3 This policy is part of a suite of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see

- Behaviour Policy,
- Personal, Social, Health, Relationships and Sex Education Policy,
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy

4.4 This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2017)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

4.5 The school will also refer to the government guidance documents '[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges \(May 2018\)](#)' and '[Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(January 2018\)](#)' '[Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes \(December 2020\)](#)' for advice when managing reports or disclosures of peer on peer abuse of a sexual nature.

4.6 Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) in this policy, it should be understood that Mawsley Primary School will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

5 Scope

5.1 This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of Mawsley Primary School. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Role of the Governors

6.1.1 The governors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

6.2 Role of the Headteacher

6.2.1 The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Team about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of peer on peer abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimizes the opportunity for peer on peer abuse.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers' Standards 2012).

6.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

6.3.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to peer on peer abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about peer on peer abuse.
- Make referrals to Children’s Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.

6.4 Role of all staff

6.4.1 All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of peer on peer abuse or become aware of cases of peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to this policy and procedures on peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.
- Report any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of ‘sharing nudes or semi-nudes’. Where incidents involve indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.²

7 Training

7.1 The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to peer on peer abuse.

7.2 All staff are made aware that children can abuse other children, that this can happen online or in person, at school or outside of school. All staff will receive training so that they can confidently recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse in order to identify it and respond appropriately to reports. All staff will be made aware of the school’s policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse and the crucial role that they play in preventing it and responding to it as necessary. It will be made clear that addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

² For further guidance, see [‘Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: How to respond to an incident’](#), UKCIS.

7.3 All staff receive induction which includes specific face to face training on Peer on Peer abuse and signs to recognize it as well as reporting systems. Existing staff also receive Peer on Peer Abuse training updates annually either by face to face, video or e-bulletin training.

8 Procedures to minimise peer on peer abuse

8.1 We recognise that a crucial part of our safeguarding responsibility is to minimise the opportunity for peer on peer abuse to occur. In order to do this, and to establish a safe environment for all children, we:

- Have a robust behavior policy, which makes it clear we have a zero tolerance approach to any kind of peer on peer abuse;
- Ensure staff understand what is meant by peer on peer abuse and are trained on the content of this policy;
- Teaching both children and staff about Protective Behaviours and everyone’s right to feel safe all of the time;
- Empower staff with the knowledge and confidence to challenge inappropriate behavior even if it appears relatively innocuous or is a clear example of peer on peer abuse;
- Ensure high quality record keeping is in place so all incidents can be monitored and patterns identified as early as possible;
- never downplay certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it; and
- recognise that sexual harassment and sexual violence, as well as other forms of peer on peer abuse, may be happening even if they are not reported;
- Adult supervision during all aspects of the school day;
- Specific, annual age appropriate lessons on consent, body autonomy, personal safety, and regular reviews of network adults (for reporting harm);
- Annual whole school Anti-bullying focus ensuring children know how to recognize all types of bullying (including online) and how to report issues to staff;
- PSHE lessons teaching children about healthy friendships;
- Early identification of concerning behaviours and early help.

8.2 We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face peer on peer abuse than other children. We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by

- Ensuring all vulnerable children have access to the PSHE curriculum at an appropriate level;
- Reviewing patterns of reports of Peer on Peer issues to ensure no vulnerable groups are being targeted;

- Staff being appropriately trained in children with increased vulnerability and informed as needed about who those children are in their setting.

8.3 We address peer on peer abuse through our curriculum, in line with [Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education and Health Education](#). We ensure that our children are aware of our safeguarding and child protection procedures, including how to raise concerns on peer on peer abuse in an age appropriate way through our protective behaviours ethos and specific anti-bullying lessons relating to the child friendly version of this policy. The curriculum covers the following issues (this list forms the planned curriculum but teachers also respond to further incidents or contexts which may be brought to their attention via our contextual safeguarding hub or day to day activities in school):

- Protective behaviors,
- Personal safety,
- Consent,
- Body autonomy,
- Privacy (including keeping secrets),
- Healthy relationships,
- Anti-bullying,
- Reporting unsafe situations,
- Peer pressure.

9 Responding to concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse

9.1 The school takes peer on peer abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse immediately. Staff will follow our protective behaviours ethos ensuring children are listened to, believed and appropriate action taken. Children will never be made to feel they are wrong for reporting something they feel uncomfortable with and always treated with concern and empathy.

9.2 All victims will be taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school will be treated equally seriously. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence or sexual harassment. A victim will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report or have their experience minimised.

9.3 If a member of staff has a concern about peer on peer abuse, or if a child discloses peer on peer abuse to them, they will refer this to the DSL, DDSL, Anti-bullying Lead or a member of the SLT immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

9.4 Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of peer on peer abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The DSL or DDSL will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

9.5 The DSL or DDSL will always consider the following;

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
- the impact on the victim;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- if there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff.
- other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

9.6 Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the DSL or DDSL may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services via a MASH referral.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.
- Liaise with specialist services.

In the event of a disclosure of peer on peer sexual violence, we will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

More information about these options in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment can be found in Part 5 of KCSIE (2021).

9.7 Supporting the victim

Mawsley Primary School recognises that peer on peer abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

- Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of peer on peer abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- We will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- We will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
- We will ensure parents are informed and work with both the victim and their parents to move the concern, issue forwards.
- If a victim of peer on peer abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

9.8 Supporting the alleged perpetrator

We have a responsibility to safeguard and support all children. We will adhere to KCSIE (2021) when managing reports of peer on peer abuse and decide on action and support on a case by case basis. The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision. Options may include

- A move to another class where this is available/appropriate.
- Support work with an adult for any mental health challenges the perpetrator may be experiencing.
- Consequences for the perpetrator in line with our school Behaviour Policy.
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We recognise that children who perpetrate peer on peer abuse may be being abused themselves.

The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.

A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.

If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.

Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school will work with Police to put in place a plan for both the perpetrator and the victim.

We also recognise that other children who were not the victim or perpetrator may have been affected by peer on peer abuse and we will look case by case at any additional support such individuals/groups may need.

10 Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

10.1 The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

10.2 For further details of how the school works with partner agencies in responding to safeguarding incidents (including incidents of peer on peer abuse), please see Mawsley Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

11 Record-keeping

11.1 Where there is an immediate report of peer on peer abuse the member of staff will raise the issue with a DSL or DDSL as quickly as possible (at least within the working day) and this report will be recorded on MYConcern. The concern will then be revisited in the weekly safeguarding meetings and updated on the same system until it is resolved.

Where it is deemed a risk assessment is necessary it will be completed by the DSL or DDSL and again held on MYConcern.

Additionally, in order to recognise any early signs of peer on peer abuse any peer on peer incident reported to staff or noticed by staff is initially recorded on a Mawsley Primary School Behaviour Incident Record. These record sheets are then collated by the PSHE Lead at least weekly basis to analyse the incidents looking for any escalations or issues which may be deemed as peer on peer abuse. Any possible sign of abuse will be passed to the safeguarding team to discuss in their weekly meeting. Where it is deemed abuse is taking place the same procedures as above will apply.

11.2 Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

12 Parent/s and Carer/s

12.1 Parent/s and carer/s will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm.

12.2 If the child wishes to withhold information from their parent/s or carer/s, competency will be assessed using the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines (where applicable).³

12.3 Children will always be encouraged to speak to parent/s or carer/s about peer on peer abuse.

³ For more information about Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines, see <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines>

Appendix A: Further Resources

The school use a range of resources (in addition to those referenced in the main body of the policy) to support in minimising peer on peer abuse, training staff and responding to concerns or disclosures. This appendix details this additional documentation.

Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/training/wider-professional-training/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55>

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Sexting: How to respond to an incident. An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges, UKCCIS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people UKCISS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

School Exclusion Statutory Guidance (including changes to the exclusion process during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Procedures, Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

http://northamptonshirescb.proceduresonline.com/p_sexually_harm_behav.html

Behaviour and discipline in schools (2016), Department for Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

