

Duston Eldean Primary School



'TOGETHER WE GROW'

At Duston Eldean we encourage a reflective, creative, caring and respectful environment where the whole school community is happy, enthused and motivated.

In developing a love for learning we sow the seeds of success.

Peer on Peer Abuse Policy and Procedures

Signed:

Dated: 2021

(Chair of Governors)

Signed:

Dated: 2021

(Headteacher)

Date of Adoption: November 2021.

Frequency of Review: Annual

Review Date: November 2022

Introduction

This policy will set out our strategies at Duston Eldean for preventing, identifying and managing peer on peer abuse. Children can be harmful to one another in several ways, which would be classified as peer on peer abuse. All staff should be aware that children of any age could abuse other children.

Peer on peer abuse is any abuse of a child or children that is perpetrated by another child or children. This includes all forms of sexual harassment, sexual violence and abuse. We strive to create a culture of safety, where children are free from harassment or abuse of any kind. We take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment – it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

We know that even if we do not receive any reports relating to peer on peer abuse, it does not mean that it is not happening. We support and encourage anyone – especially our pupils – to come forward to share any concerns about peer on peer abuse so that we can take action to keep all children safe.

Additional Vulnerabilities

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+, may be more likely to face peer on peer abuse than other children. We recognise that girls are more likely to be the victims of peer on peer abuse than boys. Some children may face additional barriers to telling anyone about abuse because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation. We work to protect children with additional vulnerabilities by providing staff who are trained to support in a sensitive manner:

- Family support worker
- EAL support worker
- Autism support worker
- Speech and language assistant
- Teaching Assistants who work closely with vulnerable children

Abuse and harmful behaviour

It is necessary for all staff in school 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 individuals
- what preventative 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'. Peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures. Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action. Children can abuse other children.

Forms of Peer on Peer Abuse

It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required. Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but is not be limited to:

- **Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and the children 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, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

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

- An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

- **Cyber Bullying**

Cyberbullying 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 Malicious Communications Act 1988 and is also supported by the Communications Act 2003. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of children under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support children may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

- **Up-skirting**

This 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.

- **Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)**

Youth produced sexual imagery is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit image or video. This includes sending 'nude pictures', 'rude pictures' or 'nude

selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever 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, children are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Staff should not view or forward sexual images. The DSL will complete a risk and needs assessment regarding actions to be taken.

- **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 child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

- **Sexually harmful behaviour**

Sexually harmful behaviour includes sexual harassment, such as making sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. Sexually harmful behaviour ranges from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse. Sexually harmful behaviour from children is not always with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a child engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the child who instigates it as well as the child it is aimed at.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;
- The alleged perpetrator; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff).

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic say where these are filed) and be kept under review. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will ensure they are engaging with MASH.

- **Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a sports team, friendship group etc. There are 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.

- **Prejudice-related Bullying**

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. It 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.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’.

Managing Peer on Peer Abuse

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputies, have to make judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

All staff will be alert to indicators of abuse (including peer on peer abuse) and will report any of the following to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately:

- any concern or suspicion that a child has sustained an injury outside what is reasonably attributable to normal play;
- any concerning behaviours exhibited by children that may indicate that they have been harmed or are at risk of harm, including unusual changes in mood or behaviour, concerning use of language and/or concerning drawings or stories;
- any significant changes in attendance or punctuality;
- any significant changes in a child’s presentation;
- any indicators that a child may be experiencing peer on peer abuse;
- any concerns relating to people who may pose a risk of harm to a child; and/or
- any disclosures of abuse that children have made.

If a child discloses that they are suffering or at risk of suffering abuse

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, including peer on peer abuse, the member of staff/volunteer will:

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- accept what is being said;
- allow the child to talk freely;

- reassure the child, but do not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- never promise a child that they will not tell anyone - as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child;
- reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault;
- stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify;
- not criticise the alleged perpetrator;
- explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;
- make a written record on a Green Form. Paper copies of the form can be found in the school office or electronic versions can be accessed on the staff shared area of the school network under 'Safeguarding' (see Record Keeping); and
- pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

All staff will reassure victims 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 abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If you think that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, you must report this to the designated safeguarding lead immediately. On occasions when the designated safeguarding lead is not available, it should be reported to the deputy safeguarding lead without delay or a senior member of staff.

Where possible, there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead but a referral must be made if a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm. **Anyone can make a referral to children's social care.** If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral to children's social care or to the police, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible.

What happens when an allegation of peer on peer abuse is made?

We will adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and the DfE guidance document 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' (2021) (where applicable) when responding to incidents of peer on peer abuse. The school takes peer on peer abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse, including those that have occurred outside of school and online, immediately.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary.

Our starting point regarding any report of peer on peer sexual harassment or violence should always be that there is a zero tolerance approach, it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It is especially important not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

The subsequent action taken will vary depending on the type of peer on peer abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 ages and developmental stages 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;
- if there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff; and
- other related issues and wider context, such as links to child criminal or child sexual exploitation.

Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment and needs 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 report 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).

Recording procedures

Incidents of peer on peer abuse should be recorded on a green Cause for Concern Form. The Headteacher will report the frequency and types of incident and actions taken at Full Governing Body meetings.

Risk assessments will be put in place to keep the child/children safe from future incidents. These will be discussed with children and parents and then reviewed, with the child, after a day, a week and then a month. Further reviews will take place as required.

How we support victims of peer on peer abuse

The 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. The school 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, harassment or abuse as a result of their disclosure.

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.

How we will support alleged perpetrators and perpetrators of peer on peer abuse

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. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse themselves or may be victims of criminal exploitation. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection.

The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider all alternatives to exclusion. However, if a pupil is unable to attend school, provision will be made for home learning. Daily contact will be made by the class teacher or a member of the safeguarding team; this may be a home visit or telephone call.

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

The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of peer on peer abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.

Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school will seek advice and complete a risk assessment to ensure the safety of all pupils.

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

How we will support other children who may have been affected by peer on peer abuse

Any children affected by the incident will be able to get support/counselling from the school Family Support Worker or another member of the Safeguarding Team.

How we address peer on peer abuse within the curriculum and across the school

We take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people.

Respectful relationships, caring friendships and issues such as consent and online safety are taught predominantly through our PSHE curriculum but also through areas such as science, P4C and computing. We ensure that our systems for reporting all safeguarding concerns are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We ensure that children are aware of our safeguarding and child protection procedures, including how to raise concerns about peer on peer abuse by:

- displaying posters around the school;
- classes promoting and displaying our child friendly Friendship and Anti-bullying Policy;
- promoting Anti-bullying week;
- children in KS2 attending assemblies which focus on areas such as racism, autism and homophobia to foster an understanding and respect for similarities and differences in different people;
- adults learning and reacting to information from pupil voice panels;
- discussions during reflection time

Good behaviour promotes a culture of safety and safeguarding. Inappropriate behaviour cannot be ignored; low level incidents must be dealt with appropriately. Sexist, homophobic language and gendered language (e.g. 'You throw like a girl' or 'What does she expect wearing ...' cannot go unchallenged.