Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Start Date:	**Autumn 2022**
Date of Next Review:	**Autumn 2023**
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Responsible Committee:	**Education Committee**

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This guidance has been written to help support staff when they are dealing with incidents/allegations of child-on-child abuse.

This policy should be used in line with Keeping Students Safe in Education 2021 and the DfE policy Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment Between Students in Schools and Colleges

1.0 Introduction to abuse and harmful behaviour

Students may be harmful to one another in several ways which would be classified as child-on-child abuse.

All staff should be aware that students can abuse other students (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment which may be stand-alone or part or a broader pattern of abuse.
- Up-skirting, 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); and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Abusive behaviour can happen to students in all schools and settings, and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and 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' or students just having a laugh. Abuse should never be tolerated and at Haileybury Turnford we do not tolerate child-on-child abuse and ensure we have clarity in our approach to dealing with any reported or noticed incidents of any type of child-on-child abuse.

2.0 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.

2.1 Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

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 accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

2.2 Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

Sexually harmful behaviour from students is not always contrived or 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. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

2.3 Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both students 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: Students 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 rumors, 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.

2.4 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 students under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support students may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

2.5 Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)

Youth produced sexual imagery (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, 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, students are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

2.6 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 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.

2.7 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 – 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 (homosexual, bisexual, biphobic or transphobic). Prejudice behaviour can also include harmful behaviour such as prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on a belief that one’s own race is superior. This can include harmful or unfair things people say or do or think, based on the belief that their own race makes them more intelligent, good moral etc. than people of other races.

2.8 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.

3.0 Expected action taken by all staff

As with all safeguarding concerns staff are expected to follow the school's policy and procedure. All staff should act in the best interests of the child, immediate consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, as well as any other pupils that area involved or impacted.

The Designated Lead or Deputy Designated Lead should be informed as soon as possible so they can make decisions around next steps

Staff should not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters. *"It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe*" KCSIE 2021.

3.1 Consider using the Brook Sexual Behaviour Traffic Light Tool:

https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool The tool uses a traffic light system to categorise the sexual behaviours of students and is designed to help professionals:

- Make decisions about safeguarding students
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in students
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from harmful behaviour

By categorising sexual behaviours as green, amber or red, professionals across different agencies can work to the same standardised criteria when making decisions and can protect students with a unified approach.

4.0 Next steps

If the information that you have available to you at any point indicates that a child may be at risk of significant harm or has suffered significant harm, then you must report the incident and record as child-on-child abuse on CPOMS according to our Safeguarding Policy. The Lead or Deputy Designated Lead (DSL/DDSL) will then make a safeguarding referral to Students's Services immediately (where a crime/potential crime has been committed the police should also be notified).

If social care and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the students in school, or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case the DSL/DDSL may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, the LDSL/DSL may then be required to inform parents.

5.0 Begin to Risk Assess

At this point the LDSL and/or DSL must consider intent. Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for one child to be able to harm another? Remember to include all risk factors and what you can put in place to mitigate and lower the risk.

6.0 Informing parents/carers

Please Note: When the DSL/DDSL is referring to parents this applies to parents of victim and alleged perpetrator.

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care you have agreement to inform parents/carers or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then you need to inform the parents/carers within the timeframe agreed. If other services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents.

If a child is deemed to be 'Gillick Competent' following the 'Fraser' guidelines and does not wish you to share the information with parents, then the school must consider this (unless this has occurred through significant harm in which case a criminal/social care case is likely, or the child is under the age of 13). https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/gillick-competencyandfraser-guidelines/

In all circumstances where risk of harm to the child is evident, then the school should encourage the child to share the information with their parents and support them to do this.

If the child does not give consent, but school can evidence they are acting in the best interests of the child, they would not be criticised by disclosing to parents/carers against the child's wishes, the evidence and justification for this decision would need to be clearly documented at school to ensure school are not actively breaching the rights and choices of the child. This would apply to parents of all students that are involved.

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

7.0 Points to consider:

What is the age of the students involved?
How old are the students involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved?

Where did the incident or incidents take place?
Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

What was the explanation by all students involved of what occurred? Can each of the students give the same explanation of the incident? What is the effect on the students involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case is it regular and repetitive? Does one child's version differ from another's and if so, why?

What is each child's understanding of what occurred?
Do the students know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and what constitutes inappropriate touching? Could the child's behaviour have been prompted by something they may have heard or been learning about? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived?

Does the child understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?
In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Hertfordshire Children's Services on 0300 1234 043.

7.1 Patterns of behaviour

Has the behaviour been repeated by or to an individual on more than one occasion? Has the behaviour persisted after it has already been discussed or dealt with?

7.2 For the students involved

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. Consider whether a restorative approach with all the students involved students is appropriate.

7.3 For students who have been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual child? It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. It is important that students are monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, students may need support in

improving peer groups/relationships with students or restorative 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 cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the child 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.

7.4 For students who have displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to understand why the child has behaved in such a way. It may be that the child 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 child may require additional support from family members.

Please note that if a referral has been made social care and police must make decisions before schools take any actions

Once the support required to meet the child's needs has been put in place, it is important that the child understands the impact of their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g., making amends with the child 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 child 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 justice service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that the child cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the school will need to be provide the child with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Even following the conclusion of any investigation, a child's behaviour 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 child and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the child and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the child or protective strategies if the child feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

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

8.0 After care

It is important that following the incident the students involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that students do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g., self-harm). In which case, regular reviews with the students following the incident(s) are imperative.

9.0 Preventative Strategies

Haileybury Turnford promote the development of appropriate strategies in order to prevent child-on-child abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way. We recognise child-on-child abuse can and will occur in any school even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms, including our school. We consider it is important to continue to recognise and manage risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting students to talk about issues with staff.

This is supported by ensuring that we have an open environment where students feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.

As well as having strategies for dealing with incidents, HT aims to promote and foster healthy and respectful relationships between all students including through Relationship and Sex Education and P&SD. Our curriculum is designed to have a whole-school approach that prepares students for life in modern Britain. At HT we have a clear set of values and minimum expectations, and these are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This will be underpinned by the school's Rewards, Discipline and Behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum. The Relationship and Sex Education curriculum is developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering students with SEND), and tackles such issues as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- What respectful behaviour looks like?
- Consent.
- Gender roles, stereotyping, and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Prejudiced behaviour.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

It is important we promote an environment where students can share anything that is upsetting and worrying them. This is strengthened through our strong and positive Personal and Social Development (P&SD) curriculum that tackles such issues as

prejudiced behaviour and gives students an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

Staff receive regular training updates to enable an open and honest environment to ensure the whole staff feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of students, including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another. Whole staff training, around abusive behaviours and talking to students in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice is reinforced in our annual safeguarding refresher training and through regular safeguarding updates in our staff briefings. It is important that staff do not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. It is necessary that staff consider each issue and each individual in their own right before acting. If staff minimise the concerns raised it may result in a child seeking no further help or advice.

Signposting is available to students in the event that they do not feel confident raising an issue with staff. We have a resource board located within our school with support services on a wide range of issues so that students can seek their own solutions should they wish to. At HT we work with a number of external services and support programmes to talk to students about specific issues to prevent child-on-child abuse, for example: Services for Young People Mentoring and support.

10.0 References and useful links

- Whatis.com http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/cyberbullying

- This is abuse campaign https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410010/2015-03-08_This_is_Abuse_campaign_summary_report__2_.pdf

- Department for Education: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-andsexualharassment-between-students-in-schools-and-colleges

- Keeping Students Safe in Education 2021

  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007260/Keeping_students_safe_in_education_2021.pdf

11.0 Contacts

NHS Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust

https://www.hct.nhs.uk/about-us/safeguarding/safeguarding-students/

Report concerns a child or request support

https://www.hct.nhs.uk/about-us/safeguarding/safeguarding-students/

0300 123 4043 can be used any time if you think a child or young person is being abused.

Call 999 if the child is in immediate danger or risk of harm

CAMHS - Students and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Hertfordshire)

https://www.hpft.nhs.uk/services/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/

CAMHS out of hours telephone number: 01438 843322

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership

https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/studentss-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-students-partnership/hscp.aspx

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Students

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice and guidance for education settings working with students and young people. DfE

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudesadvice-for-education-settings-working-with-students-and-youngpeople/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-workingwith-students-and-young-people