



Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

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1 Aims

1.1 Southall 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. Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse) could include (but is not limited to);
 - bullying (including cyberbullying);
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include elements of online bullying)
 - 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 of a broader pattern of abuse;
 - upskirting, 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.²
 - abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse;

¹ Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

² Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

2.2 Sexual abuse; including sexual violence and harassment

A form of abuse involving sexual activity between children – sexual abuse, for the purposes of this policy, is divided into two categories: sexual violence and sexual harassment.

“Sexual violence” encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, i.e. non-consensual sexual touching, and causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent, e.g. forcing someone to touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.

“Sexual harassment” refers to any sexual behaviour that could violate another child’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment, including:

- Sexualised jokes, taunting or comments.
- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone.
- Online sexual harassment, including
 - Upskirting
 - Sexualised online bullying
 - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
 - Sexual threats or coercion.

The sharing of sexualised imagery (including images and videos), sexting / youth produced sexual imagery, can also constitute sexual harassment – this refers to the consensual and non-consensual sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including that which depicts:

- Another child posing nude or semi-nude
- Another child touching themselves in a sexual way
- Any sexual activity involving another child
- Someone hurting another child sexually

Staff will be aware that children creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of other children is a criminal offence, even where the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed with the permission of the child depicted, or by the child themselves.

All incidents pertaining to sexual harassment or sexual violence; including incidents of sharing sexualised imagery, will be handled in line with the following documents:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021)

As with all other elements of peer-on-peer abuse, Southall School adopt an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ in recognition that sexual harassment and violence can happen anywhere.

All staff are 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.

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 Southall School works to prevent peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how Southall School responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to peer-on-peer abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how Southall School continues 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:

Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SRE Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, E- 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 \(May 2018\)](#)', '[Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(January 2018\)](#)' and [Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges \(2021\)](#) 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 Southall 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 Southall 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 and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

6.2.1 The Headteacher/SLT 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 Lead 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.
- **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).**

6.4 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 the school 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”.
- Recognise that any pupil could be a victim of peer-on-peer abuse, and are made aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT pupils are at greater risk.
- 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 ‘sexting’. Where incidents involve sexting or 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.³

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 Child Protection training takes place for all staff, at least every two years. Induction training for new staff on safeguarding takes place as soon as the commence employment at Southall.

³ For further guidance, see [‘Sexting: How to respond to an incident’](#), UKCIS.

7.3 We recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all staff will be trained to understand that all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously

8 Procedures to minimise peer on peer abuse

8.1 The school have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for peer-on-peer abuse. We do this by

- Pupil voice through Parliament and E-Safety.
- Strong pastoral system through tutor teams and pastoral lead – pupils have key workers they recognize as people they can speak to.
- Insert list of school-specific measures here. Include 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 through:

- Total Communication – Inprint (symbols), Makaton

8.3 We address peer on peer abuse through our curriculum, in line with [Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education and Health Education](#). The curriculum covers the following issues:

- Consent, healthy relationships, e-safety

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.

9.2 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

9.3 Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

9.4 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 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.

9.5 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 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.

9.6 Supporting the victim

- 9.6.1 The school recognises that peer- on- peer abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.
- 9.6.2 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.
- 9.6.3 The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- 9.6.4 The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
- 9.6.5 School-specific procedures for supporting victims - Pastoral support, intervention team – ASD, wellbeing, nurture support, links with agencies such as the Police, CAMHs, social care
- 9.6.6 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.

9.7 Supporting the alleged perpetrator

- 9.7.1 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
- Modified timetable
 - Remote learning
- 9.7.2 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.

- 9.7.3 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.
- 9.7.4 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.
- 9.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- 9.9 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.
- 9.10 Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of peer-on-peer abuse, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all the children. Consider any suitable action in light of the behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in the same school as the victim, the school will be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned.

10 Local Arrangements and Making Referrals

- 10.1 The school adheres to local safeguarding arrangements, as outlined by Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding.
- 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 the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

11 Record-keeping

11.1 Staff will record on the CPOM's safeguarding system, Supply teachers will have a nominated DSL to report to and made aware of who that is on entry. Updated Risk assessments and support plans will be held in students' folders, this is on the school system, these are reviewed at least termly or when an incident arises.

Safeguarding is an agenda item at each Governors meeting. More serious incidents are relayed to the safeguarding Governors as needed.

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

12 Parents and Carers

- 12.1 Parents and Carers 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 parents or carers, competency will be assessed using the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines (where applicable).⁴
- 12.3 Children will always be encouraged to speak to parents or carers about peer-on-peer abuse.

⁴ 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>

UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes – advice for education settings

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008443/UKCIS_sharing_nudes_and_semi_nudes_advice_for_education_settings_Web_accessible_.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>

Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021), **Department for Education**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014224/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf