



FOREST SCHOOL

Peer on Peer abuse **Whole school including EYFS**

V1.0

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Owner (Name, Title):	JHK Director of Pupil Welfare, Head of the Preparatory School
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Contents

1. Introduction

2. Policy Aims

3. Whole School approach to promoting positive peer-to-peer relationships

3.1 Lead Members of staff

3.2 Fielding a disclosure

3.3 Multi-Agency Working

3.4 Counselling Provision (Place2Be)

3.5 Digital Partners

4. What is Peer-on-Peer Abuse

4.1 Contextual Safeguarding

4.2 Harmful Sexual Behaviours

4.3 Other harmful behaviours

4.4 How can a child who is being abused by their peers be identified?

4.5 Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

5. Responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse

5.1 Safety Plans and Risk Assessments

5.2 Information sharing, data protection and record keeping

5.3 Ongoing Response

6. Disciplinary Action

7. Pro-active work to promote best practice

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Forest School Safeguarding Team

Appendix 2: Summary of Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools (April/May 2021)

Appendix 3: Forest School Safety Plan

Appendix 4: Additional Resources

1.0 Introduction

The governors, senior leadership team, and all staff at **Forest School** are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the School.

In particular, we:

- believe that in order to protect children and young people, all schools should (a) be aware of the nature and level of risk to which their students are or may be exposed, and put in place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to their specific safeguarding context; and (b) take a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse,
- regard the introduction of this policy as a preventative measure. We (a) do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to peer-on-peer abuse in response to alleged incidents of it; and (b) believe that in order to tackle peer-on-peer abuse proactively, it is necessary to focus on all four of the following areas: (i) systems and structures; (ii) prevention; (iii) identification; and (iv) response/intervention,¹
- recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and peer-on-peer abuse in the school setting, and
- encourage parents to hold us to account on this issue, so that if their child feels unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the School so that it can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response.

2.0 Policy Aims

- is the School's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer abuse. It relates to, and should be read alongside, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and any other relevant policies including, but not limited to, The Behaviour Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy and The Mental Health Policy
- sets out our strategy for improving prevention and identifying and appropriately managing peer-on-peer abuse. This policy is largely based upon the Farrer & Co, Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit². There are also significant references to the statutory Keeping Children Safe in

¹ <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/publications/beyond-referrals-levers-for-addressing-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools>

² <https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit/>

Education (especially Part 5)³, the DfE guidance entitled Sexual violence and Sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges⁴ and various NSPCC resources.

- applies to all governors, the senior leadership team and staff. It is reviewed annually, and updated in the interim, as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which students are or may be exposed. A number of staff and students are to be involved in each annual review which involves, and is informed by, an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of this policy over the previous year,
- recognises that abuse is abuse, and should never be passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’, or ‘part of growing up’,

3.0 Whole School approach to promoting positive peer-to-peer relationship

The School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

educating all governors, its senior leadership team, staff, students, and parents about this issue.

This includes:

- training all governors, the senior leadership team, and staff on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify, and respond to it. This includes (i) Contextual Safeguarding, (ii) the identification and classification of specific behaviours, including digital behaviours, (iii) the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how ‘low level’ they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing, and (iv) social media and online safety, including how to encourage children to use social media in a positive, responsible and safe way, and how to enable them to identify and manage abusive behaviour online.
- educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via Wellbeing Education and the wider curriculum. Educating students about consent includes teaching them basic facts such as (i) a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity; (ii) the age of consent is 16; and (iii) sexual intercourse without consent is rape, and engaging parents on these issues by:
 - talking about them with parents, both in groups and one to one,
 - asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the School address those risks,

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

- encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue, in part as a result of visibility of this policy.
- working with governors, senior leadership team, and all staff, students and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community thereby creating conditions in which our students can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture. Every member of our School community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships, and helping to create a safe School environment in which violence and abuse are never acceptable, in which students are able to develop trusting relationships with staff, and in which staff understand, through regular discussion and training, the importance of these relationships in providing students with a sense of belonging.

3.1 Lead Members of staff

Whilst all staff at Forest School are responsible for the promoting positive relationships between children and young people, the following staff play key roles:

- Jeff Kayne, Director of Pupil Welfare and Lead DSL**
- Natassja Milton, Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School and Deputy DSL*)
- Harriet Dyke, Head of Middle School and Deputy DSL*
- Kate Spencer Ellis, Head of Sixth Form and Deputy DSL*
- Paul Faulkner, Head of Pre-Prep and Deputy DSL*
- Anna Manlangit, Deputy Head Pastoral (Prep) and Deputy DSL*
- Kim Wolstenhome, School Office Manager and Deputy DSL*
- Wayne Bishop, Director of Compliance and Deputy DSL*
- Sinead Dempsey, Matron and Deputy DSL*
- Amanda Gale, Place2Be School Project Manager*
- Louisa Parrales, School Chaplain
- Liz Adshead, Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pupil Development) and Deputy DSL

*Members of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team

**DSL = Designated Safeguarding Lead

‘Children have said that they need:

- vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- stability: to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

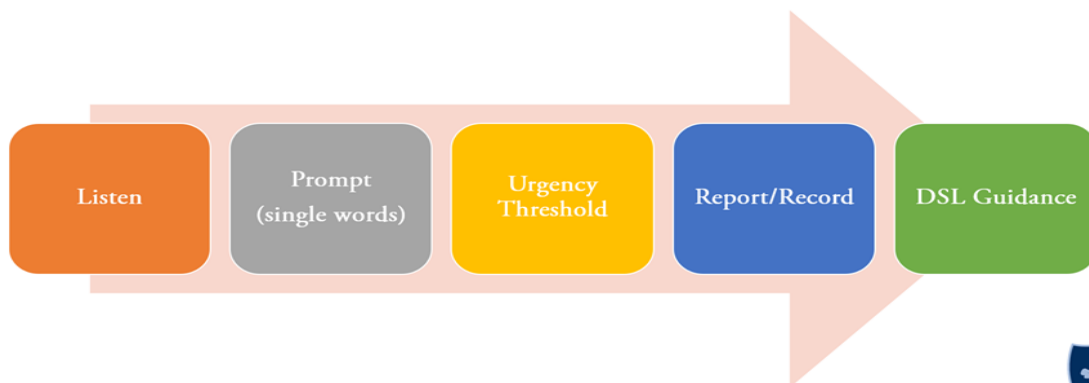
- support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- protection: to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination’ ⁵

3.2 Fielding a Disclosure

All staff at Forest School are encouraged to listen to pupils and ‘hear’ what they say. We encourage staff to use coach-like language and prompt questions to help empower pupils to articulate what it is they would like to say. We want pupils to be able to disclose concerns about themselves or others to any member of staff. Therefore, specific guidance has been issued in relation to fielding disclosures:

- ✓ Listen carefully, reassure them that they were right to tell you
- ✓ Be calm, supportive and non-judgemental
- ✓ Don’t try to investigate or ask leading questions
- ✓ Explain that you must tell someone else who can help. Be specific about who you will tell, i.e. DSL

Fielding a Disclosure – Guiding Principles



⁶

The Urgency Threshold: Any member of staff fielding a disclosure must decide if the child is at risk of immediate harm. If so, the member of staff must bring the child to the relevant DSL immediately. If this is not the case, the member of staff should report/record the conversation via the school safeguarding software (CPOMS) as soon as is practically possible.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

⁶ Forest School Staff Safeguarding and Child Protection Training

3.3 Multi Agency Working

The School actively engages with its Local Safeguarding Partnership in relation to peer-on-peer abuse, and works closely with, for example, children's social care and the police. We work very closely with Waltham Forest and subscribe to their Safeguarding in Education Service. We are in frequent contact with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer who provides expert advice on all aspects of Safeguarding and Child Protection. We also work regularly with children's services in 8-10 other local authorities. Our Safer Schools Police Officer, PC Byford contacts us every day to check-in and forwards any police reports recorded in respect of our students and their families. Of course, when necessary, we work closely with other schools.

The relationships the School has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the School is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of peer-on-peer abuse. They help the School to: (a) develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist; (b) ensure that its students are able to access the range of services and support they need quickly; (c) support and help inform the School's local community's response to peer-on-peer abuse;

(d) increase the School's awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in its local area to enable it to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by its students.

The School actively refers concerns and allegations of peer-on-peer abuse where necessary to children's social care and the police. This is particularly important because peer-on-peer abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the alleged incident cannot appropriately be managed internally by the School itself) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

3.4 Counselling Provision (Place2Be)

We are delighted to work in partnership with Place2Be ⁷ in order to provide counselling provision, on a 5-day per week basis, at Forest School. Amanda Gale, our Place2Be School Project Manager works closely with school staff to deliver the service which is available to children from Year 3 to year 13, inclusive.

⁷ <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

Whole-School Approach

Supporting parents and carers

- Parent partnership
- Signposting and multi-agency working
- Parenting skills



Focus areas

- Safeguarding
- SEN and disability
- Hidden harms (domestic violence, addiction & family mental health)



Integrated approach

- Care pathways with CAMHS and specialist agencies
- Clinical supervision
- Extensive training for staff and counsellors on placement
- Evaluation to assess impact and regular reporting on outcomes



Supporting children and young people

- Place2Talk sessions open to all pupils
- Referral and assessment
- One-to-one counselling
- Therapeutic group work
- Whole-class work



Supporting school staff

- Training for teachers and school staff
- Expert advice and consultation
- Working with school leadership
- Working with governors



8

The services Place2Be offer include advice and support for families and consultations and training for school staff. This builds resilience and raises awareness of the importance of good mental health across the whole school community. More specifically, the services Place2Be offer include:

- One-to-one counselling for pupils who are struggling
- Short appointments to talk about worries, booked by pupils
- Group work about friendship, self-esteem and other issues
- Training for school leaders and staff to make schools more mentally healthy
- Consultations for school staff about behaviour and wellbeing
- Advice and support for parents to help them look after their child
- Group programme using art and discussion to build pupils' self-esteem.⁹

Place2Talk is an opportunity for pupils to request an appointment to see our school Project Manager. Appointments normally last for 15-20 minutes and the sessions are normally 'solution-focused'. Pupils self-refer into Place2Talk by using the direct e-mail place2talk@forest.org.uk

1:1 Counselling is available on a weekly basis after a full assessment of the case has been made. In the first instance, the Heads of Section will make a referral with the pupil often working closely with the relevant Head of House and/or Tutor. Once a referral has been made,

⁸ Place2Be Presentation

⁹ <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/our-work/our-approach/>

the school project manager will commence the assessment to decide if the pupil's case meets the threshold for 1:1 counselling. In most cases, parents will be directly involved in the assessment as we believe it is in the best interests of the pupil. On rare occasions, there may be exceptional circumstances evident in relation to safeguarding, when parents will not be informed that a pupil is receiving counselling at Forest School.

Place2Think is designed to provide guidance and advice to Forest staff to help support pupils in their care who may be experiencing difficulties in relation to their mental health and wellbeing. Staff can book a Place2Think consultation via the e-mail address: place2think@forest.org.uk

3.5 Digital Partners

In order to ensure Forest pupils can self-advocate, access different types of support, seek peer-to-peer support and/or attain support in the evenings, weekend and during holidays, we have added a suite of digital partners to our -provision.

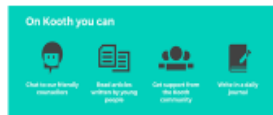
Mental Health and Wellbeing Signposting



FOREST
SCHOOL LONDON



Place2Be - Text P2B to 85258 for free, confidential support via text. Available 24/7. In partnership with Shout and Crisis Text Line.
www.place2be.org.uk/text



Kooth - Free online counselling through instant chat messaging. 12pm-10pm weekdays, 6pm-10pm at weekends.
www.kooth.com



MeeToo - Fully moderated app for young people, providing peer support, expert help and links to UK charities and helplines.
<https://www.meetoo.help/>



Papyrus Hopeline - Confidential support to young people with thoughts of suicide and anyone worried about a young person.
[call 0800 068 4141](tel:08000684141)

4.0 What is Peer-to-Peer Abuse

For these purposes, peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and nonintimate), friendships and wider peer associations.

Peer-on-peer abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and violence
- emotional harm
- on and offline bullying
- teenage relationship abuse ¹⁰

KCSIE 2021 states:

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse: such as hitting, kicking, 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 of a broader pattern of abuse
- upskirting: typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Youth produced sexual imagery (sometimes referred to as 'sexting')
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

¹¹

4.1 Contextual Safeguarding

¹⁰ <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/04/what-is-peer-on-peer-abuse/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This policy:

- (a) encapsulates our Contextual Safeguarding approach, which is about changing the way that professionals approach child protection when risks occur outside of the family, thereby requiring all those within a Local Safeguarding Partnership to consider how they work alongside, rather than just refer into, children's social care, to create safe spaces in which children may have encountered peer-on-peer abuse.
- (b) adopts a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach, which means:
 - being aware of and seeking to understand the impact that these wider social contexts may be having on the School's students,
 - creating a safe culture in the School by, for example, implementing policies and procedures that address peer-on-peer abuse and harmful attitudes; promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender/ sexuality; hotspot mapping to identify risky areas in the School; training on potential bias and stereotyped assumptions,
 - being alert to and monitoring changes in students' behaviour and/or attendance, and
 - contributing to local child protection agendas by, for example, challenging poor threshold decisions and referring concerns about contexts to relevant local agencies (see section entitled 'multi-agency working').

4.2 Harmful Sexual Behaviours

- Around a third of child sexual abuse is by other children or young people
- There is some cross-over between online and offline HSB and between child sexual exploitation and HSB.
- HSB is most commonly identified in adolescent boys, but girls and younger children can also exhibit HSB.
- A significant proportion of children who display HSB also have a learning disability. The majority of children who display HSB have themselves experienced trauma, including abuse or neglect.

- The majority of children and young people displaying HSB do not become sexual offenders as adults. Young people who display HSB often experience other emotional, behavioural and peer-related difficulties.¹²

Simon Hackett has proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a student's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it.¹³



Hackett's continuum relates exclusively to sexual behaviours and is not exhaustive.

The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can help professionals working with children to distinguish between three levels of sexual behaviour – green, amber and red, and to respond according to the level of concern.

¹² <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/statistics-briefings/harmful-sexual-behaviour-hsb>

¹³ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework>

Red Light sexual behaviours



Sexual behaviours which **indicate** or **cause harm** because they are:

- Excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening
- Secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery
- Not appropriate for the age and stage of development
- Between children with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power
- Abusive or aggressive

These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow up support



Orange Light sexual behaviours



Sexual behaviours which **cause concern** because of:

- Persistence, intensity, frequency or duration of behaviours
- The type of activity or knowledge for the age and stage of development
- Inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability
- Risk to the health and safety of the child or others
- Unusual changes in a child's behaviour

These behaviours signal the need to monitor and provide targeted support



Green Light sexual behaviours



Sexual behaviours which are typical and developmentally appropriate are:

- Spontaneous, curious, light hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual
- Appropriate to the child's age and development
- Activities or play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels about understanding and gathering information, balanced with curiosity about other parts of life

These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and provide support



Respond

There are different ways you might respond to a behaviour, regardless if it is a green, orange or red behaviour. For example:

GREEN

- Teachable moments
- Information for parents & carers
- Relationships & sexuality education
- Information & training for staff

ORANGE

- Observe, record & monitor
- Collaborate with stakeholders
- Positive behaviour management support
- Review support plan

RED

- Intensive support plan
- Report harm, suspected harm or risk of harm
- Family and carer involvement
- Monitor and review



0-4 years

- Comfortable being nude
- Body touching and holding own genitals
- Unselfconscious masturbation
- Interest in body parts and functions
- Wanting to touch familiar children's genitals during play, toilet or bath times
- Participation in games involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine"
- Asking about or wanting to touch the breasts, bottoms or genitals of familiar adults e.g. when in the bath or shower
- Supervised online communication with family or known peers

- Masturbation in preference to other activities
- Preoccupation with sexual behaviours
- Explicit sexual talk, art or play
- Persistently watching or following others into private spaces e.g. toilets, bathrooms to look at them or touch them
- Pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will
- Touching the genitals/private parts of other children in preference to other activities
- Attempting to touch or touching adults on the breasts, bottom, or genitals in ways that are persistent and/or invasive
- Touching the genitals/private parts of animals after redirection
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details

- Compulsive masturbation which may be self-injurious, of a persistent nature or duration
- Persistent explicit sexual themes in talk, art or play
- Disclosure of sexual abuse
- Simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity
- Persistently touching the genitals/private parts of others
- Forcing other children to engage in sexual activity
- Sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects, masturbation of others, oral sex
- Indication of a sexually transmitted infection
- Communicating online with known and unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details and / or sexual images or videos

5-7 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sense of privacy about bodies Body touching and holding own genitals Masturbation with increasing awareness of privacy Curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine" Curiosity about sexuality e.g., questions about babies, gender, relationships, sexual activity Telling stories or asking questions, using swear words, 'toilet' words or names for private parts Kissing or holding hands with known peers Mimicking or acting out observed behaviours such as pinching a bottom Supervised online communication with family or known peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent rubbing / touching own genitals after redirection Masturbation in preference to other activities in public; with others and/or causing self-injury Explicit talk, art or play of sexual nature Playing / attempting to play "show me yours and I'll show you mine" games with significantly older or younger children Persistent attempts to touch the genitals of other children Persistent interest in touching or viewing other people's private body parts / private activities Persistent questions about sexuality despite being answered Persistent nudity and/or exposing private parts in public places Touching genitals/private parts of animals after redirection Recurrent urinary tract infections Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubbing / touching own genitals to the exclusion of usual activities Masturbation that is compulsive, self-injurious, self-harming, or seeking an audience Rubbing own genitals on other people Disclosure of sexual abuse Simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity Forcing other children to play sexual games Sexual knowledge beyond expected for age or stage of development Indication of a sexually transmitted infection Excessive talk about sex and sexual activity Communicating online with known and unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details and / or sexual images or videos
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8-12 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing need for privacy • Masturbation, with increasing awareness of privacy • Curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine" games with peers • Showing curiosity about private parts but having a respect for the privacy of others • Hugging, kissing, flirting, touching with known peers • Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a peer of any gender • Curiosity and seeking information about sexuality • Use of sexual language • Exhibitionism amongst same age peers within the context of play e.g. occasional flashing or mooning • Communicating online with family and known peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masturbation in preference to other activities, in public and/or causing self-injury • Persistent explicit talk, art or play which is sexual or sexually intimidating • Intentional viewing of other people's private body parts / private activities • Marked changes to behaviour e.g. mimicking older or adult flirting behaviours, seeking relationships with older children or adults in preference to peers • Simulation of sexual activities e.g. oral sex, sexual intercourse with clothes on • Mutual /self-masturbation with known and unknown peers • Hugging, kissing, flirting, touching with unknown peers • Accessing age restricted materials e.g. movies, games, internet with sexually explicit content • Persistent expression of fear of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy • Recurrent urinary tract infections • Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, seeking an audience • Persistent bullying involving sexual aggression e.g. pulling/lifting/removing other children's clothing, sexually threatening notes, sending sexually explicit material, drawings, text messages • Degrading or humiliating self or others using sexual themes • Disclosure of sexual abuse • Accessing the rooms of sleeping children to touch or engage in sexual activity • Touching another person's genitals without permission • Sexual activity or penetration with animals, dolls/stuffed toys • Participating in or simulating intercourse and/or oral sex with known or unknown peers with clothes off • Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges • Indication of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy • Communicating online with unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details • Communicating online with known and unknown people to send or publish sexual images, videos or audio of self or another person
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13-15 years

- Need for privacy
- Masturbation in private
- Accessing information about sex and sexuality
- Viewing age and developmentally appropriate materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- Sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers
- Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a peer of any gender
- Mutually consenting safe/ protected sexual activity for pleasure, in private, with a known peer of similar age/developmental ability
- Communicating online with peers
- Arranging a meeting with a known peer, who they communicate with online, with the knowledge of a known adult

- Sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily functioning
- Sexual activity with a person of more than two years age difference, developmental ability and/or peer grouping
- Viewing age and developmentally inappropriate materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- Indication of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- Viewing of others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity
- Explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating
- Exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details
- Communicating online to send or publish sexual images, videos or audio of self or another person with or without their consent
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a peer or known adult

- Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, in public, seeking an audience
- Engaging vulnerable others in a process to gain sexual gratification by using grooming techniques, e.g. gifts, lies, flattery
- Force or coercion of others into sexual activity
- Disclosure of sexual abuse/ sexual assault
- Sexual activity or penetration with animals, dolls / stuffed toys
- Unsafe sexual activity, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/ or frequent change of partner
- Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges
- Sexual contact with others of significant age and/or developmental ability
- Creating, possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials e.g. photos of children naked or in sexual activities
- Harassing or coercing others to take or send sexual images videos or audio
- Deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images videos or audio of another person without their consent
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance unaccompanied by a peer or known adult

16-18 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for privacy • Masturbation in private • Accessing information about sexuality • Viewing materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies • Sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers • Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a person of any gender • Mutually consenting sexual activity for pleasure, in private, with a partner of similar developmental ability • Communicating online with peers • Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a known peer or adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily function • Viewing of others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity • Explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating • Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges • Exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing • Unsafe sexual behaviour, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/or frequent change of partner • Indication of sexually transmitted infection or unplanned pregnancy • Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance with the knowledge of a known peer or adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, in public, seeking an audience • Preoccupation with sexually aggressive and/or illegal pornography • Disclosure of sexual abuse/sexual assault • Sexual contact and activities with animals • Forcing or manipulating others into sexual activity • Engaging others in a process to gain sexual gratification by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, manipulation, lies • Creating, possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials • Harassing or coercing others to take or send sexual images videos or audio • Deliberately sending or publishing sexual images videos or audio of another person without their consent • Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance without the knowledge of a known peer or adult
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4.3 Other behaviour

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable,
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time,
- is socially acceptable within the peer group,
- is problematic and concerning,
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability,
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning,
- involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power, and
- involves a misuse of power

4.4 How can a child who is being abused by their peers be identified?

All staff should be alert to the well-being of students and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by peer-on-peer abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which children will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ.

Signs that a child may be suffering from peer-on-peer abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse (please see the Safeguarding Policy for indicators of abuse) and can include:

- failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school-related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected;
- physical injuries;
- experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing;
- becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much;
- broader changes in behaviour, including alcohol or substance misuse;
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age;

Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

Any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to the strength of peer influence during adolescence, and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. For example, an image of a child could be shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family. Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others and/or who are socially isolated from their peers may be more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse. Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers.

Research suggests that:

- peer-on-peer abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different. As a result, schools need to explore the gender dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse within their settings, and recognise that these will play out differently in single sex, mixed or gender- imbalanced environments,

- children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND, and additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND. These can include:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration,
- the potential for children with SEND to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs,
- communication barriers and difficulties, and – overcoming these barriers
- some children may be more likely to experience peer-on-peer abuse than others as a result of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

5.0 Responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse

It is essential that all concerns and allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly. The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on our School environment.

Any response should:

- include a thorough investigation of the concern(s) or allegation(s), and the wider context in which it/they may have occurred (as appropriate) – depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident(s), it may be appropriate for the police and/or children's social care to carry out this investigation,
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk – while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. The School should ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it, and additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter,

The following must be taken into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved and consider and address the effect of wider sociocultural contexts – such as the child's/ children's peer group (both within and outside the School); family; the School environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence. Consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the child/ children's needs and to mitigate risk, and
- the potential complexity of peer-on-peer abuse and of children's experiences, and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited they are not consenting
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL should discuss the

proposed action with the child/ children and their parents, and obtain consent to any referral before it is made. The School should manage the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so. It is particularly important to take into account the wishes of any child who has allegedly been abused, and to give that child as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and how they will be supported.

What should you do if you suspect either that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s)?

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay (in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy) so that a course of action can be agreed.

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

The DSL/DDSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the member of staff who has reported it/them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected.

Where any concern(s) or allegation(s) indicate(s) that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL should consider what urgent action can be taken in addition to the actions and referral duties set out in this policy, and in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with specific reference to YPSI

DSL/DDSLs should always use their professional judgement to: (a) assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour, and (b) determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required.

In borderline cases, the DSL/DDSL may wish to consult with children's social care and/or the Waltham Forest LADO or our Safer Schools Police Officer [and/or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures] on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

Where the DSL/DDSL considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL should contact children's social care and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of the alleged behaviour. The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:

A Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible.

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and

that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support. Any response should be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

B Undertake/contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of the child/children and their family.

The school may decide that the children involved may benefit from early help. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

C Refer the child/children to children's social care for a section 17/47 statutory assessment.

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, schools should make a referral to local children's social care. At this point, schools will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.

Schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school or college.

Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any children directly involved in the reported incident and all children (and adult students) at the school or college should be immediate.

In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

D Report alleged criminal behaviour to the police.

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the police. However, there are some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the police. For example, where the exchange of youth involved sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors [see the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information]. All concerns or allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis, and in light of the wider context.

5.1 Safety plans and Risk Assessments

The School will carry out a safety plan in respect of:

- any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child, or
- any child who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

Where other children have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration should also be given by the DSL to whether there might be any risks to those children, and whether a safety plan would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

5.2 Risk Assessments

The School may decide to carry out a risk assessment in respect of:

- any child who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent,

Where it is alleged that a child has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL/DDSL will use their professional judgment – based on the particular concern(s) and/or allegation(s) raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question – to determine whether (as explained above) it would be appropriate to contact children's services, and to carry out a risk assessment.

Careful judgment and consideration are required as to whether alleged behaviour which might be judged to be inappropriate by an adult might actually be harmful to another child. Consultation is recommended with children's services if there is any doubt about this. Careful consideration should also be given to a range of factors including the context, severity of the alleged behaviour, impact of the alleged behaviour on others, risk to others, and whether there are any patterns of behaviour occurring.

Information sharing, data protection and record keeping

When responding to concern(s) or allegation(s) of peer-on-peer abuse, the School will:

- always consider carefully, in consultation with children's services the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), how to share information about the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the student(s) affected, their parents, staff, and other students and individuals,
- record the information that is necessary for the School and other relevant agencies (where they are involved) to respond to the concern(s) or allegation(s) and safeguard everyone involved,

- keep a record of the legal purpose for sharing the information with any third party, including relevant authorities, and be mindful of and act in accordance with its safeguarding and data protection duties, including those set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (July 2018)¹⁴ and the *HM Government advice on Information Sharing* (updated in July 2018).¹⁵

5.3 Ongoing response (Victims)

The following principles should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- Schools should consider the most appropriate language to use when referring to the “victim”, as not everyone who has been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse.
- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response.
- It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine, and school should be a safe space for them.
- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis.

A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment - there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities.

If the trauma results in the victim being unable to remain in school, alternative provision or a move to another school should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

¹⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Ongoing response (Alleged Perpetrators)

The following principles should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting any alleged perpetrators.

- Schools should consider the most appropriate language to use when referring to the “perpetrator” or “allegedly perpetrator”. The guidance recognises that the school will have to balance safeguarding the victim (and the wider student body) with providing the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implementing any disciplinary sanctions. Research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer-on-peer abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers,

Consideration should be given to:

- the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations
- the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis

6.0 Disciplinary action

The School may wish to consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any child/children involved. However, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that the School works in partnership with the police and/or children’s services.

Where a matter is not of interest to the police and/ or children’s services, the School may still need to consider what is the most appropriate action to take to ensure positive behaviour management. Disciplinary action may sometimes be appropriate, including to:

- (a) ensure that the child/children take(s) responsibility for and realise(s) the seriousness of their behaviour.
- (b) demonstrate to the child/children and others that peer-on-peer abuse can never be tolerated; and
- (c) ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children.

However, these considerations must be balanced against any police investigations, the child’s/children’s own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns. Before deciding on appropriate action the School will always consider its duty to safeguard all children in its care from harm; the underlying reasons for a child’s behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the peer-on-peer abuse and the causes of it.

The School will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of temporary or permanent exclusion as a response. Permanent Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other children in the School.

Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer-on-peer abuse, and the School will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above and below.

In all cases, schools and colleges should record and be able to justify their decision making. All of the above should be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

7.0 Ongoing proactive work for a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach

The School's response to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse should be part of on-going proactive work by the School to embed best practice and in taking a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach (defined above) to such abuse. As such the School's response can become part of its wider prevention work.

This response may involve the School working with the local authority to undertake, for example, a Contextual Safeguarding school assessment which would fit into a systems approach to Contextual Safeguarding ¹⁶ The response could also include the School asking itself a series of questions about the context in which an incident of peer-on-peer abuse occurred in the School, the local community in which the School is based, and the wider physical and online environment – such as:

- What protective factors and influences exist within the School (such as positive peer influences, examples where peer-on-peer abuse has been challenged, etc.) and how can the School bolster these?
- How (if at all) did the School's physical environment or the students' routes to and from the School contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by improving the School's safety, security and supervision, or by working with local safeguarding partners to mitigate the risks to students' safety whilst travelling to and from the School?
- How (if at all) did the online environment contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by strengthening the way in which the School encourages positive and safe use of the internet by students?
- Does the abuse indicate a need for staff training on, for example, underlying attitudes, a particular issue or the handling of particular types of abuse, or to address any victim-blaming narratives from staff?

¹⁶ <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/publications/school-assessment-toolkit>

- How have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had?
- Does the case or any identified trends highlight areas for development in the way in which the School works with children to raise their awareness of and/or prevent peer-on-peer abuse, including by way of the School's Wellbeing Education curriculum and lessons that address underlying attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work, respect, boundaries, consent, children's rights and critical thinking and/or avoiding victim-blaming narratives?
- Are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the School engages with parents to address peer-on-peer abuse issues?
- Are there underlying issues that affect other schools in the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?
- Were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the School?

Answers to these questions can be developed into an action plan that is reviewed on a regular basis by the School's leadership and the DSL. The School will, where possible and appropriate, work with the local authority and wider partners to deliver on this plan, possibly as part of a wider Contextual Safeguarding school assessment led by or with input from the local authority.

Appendix 1 – Forest School Safeguarding Team



Designated Safeguarding Lead - Jeff Kayne

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Sixth Form) – Kate Spencer Ellis kse@forest.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Middle School) – Harriet Dyke hd@forest.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lower School) – Jon Sloan jts@forest.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Prep School) – Anna Manlangit aam@forest.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Pre-Prep) – Paul Faulkner pmf@forest.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DHP) – Natassja Milton nsm@forest.org.uk

Appendix 2 – Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools (April/May 2021)

The review included visits to 32 schools and colleges. Ofsted spoke to over 900 children and young people about the prevalence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. Ofsted also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, LSPs, and parents.

This rapid thematic review does not report on individual schools and colleges or cases, all of which remain anonymous. A number of visits to schools named on the Everyone's Invited website, as well as others not named. This should not be assumed to be a fully representative sample of all schools and colleges nationally. It presents a picture of strong and weaker practice across participating schools and colleges, from which conclusions have been drawn.

The sample included:

- 14 state-funded schools
 - 14 ISI-inspected independent schools
 - 2 Ofsted-inspected independent schools
 - 2 FE colleges
-
- Visits took place over two days led by HMI. ISI Inspectors shadowed some visits.
 - All inspectors involved attended two days' training which included how to talk with children and young people about sexual abuse and how to deal with disclosures.
 - Visits used a range of methods to collect information from school leaders, governors and other staff with a focus on safeguarding and the adequacy of school RSE (relationships and sex education)/RSHE/PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum and teaching.

Safeguarding and curriculum

- Is the existing safeguarding framework and guidance for inspectors strong enough to properly assess how schools and colleges safeguard and promote the welfare of children?
- How can schools and colleges be supported further to successfully deliver the new RSHE (relationships, sex and health education) curriculum, including in teaching about sexual abuse, cyber bullying and pornography as well as healthy relationships and consent

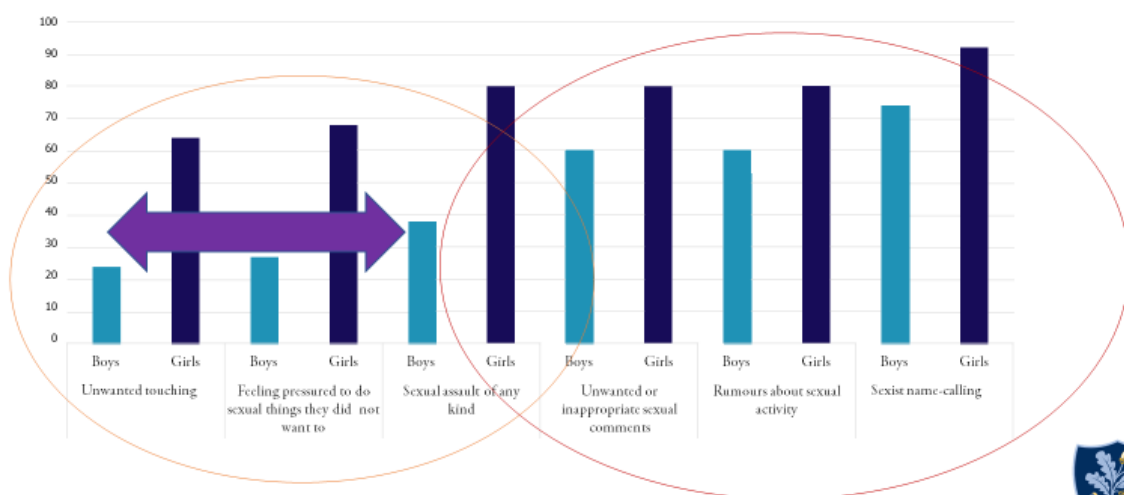
Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- How well are safeguarding guidance and processes understood and working between schools, colleges and local multi-agency partners?
- Does working between schools, colleges and local safeguarding partners (LSPs), including local authority children's social care, the police, health services and other support, need to be strengthened

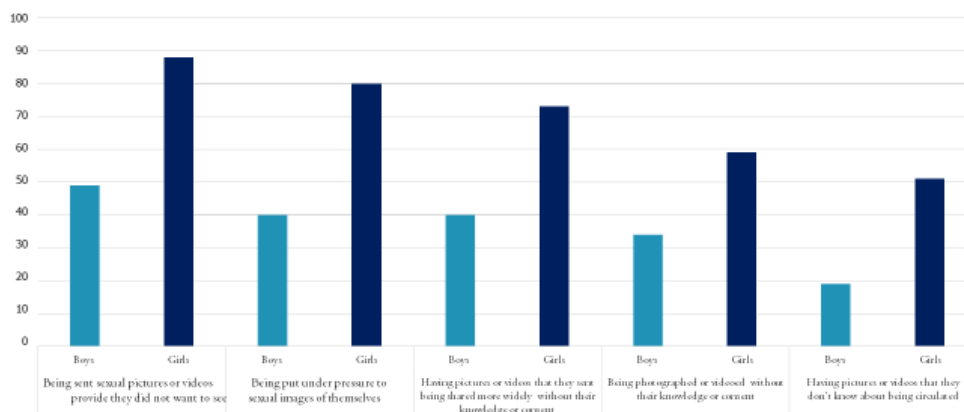
Victims' voice and reporting

- How does the current system of safeguarding in schools and colleges listen to the voices of children when reporting sexual abuse whether occurring within or outside school?
- What prevents children from reporting sexual abuse?
- Do victims receive timely and appropriate support from the right place?
- Have inspections by ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) and Ofsted been robust enough in relation to the issues raised?

Happens 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people my age (%)



Happens 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people my age (%)



Generally, older teens (aged 16 and above) were more likely to say that sexual harassment and violence, including online, between peers was prevalent than younger teens, for example, 79% of young people aged 16 to 17 and 86% of those aged 18 and above said that rumours about sexual activity occurred a lot or sometimes between peers compared with 61% of those aged 13 to 15. Similarly, 54% of those aged 16 and above said unwanted touching occurred a lot or sometimes, compared with 40% of 13- to 15-year-olds. While figures are high for both groups, this increase could suggest that sexual harassment and violence, including online, happen more as children and young people grow older, or that they become more aware of them.

In terms of sexualised language, children and young people told us that 'slag' and 'slut' were commonplace. Many felt that staff either were not aware of this language, dismissed it as 'banter' or simply were not prepared to tackle it. Many also commented that they would be wary of tackling their peers' use of this language, even when they did not feel comfortable with such terms. Sometimes, children and young people themselves saw the use of derogatory language as 'banter' or 'just a joke'. Girls talked about boys being very persistent when asking for images – 'they just won't take no for an answer' – some explained that if you block them on social media 'they just create multiple accounts to harass you'. In one school, the girls spoken to by inspectors reported that some girls can be contacted by up to 10 or 11 different boys a night to be asked for nude/semi-nude images. Some children and young people thought that it was 'ok' and 'acceptable' to ask someone for a nude picture but had been taught to think about who else might see the pictures apart from the original recipient, and not to share them further.

Some girls expressed frustration that there was not explicit teaching of what was acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They felt that the need to educate peers had been left to them. One girl said: 'It shouldn't be our responsibility to educate boys.' A minority of boys felt that gender stereotyping meant that they were being made to 'feel guilty all the time' and that they were being unfairly blamed for things they had not done. Nearly half of boys also said that being sent sexual images or videos they did not want to see was something that happened 'a lot' or 'sometimes' to them or their peers.

Responding to incidents

There were many examples where incidents of sexual violence were dealt with appropriately and school policies and statutory guidance such as 'Keeping children safe in education' were informing practice. However, the review highlighted some inconsistencies in responses where professionals had interpreted guidance differently. Some schools were dealing with incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online abuse, in an isolated way, without considering the context and wider safeguarding risks.

The review noted concern that many instances of sexual harassment, including the pressure to share nudes and the sharing of youth-produced sexual imagery without consent, were going unrecognised or unchallenged by school staff.

Staff training and development

The review found that most staff receive annual safeguarding training, which includes updates on 'Keeping children safe in education'. However, most staff training on harmful sexual behaviours tended to be piecemeal. This was often because it was incorporated into training on other important aspects of safeguarding. In a few schools, there was no training on peer-on-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence. These schools expected staff to read the government's guidance instead.

The review also found that governors would benefit from better training and greater involvement in tackling harmful sexual behaviours.

Delivering the new RSHE curriculum

While acknowledging the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the review identified a number of issues that meant that children and young people were not getting the quality of relationships and sex and health education (RSHE) they should. These included weak implementation of RSHE, poor teacher subject knowledge, and significant gaps in curriculum coverage. The review found that children and young people were seldom positive about their RSHE and PSHE lessons. Some felt it was 'too little, too late', and talked about filling in the gaps in their knowledge through social media or their peers.

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

The review held discussions with 12 local safeguarding partners (LSPs) to seek their views on how well multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to tackle sexual harassment and violence were working. The review found that some LSPs had been working closely with schools to track and analyse data from schools and understood children's experiences of sexual harassment and violence. However, a small number told us that they were not aware that sexual harassment and violence, including online, in schools and colleges were significant problems in their local area.

The review identified a gap in guidance for how schools and colleges should respond when there are lengthy investigations into incidents of sexual harassment or violence, or when investigations do not lead to a prosecution or conviction. Some school and college leaders also wanted clearer guidance on where their responsibilities start and end, for example with incidents of harmful sexual behaviour that happen outside school.

How does the current system of safeguarding listen to the voices of children and young people?

The review found that children and young people rarely speak to adults about sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online abuse. Most children and young people said they would feel most comfortable talking to friends.

- not knowing what would happen next
- concerns about 'reputational damage', for example being ostracised from a social group or damage to a sexual reputation
- concerns about the reaction from adults, including feeling judged or blamed
- concerns about confidentiality and not knowing what will be done with the information
- feelings that things were so commonplace there was 'no point' in reporting them
- feelings of embarrassment or shame in talking to someone of a different generation about sex.

Recommendations for Schools

- School and college leaders should develop a culture where all kinds of sexual harassment are recognised and addressed, including with sanctions when appropriate.
- The RSHE curriculum should be carefully sequenced with time allocated for topics that children and young people find difficult, such as consent and sharing explicit images.
- Schools and colleges should provide high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE.
- There should be improved engagement between multi-agency safeguarding partners and schools.



Recommendations for Schools

- A behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
- Support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), e.g. protected time
- Training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - Better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - Identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - Consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse



Appendix 3 – Forest School Safety Plan

Safety Plan for:

Completed with pupil by:

Date:

Scheduled Date for Review:

What are the reasons that you want to stay safe?

What might make it harder to stay safe?

Am I experiencing any mental health concerns or symptoms that make it harder to stay safe?

What are the warning signs?

These are the changes that you feel and the way you act that you can watch out for, to know that you might be at risk of a crisis.

What do you look like at your best?

These are all the things that make you, you. Sometimes when people are in a crisis, it can be hard to remember the positives. If you write down everything, big and small, that you care about and your best qualities, it can help to remind you when they're hard to remember.

What are your coping strategies?

These are the activities or ideas that you can use if and when you find difficult thoughts hard to ignore. How will you make your environment safer? What can I do to keep me safe?

What can you do to make yourself safe in School and at home?

Things that you can do or change, if you think that you're at risk of a crisis or feel vulnerable, to make your environment and surroundings less of a risk.

At School	At Home

Who are the people that will support you?

These are the people in your support network who will be there to listen and offer support

Parent contribution to safety plan

An opportunity for parents to add to the safety plan from their perspective

Access to External Support

We would like to signpost the following specialist services

- Your GP (<https://www.docready.org/#/advice>)
- A&E
- Place2Be: Text P2B to 85258 (24 hours, 7 days)
- Kooth - <https://www.kooth.com/>
- Papyrus Hopeline: [0800 068 4141](https://www.papyrus.org.uk) (9am – 10pm weekdays, 2pm – 10pm weekends, 2pm – 10pm bank holidays)
- Childline: 0800 1111



**BEYOND
REFERRALS**

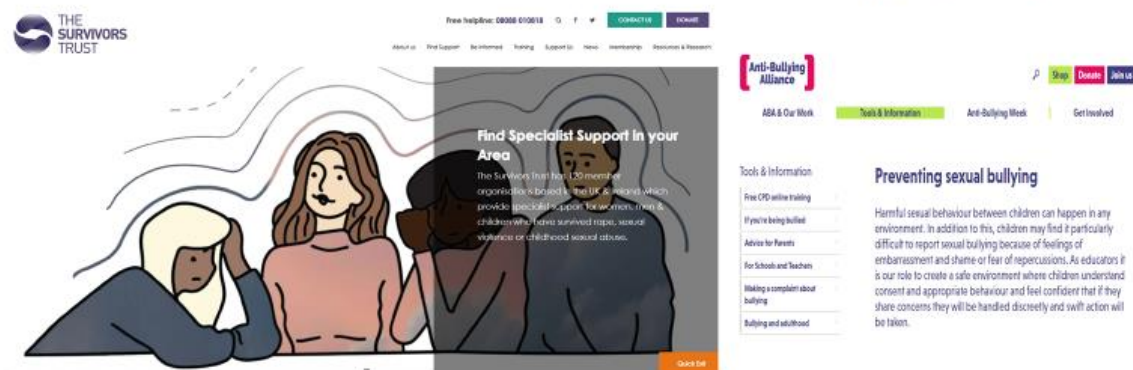
Harmful sexual behaviour in schools: a briefing on the findings, implications and resources for schools and multi-agency partners

Authors: Sarah, Joanne, Rachel and Vanessa Bradley
June 2020

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>
2. <https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit/>
3. <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/peer-on-peer-sexual-abuse>
4. <https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/beyond-referrals-levers-for-addressing-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools>

Signposting

- NSPCC Report Abuse in Education 0800136663 or help@nspcc.org.uk



5. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/sexual-abuse-victims-schools-helpline/>
6. <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/>
7. <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>