

# Market Harborough C of E Academy

# **Peer on Peer Abuse Policy**

This policy replaces	None
Date policy approved by Governing Body	January 2021
Date of next review	January 2024
Reviewer	Staff and PSE Governors

"The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29/31

### Introduction

At Market Harborough C of E Academy, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse.

## Key principles from our Behaviour Policy

The following key principles form the rationale for developing positive relationships and behaviour at Market Harborough C of E Academy.

- Developing a curriculum which puts our school motto that we are 'growing together in God's love' our Christian Values and Golden Threads at the heart of learning is crucial if children are going to develop a strong moral code. Behaviour does not occur in isolation and is driven by an individual's personal belief systems.
- Developing positive behaviour, through developing values which reflect a 'deeply Christian' lens and the desire for human flourishing for all. These values are embedded in school systems and the school ethos. Through these we promote in pupils a recognition and acceptance of responsibility for their own actions, decisions and for their consequences.
- Positive behaviour in school stems from our Christian Values which are based upon mutual respect for all individuals in school and the desire for all to have fullness of life.
- Everyone in school will take collective responsibility for developing positive behaviour within an agreed framework as outlined below.

Staff are warm, firm and resolute.

All children and staff are treated with unconditional positive regard; everyone in school will take collective responsibility for developing positive behaviour within an agreed framework. All children and staff have a right to a safe, calm and orderly learning environment.

Our Christian values and vision supports the promotion of positive behaviours and attitudes for all children; through these we promote in pupils a recognition and acceptance of responsibility for their own actions, decisions and for their consequences.

Children who feel successful and valued as learners and can see their own progress will become self-motivated and 'switched on' to learning; motivated children who understand the importance of developing learning behaviours and having a growth mindset.

Good behaviour should be taught explicitly within a context of high-quality education, curriculum, teaching and learning, from EYFS onwards and for all children.

We offer effective provision for SEND and disadvantage.

#### We will ensure that every member of our school community;

- Feels valued and respected.
- Feels safe and secure within the school environment and can become responsible and independent community members.
- Is treated in a caring and considerate way by others.
- Will learn about our values and learning muscles to enable them to flourish in their lives.
- Can achieve academic, personal and social success.
- Understands the clear strategies and expectations that form the Behaviour Policy in school.

## Our 'Golden Threads'

Our golden threads reflect the caring ethos of our school. We are all growing in God's love and we grow best in an environment where we feel special and valued for who we are, and which is itself valued and cared for.

Our Golden Threads build on our school's foundations of Christianity but are universally valuable. They are intended as a moral guide for everything we do.

#### Stewards of the Earth

"Treat the Earth as if your life depends on it." - Genesis 2:15

#### Hope for Humanity

*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."--John 8:12* 

#### A Community of Learners

"Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights." - Proverbs 18:15

Passionate speakers, passionate readers "Words change worlds." - @PamAllyn

# **Our Values**

Our values are the beating heart of our school, guiding us in our everyday lives.

SERVICE REPUICE	We will welcome everyone in our community. We will look out for each other. We will make time to serve others and never say 'it is not my job'. THINK TOGETHER
CENERO SVAL	We support each other. We appreciate each other and say thank you. We are grateful for all the many things we have. THINK SHARE
LORGIVENIESS COMPASSION	We will help others who are having a difficult time. We will try to let go of our hurts and forgive the mistakes of others. We will try and stand in other people's shoes and understand them. THINK LOVE
HOPE	We try to look on the bright side of life and spread a message of hope for the future. We know that being trustworthy shows you care. THINK POSITIVE
COURAGE BRASEVERANDE	We will keep going even when things are hard or don't go our way We will be brave and stick at things even when they seem scary THINK STRENGTH
PESPECA	We are honest with each other but never humiliate We will treat others as we would like to be treated THINK VALUE

The following five statements are based on our school values and will guide the behaviour of our school community.

With God's help we:

- Respect ourselves, value others and our environment and show compassion in all we do.
- Build strong relationships based on good manners, trust, generosity and forgiveness.
- Follow instructions and always try our hardest even when we find things difficult.
- Think carefully about the choices we make and try to be wise and courageous.
- Will count our blessings and be grateful for the good things in our world and trust that as each day closes, we have been better people than we were the day before

It is our aim to prevent bullying occurring in the first place by creating an 'ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect, because they know that this is the right way to behave.' (DFE Preventing & Tackling Bullying 2014)

## **Purpose and Aim**

This school recognises that children sometimes display harmful behaviour themselves and that such incidents or allegations must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention. Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

Keeping Children Safe in Education states that Governing bodies should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with. The document also states it is most important to ensure opportunities of seeking the voice of the child are heard. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, any system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

At Market Harborough CE Academy, we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being. In line with the school's Behaviour Policy, any incident of peer-on-peer abuse would be recorded in Arbor immediately, as a Red Stage 4 with an appropriate incident form completed and advice therefore sought from the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways, which would be classified as peer-on-peer abuse. The purpose of this policy is to explore the many forms of peer-on-peer abuse and include a planned and supportive response to the issues. This policy has been developed in conjunction with the policies listed below, all with the aim of providing guidance and procedures which support all members of the school community in creating an environment which reflects 'deeply Christian Values' and a desire for everyone to live life to the full and to grow spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, morally and socially.

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Personal, Social and Health and Citizenship Education
- Religious Education Policy
- Collective Worship
- Equality Policy
- E- safety
- Teaching and Learning
- "Guidance for schools working with children who display harmful sexual behaviour" (Leicestershire LA Guidance)
- DfE guidance "Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges"

## Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children's Act, 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document that focuses adult thinking towards the views of the child is 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child' and within that 'It is important to understand the resilience of the individual child when planning appropriate services. This is also supported and echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

# Introduction to abuse and harmful behaviour

Abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g., girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2021). It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

# Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

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

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

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

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards.

Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

It may also involve up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

## Bullying (physical, name-calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

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

- An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g., size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, attacking/damaging/taking someone else's belongings and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

#### Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

#### Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference. However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated, as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. School will always respond if informed that children have been involved in 'sexting' (youth produced sexual imagery). The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) guidance, "Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people" will be used to guide the school's response on a case-by-case basis.

The key points being:

- Inform the Headteacher/DSL as soon as possible
- Support the children involved as appropriate and in accordance with their best interests.
- Inform all parents of involved children unless by doing so you put a child at risk.
- Images will not be viewed by school staff.
- If school is to deal with the matter, involve parents in ensuring the images are deleted. If there is evidence of exploitation, blackmail or the deliberate targeting of a vulnerable student, inform the police.

#### Initiation/Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials, which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

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#### **Prejudiced Behaviour**

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

#### Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

## Expected action taken by all staff

Children will be encouraged to report all incidents of peer on peer abuse wherever it may have happened and will be taught about alternative ways of doing this both in school and elsewhere. Where an incident has occurred or specific risks are identified, the details will be added to a Safeguarding record [CPOMS] and/ or behaviour record for the children concerned [Arbor] and an investigation conducted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. A written risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL/DDSL in order to minimise the risk of further harm and to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils. Parents or carers of the children involved will be informed as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Support plans will be developed for the children involved and help offered, by different adults in school, where possible, to the alleged victim, the child or young person accused and any other children involved. A referral to any relevant outside agency will be made e.g. Police or Social Care. Detailed procedures are included in the linked school policies listed above.

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm. It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred, as soon after the child(ren) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example, do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. In all cases of peer-on-peer abuse, it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to young people and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

#### Actions:

## 1. Gather the facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?) Record keeping is essential during

these circumstances and should be recorded on Arbor and a Behaviour Monitoring Form completed and attached. In addition, a safeguarding note may be recorded on CPOMS.

### 2. Consider the intent (begin to risk assess)

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

#### 3. Decide on your next course of action

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). If this is the case, once social care has been contacted and made a decision on what will happen next then you will be informed on your next steps. If social care and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take. It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case you may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, you may then be left to inform parents. Please ensure all this information is recorded on CPOMS.

#### 4. Informing parents/carers

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care you have agreement to inform parents or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then you need to inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents. If a young person is deemed to be 'Gillick Competent' following the 'Fraser' guidelines and does not wish you to share the information with parents/carers, then the school must consider this. In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer or even with them (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way). Where school can evidence they are acting in the best interests of the young person they would not be criticised, however this would be the case if they actively breached the rights and choices of the young person. The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

In all cases, the details will be added to the school agreed behaviour recording system of Arbor and a Behavviour Monitoring Sheet is attached to the incident. The incident may also need to be recorded on the CPOMS Safeguarding System and this will be decided by the Safeguarding Team.

#### Points to consider:

#### 1. What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked if other issues arise (see following)

#### 2. Where did the incident or incidents take place?

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

### 3. What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

### 4. What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person? In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children's Services Social Care.

#### 5. Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

- Feedback of findings to those concerned and outcomes of actions to be taken.
- Sanctions where necessary

## Next steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established, it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

#### 1. For the young person who has been harmed

Support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

#### 2. For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

In this circumstance, it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases, support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through a CAF/strengthening families/early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g., making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying.

In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service).

If there is any form of ongoing criminal investigation, it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved, including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour. The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence, such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

#### After care

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

## Information on preventative strategies for schools and settings

For all schools and settings, it is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of peer-on-peer abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.

Firstly, and most importantly for schools and settings is recognition that peer on peer abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting young people to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

This can be supported by ensuring that each school/setting has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. This can be strengthened through a strong and positive PHSE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another. Embedding our values, school motto 'Growing Together in God's Love' and our

Golden Threads within all aspects of our curriculum are key to developing an environment where young people flourish.

To enable such an open and honest environment it is necessary to ensure the whole workforce feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of young people including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another. In order to create such an environment, it is necessary for whole staff training and CPD around abusive behaviours and talking to young people in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice. It is incredibly important that staff do not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. It is necessary that staff consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action. If staff minimise the concerns raised, it may result in a young person seeking no further help or advice.

It is important that signposting is available to young people in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer. It is useful to have a resource board with support services on a wide range of issues, so young people can seek their own solutions should they wish to. In the same way, external services or support programmes could be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of the prevention of peer on peer abuse. In our school we have a 'Worry Box', where children can post their concerns with the knowledge that these will be looked at and addressed.

#### Monitoring, evaluation and review

- The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.
- The school will review this policy and assess its implementation and effectiveness in line with the policy review cycle.

#### References

New Choices Inc http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/cyberbullying://newchoicesinc.org/educated/abuse/TDV/def

#### This is abuse campaign

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/410010/2015-03-08\_

This\_is\_Abuse\_campaign\_summary\_report\_\_2\_.pdf Stop bullying.gov http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is bullying/definition/index.html#types

Holding Together: equalities, difference and cohesion, a resource for school improvement planning, published for Derbyshire Education Authority by Trentham Books, summer 2009.

EACH resources for LGBT

CEOP

https://www.ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2009/What-does-sexting-mean

Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/ 912592/Keeping\_children\_safe\_in\_education\_Sep\_2020.pdf