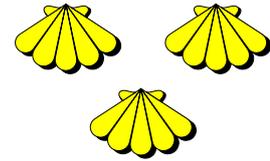


High Wych C E Primary School

Founded in 1861



High Wych Peer on Peer Abuse Policy January 2022

1. Introduction

At High Wych CE Primary School we recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Peer on peer abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer on peer abuse within our school and beyond. In cases where peer on peer abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation.

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence; such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online harassment, which may stand alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- 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
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to peer on peer abuse. The policy also includes a planned and supportive response to the issues for both victim and perpetrator/s. It should be read in conjunction with the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and any other relevant policies including, but not limited to:

Keeping Children Safe in Education
Behaviour Policy
E-Safety Policy
Anti-bullying Policy
PSHE/RSE Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Governors

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).
- Ensure that policies (including this policy), procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

Role of the Headteacher

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure the curriculum includes opportunities to minimise incidents of peer on peer abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for peer on peer abuse.
- Safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties

Role of the Staff

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the DSL in cases where they suspect cases of peer on peer abuse or become aware of cases of peer on peer abuse.
- Be aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
- Report any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the DSL immediately.
- Receive training on how to respond appropriately to incidents of 'semi-nudes' so members of staff do not view, download, print or share images. Refer to DSL immediately.

4. Procedures to minimise peer on peer abuse

The school have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for peer on peer abuse.

We do this by:

- Regular staff training to raise awareness

- Early identification of concerning behaviours - referral to Aspects if needed
- PSHE Teaching including RSE
- Assembly Themes
- Use of 'worry box' in classes
- All staff reinforcing the school's rights and responsibilities
- monitoring incidents for any trends or patterns to identify areas that need addressing

5. Children with Special Educational Needs and Vulnerable Pupils

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse than others eg children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care, and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act. These children can face additional safeguarding challenges.

These can include:

- Being prone to peer on peer group isolation
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further explanation
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, we will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND and vulnerable pupils particularly when investigating any form of peer on peer abuse.

6. Responding to concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse

If a member of staff has a concern about peer on peer abuse, or if a child discloses peer on peer abuse to them, they will refer this to the DSL immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the DSL will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of peer on peer abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The DSL will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

The DSL will always consider the following;

- The wishes of the victim by giving as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
 - The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
 - Both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
 - Any power imbalance, including consideration of the age and whether children have SEND;
 - The impact on the victim;
 - If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
 - If are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children or school staff.

Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the DSL may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.

- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services or the police.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).

7. Supporting the victim

The school recognises that peer on peer abuse has a significant impact on young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support. Appropriate support will be put in place for victims whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.

The school will :

- do everything to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- do everything to protect the victim from further bullying & harassment after the disclosure.
- refer to Aspects who will undertake 1-1 work with children and families if necessary.
- share the necessary information if a victim of moves to a new setting so support continues.

8. Supporting the alleged perpetrator

The school has a responsibility to ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider a range of options in continuing educational provision.

Options may include:

- working with adult supervision in class or out of class
- using a risk assessment to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator following the alleged abuse.
- taking advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- Imposing a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident. We will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.

We recognise that children who perpetrate peer on peer abuse may also be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the DSL will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other children at the new setting.

9. Record - Keeping

The school staff use the 'Record of Concern' and 'Behaviour' forms to report incidents and also speak directly to the DSL. The Lead and Deputy DSL monitor all reports to decide and record the category of concern and the best course of action for the victim and perpetrator. All cases are discussed, actioned and monitored weekly by the Lead and Deputy DSL. The Termly Headteacher Report to Governors records any Peer on Peer Abuse. Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

10. Parents and Carers

Parent/s and carer/s will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child at greater risk of harm. Children will always be encouraged to speak to parent/s or carer/s the abuse.

Date: January 2022

Date of next Review: 2023