

Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Oakfield Lodge School



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Designated Safeguarding Lead	Gemma Bailey (SLT) Kate Carter (KS3 and KS4)
Chair of Governors	Su Turner
Safeguarding Governor	John Edmonstone
Person Responsible for Policy	Gemma Bailey
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1 Aims

1.1 **Oakfield Lodge School** is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. As well as being abused by adults, children can be abused by other young people. This is known as 'peer on peer abuse' or 'child on child abuse'. The school is committed to preventing peer on peer abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that peer on peer abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

1.2 Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy ensures that Oakfield Lodge School is committed to all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

2 Definitions

2.1 The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- **'Staff' or 'members of staff'** refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
- **Child/children** refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.¹
- **Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse)** refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Peer on peer abuse (or child on child abuse) could include (but is not limited to);
 - bullying (including cyberbullying);
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
 - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
 - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
 - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
 - sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.²
 - abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse;

3 Purpose

3.1 This policy has been written to

- ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to peer on peer abuse

¹ Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)

² Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)

- provide stakeholders with information about how **Oakfield Lodge School** works to prevent peer on peer abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how **Oakfield Lodge School** responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to peer on peer abuse
- provide stakeholders with information about how **Oakfield Lodge School** continues to support victims of peer on peer abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

4 Legislation and relevant documentation

4.1 This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

4.2 All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns.

4.3 This policy is part of a collection of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see: -

- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **SRE Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**

4.4 This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

4.5 Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) in this policy, it should be understood that **Oakfield Lodge School** will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Role of the Governors will

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

5.2 Role of the Headteacher

5.2.1 The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimize incidents of peer on peer abuse.

- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimizes the opportunity for peer on peer abuse.
- **Safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers’ Standards July 2021).**

6 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

6.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to peer on peer abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about peer on peer abuse.
- Make referrals to Children’s Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.
- **Safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (in line with The Teachers’ Standards 2021).**

7 Role of all staff

7.1 All staff will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Make referrals to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in cases where they suspect cases of peer on peer abuse or become aware of cases of peer on peer abuse.
- Be made aware that children can abuse other children and the forms that this abuse could take.
- Be clear as to the school policy and procedures on peer on peer abuse.
- Be clear at all times that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.
- Be able to recognise indicators such as emotional or behavioural changes.
- Create a culture where it is clear what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is for staff, children and young people
- By showing students that they respect them, listen to them and respond subtly
- Report any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Receive training in how to respond appropriately to incidents of ‘sexting’. Where incidents involve sexting or indecent images of children, members of staff will not view, download, print or share images. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware of the incident immediately.
- Have a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to sexual violence/sexual harassment, peer-on-peer abuse
- Challenge all physical behavior (which potentially is criminal in nature) such as grabbing, unwanted touching, flicking etc.

8 Training

- 8.1 The school will ensure that all staff have been trained to recognise and respond to peer on peer abuse.
- 8.2 This training will be refreshed annually
- 8.3 We recognise the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse. However, all staff will be trained to understand that all **peer on peer abuse is unacceptable** and will be taken seriously

9 Procedures to minimise peer on peer abuse

- 9.1 The school have a responsibility to minimise opportunities for peer on peer abuse. We do this by early identification of concerning behaviours and actioning in a timely manner.
- 9.2 Use the CPOMS recording system to log all incidents to support the Designated Safeguarding Lead's role for child protection and safeguarding responsibilities, and to assist in 'building a picture' in order that indicators of concerns are referred on/further investigated as required.
- 9.3 We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse than others. For example, children who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children living in care and children who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 may be more likely to face peer on peer abuse than other children.
- 9.4 We address peer on peer abuse through our whole curriculum, through our Learning Mentor programme, and in line with Oakfield Lodge School's RSE and PHSCE curriculum. In addition, our weekly thematic whole school assemblies are used as a platform to raise awareness for staff and students.

10 Responding to concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse

- 10.1 The school takes peer on peer abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of peer on peer abuse immediately.
- 10.2 If a member of staff has a concern about peer on peer abuse, or if a child discloses peer on peer abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- 10.3 Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of peer on peer abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.
- 10.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following;
 - the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
 - the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
 - both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
 - any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
 - the impact on the victim;
 - if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
 - if there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff.

10.5 Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard the victim, alleged perpetrator, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Take advice from SCiES, who may recommend a referral to Children's Services(ChECS)
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.

10.6 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 of peer on peer abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- The school will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- The school will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
- If a victim of peer on peer abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

10.7 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:-

- Temporary change in class
- Educated within a smaller group – i.e. 1:1 with a Learning Mentor
- We recognise that children who perpetrate peer on peer abuse may be being abused themselves. The school will continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support.
- A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.
- If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- The school may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of peer on peer abuse. In this case, we will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.
- Where a child is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of peer on peer abuse, the school will liaise with appropriate agencies -**refer to KCSIE Part 5 for guidance**

11 Record-keeping

- 11.1 Oakfield Lodge School's procedures for recording incidents of peer on peer abuse will be logged on CPOMS. Include frequency and type that are reported to the Chair of governors as part of supervision meetings. Include how risk assessments will be generated and where they will be held. Include frequency of review of risk assessments.
- 11.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead, and key workers on the Safeguarding Team will ensure that the Vulnerability Risk Register (VRR) and the CiN/CP logs reflect information recorded on CPOMS.
- 11.3 Members of staff will follow the procedures for recording a disclosure outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

12 Parent/s and Carer/s

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

Appendix A: Further Resources

The school use a range of resources (in addition to those referenced in the main body of the policy) to support in minimising peer on peer abuse, training staff and responding to concerns or disclosures. This appendix details this additional documentation.

Harmful sexual behaviour between children and young people, NICE

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng55>

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1657/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice (2017), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015), HM Government

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Sexting: How to respond to an incident. An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges, UKCCIS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/647389/Overview_of_Sexting_Guidance.pdf

Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people UKCISS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

School Exclusion Statutory Guidance (including changes to the exclusion process during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Behaviour and discipline in schools (2020), Department for Education

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour and Discipline in Schools -
A guide for headteachers and School Staff.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf)

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality, and the possible implications for pupils and protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (see also Equality and Accessibility plans).