

Appendix 6 Allegations against pupils (peer on peer abuse – called child on child abuse in KCSIE 2023 but called peer on peer abuse here since some of our sixth form pupils are 18)

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean that it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important that if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as teenage relationship abuse);
- bullying (including cyber bullying, 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 (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- 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;
- 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);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing (without their permission, 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 (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Peer on peer abuse has a gendered nature in that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators but all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

The School actively seeks to minimise peer-on-peer abuse by encouraging a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community and by responding to allegations of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately. Staff model the way to treat others and reinforce positive behaviour in the everyday life of the School. They are given training on peer on peer abuse and should be alert to the possibility of peer on peer abuse and report such abuse. Pupils are taught and encouraged to ask for help and share any concerns that they have about themselves or others.

Allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and victims, perpetrators and any other child affected will be given appropriate pastoral support. Consideration will be given as to whether a child is in need of early help and where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is in need or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy, which is available on the School's website, explains how allegations of bullying will be investigated and pupils supported.

If a pupil makes a disclosure that they have shared or received nudes or semi-nude images or videos to member of staff or volunteer, the employee or volunteer should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. Staff and volunteers must not ask to view images, search mobile devices, print out any material or move any material from one storage device to another. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will investigate the disclosure and support pupils by following Sharing nudes and semi-nudes Advice for education settings working with children and young people Responding to incidents and safeguarding children and young people (UK Council for Internet Safety December 2020) and the Department for Education's advice on Searching, Screening and Confiscation July 2022.

If a child or their parent makes a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment to an employee or volunteer, the member of staff or volunteer should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy as soon as practically possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will investigate the report and support pupils following the guidance in Part 5 of KCSIE 2023 and the Department for Education's advice on Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges September 2021. Information on what constitutes sexual violence and sexual harassment and guidance on how staff and volunteers should manage a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment can be found in Appendix 1 Advice to staff. It is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately.

The NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education, has been set up by the NSPCC and Department for Education. The helpline can be contacted on 0800 136663 or help@nspcc.org.uk and offers support to children and young people making current and non-recent disclosures of sexual harassment or abuse on school grounds within school time and incidents linked to school in any capacity, children or young people who want to talk about being involved or witnessing any incident and parents and carers who have any concerns about their own or other children.

If a child or their parent informs a member of staff or volunteer about any other form of abuse by another pupil in the school, the member of staff or volunteer should pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or relevant Head of the Junior or Senior School as appropriate (depending on the form of abuse) so that the allegation can be investigated and pupils supported.

If a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about abuse of a pupil by another pupil in the school, they should also tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head as appropriate.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy, which is available on the School's website, will apply.

Peer on peer abuse allegations will be recorded. Details of bullying allegations and investigations will be kept in the bullying folder in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's office. Investigations into allegations of other forms of peer on peer abuse will be recorded on CPOMS.