



Identifying and responding to peer-on- peer abuse

Accepted by Trustees in: October 2021

Due for next review in: October 2022

What is peer-on-peer abuse?

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

- 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)
- abuse in intimate relationships between peers
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, which 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.

This is explained in paragraph 49 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE).

Staff training to recognise peer-on-peer abuse

All staff at Woodside school are expected to be vigilant and to identify peer-on-peer abuse early to prevent it from escalating. Staff at Woodside are regularly updated and receive appropriate safeguarding training that enables them to understand:

- their role in preventing peer-on-peer abuse
- how to identify the indicators of abuse
- what to do if they have a concern about a child
- how to respond to a report of abuse
- how to offer support to the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)
- where to go if they need support
- that children can abuse other children inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that online abuse can take the form of:
 - abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
 - non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who don't want to receive such content
- that they need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- that even if there are no reports in your school, it doesn't mean it's not happening
- the importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviour (see more on this below)
- that girls are more likely to be victims and boys are more likely to be perpetrators.

Challenging inappropriate behaviours

At Woodside School, our first point of reference is our school Behaviour Policy. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should also be read alongside this. Staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours by, for example:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'
- dismissing inappropriate behaviour risks leading to:
 - a culture of unacceptable behaviours
 - an unsafe environment for children
 - a culture that normalises abuse, leading to pupils accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour will follow those outlined in our Behaviour Policy. In addition to this, we may seek specialist advice depending on the incident. For example, inappropriate sexualised behaviour may result in working with Children's Services, a therapist, etc. Issues can also be localised to our specific community. We will work with other agencies such as the police in these circumstances.

We will always work closely with families to address any concerns or incidents.

Creating a preventative curriculum

Our school curriculum is designed with the safeguarding and wellbeing of children at the heart of all we do. Our PSHE and Relationships and Sexual Education programmes of study particularly address issues (at an appropriate, age-related level) such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- what respectful behaviour looks like
- consent
- gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- prejudiced behaviour
- sexual harassment.

Please see our RSE Policy for more information.

<https://woodsideschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Relationships-and-Sex-Education-Policy-2021.pdf>

Further resources

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command has developed resources to help you support young people with developing confident, healthy approaches to relationships and the internet. These include videos, toolkits and activities that can be used in lessons and assemblies, or shared with parents.

Childnet International has an online safety PSHE toolkit with films and lesson plans exploring issues such as:

- cyber-bullying
- sexting
- peer pressure
- self-esteem.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has a range of safeguarding teaching resources including lesson plans on personal safety, healthy relationships and online bullying. Its 'Speak out Stay safe' programme also includes interactive assemblies and workshops on safeguarding for pupils in KS1 and KS2.

Seeking specialist support

Sometimes school staff will external input, particularly when approaching sexual violence and sexual harassment as part of preventing peer-on-peer abuse. Organisations we may work with include:

- [NSPCC](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Brook](#)
- [The Anti-Bullying Alliance](#).