



Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School

Peer on Peer Abuse Policy and Procedures

2020 - 2021

Commitment to review

This policy will be flexible to change and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect where there are any changes in government legislation or any changes in the duty of statutory agencies in child protection and/or the wider safeguarding agenda. If it is not appropriate to refine the policy during the year, then this will be done as a matter of course on yearly basis by a named person responsible below, who shall be accountable for that action.

Policy- Document Status			
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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 is Working Together, 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, 'must be informed by the views of the child'. (Working Together, 2018:21) This is echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools and settings to hear the voice of the child.

Policy Purpose and Aims

The purpose and aims of this policy is to explore some forms of peer on peer abuse. The policy also Peer on Peer Abuse - Policy and Procedural Guidance Revised July 2020, includes a planned and supportive response to the issues.

At Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Managing Allegations / Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Peer on Peer Abuse

At Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School all staff are trained to understand that children can abuse other children we refer to this as peer on peer abuse. Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be 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.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs. These can include:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, must make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2020 states that

‘Governing bodies and proprietors 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’.

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard

‘Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.’

There is a clear section on Peer on Peer Abuse and Managing Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy written in collaboration with Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership.

The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer necessitate separate policy guidance. At Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School 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 the impact on that individual child’s emotional and mental health and well-being.

Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

It is necessary to consider

- What abuse is and what it looks like
- How it can be managed
- What appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual
- 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’. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.
- **Children can abuse other children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSiE 2020)**
- Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.
- Staff should be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

Raising Awareness and Preventative Measures

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer on peer abuse by:

- Educating all governors, its senior leadership team, staff, students, and parents about this issue
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer on peer abuse, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via the curriculum
- Engaging parents on these issues
- Supporting the on-going welfare of the student body by drawing on multiple resources that prioritise student mental health, and by providing in-school counselling and therapy to address underlying mental health needs
- Working with governors, senior leadership team, and all staff, students and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community

- Creating conditions in which our students can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture
- Responding to cases of peer on peer abuse promptly and appropriately
- Ensuring that all peer on peer abuse issues are fed back to the DSL and deputies so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify students who may be in need of additional support.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School actively engages with TWSP in relation to peer on peer abuse, and works closely with, for example, children's social care, the police and other schools. The relationships the school has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the school is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of peer on peer abuse. The DSL (or deputy) will regularly review behaviour incident logs which can help to identify any changes in behaviour and/or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage.

Recognising Signs

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School recognises that any child can be vulnerable to peer on peer abuse due to the strength of peer influence, especially during adolescence, and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. We know that research suggests:

- Peer on peer abuse may affect boys differently from girls (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators). However, all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously
- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND
- Some children may be more likely to experience peer on peer abuse than others as a result of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children

All parts of the Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School community believe that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School understands that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. 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 to the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may include:

- Inappropriate sexual language
- Inappropriate role play
- Sexual touching
- Sexual assault/abuse.

We recognise that children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. We will ensure that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. We know that evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School will ensure that staff are aware of the importance of:

- 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”, and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual Violence

Our staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. We refer to sexual violence as sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School believe that **consent** is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual

harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
 - upskirting.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School recognises 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim. This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead DSL

Sexting/Sharing nude or indecent imagery

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.

Bullying

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 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, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Online Bullying

Online Bullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, email, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

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 ceremony 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.

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 – for example 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.

Recognising Peer on Peer Abuse

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- If there were any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

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. 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. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner.

Response to peer on peer abuse, including reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment

We undertake pre-planning, training for staff and have implemented this peer on peer abuse policy to help us develop the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

Expected Staff Action

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately before taking any further in-school actions.

Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School will always reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will we make a victim feel ashamed for making a report.

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL (or deputy) without delay.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School has four members of staff who are trained Designated Safeguarding leads:

Miss T. Cartwright – Headteacher

Mr G. Spragg – Deputy Headteacher

Mrs A. Williams – Assistant Headteacher/ SENCo

Mrs C. Ashley – Pastoral Lead

In incidents where it is believed that peer on peer abuse may have occurred, the DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the member of staff who has reported it/them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected.

All staff, especially the DSL (or deputy) will give immediate consideration as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted). If any of the children involved has SEND the DSL will liaise with the SENCO to assist in the management of the report.

Where any concern(s) or allegation(s) indicate(s) that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL will consider what urgent action can be taken, this may include seeking specialist help, such as advice from [The Internet Watch Foundation](#) and the police in preventing the images spreading further and removing the images from the internet.

The DSL (or deputy) will use their professional judgement to: (a) assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour, and (b) determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required.

In borderline cases the DSL (or deputy) may consult with Family Connect, and/or other relevant agencies on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

Where the DSL (or deputy) considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL (or deputy) will contact Family Connect or the local social care team for the child and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL (or deputy) becoming aware of the alleged behaviour. The DSL (or deputy) will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:

1. Manage internally;
2. Early help;
3. Referral to children's social care; and
4. Reporting to the police.

The School will always carry out a written safety plan/risk assessment in respect of:

- Any child who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent

- Any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child
- Any child who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

It may be appropriate to contact children's social care and/or police to assist in carrying out a safety plan. The DSL may use and consider the [TWSP Sexually harmful behaviour - risk assessment tool](#).

Where other children have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration will also be given by the DSL (or deputy) to whether there might be any risks to those children, and whether a safety plan would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

When responding to concern(s) or allegation(s) of peer on peer abuse, the school will:

- Always consider carefully, in consultation with children's social care, the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), how to share information about the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the student(s) affected, their parents, staff, and other students and individuals
- Record the information that is necessary for the school and other relevant agencies (where they are involved) to respond to the concern(s) or allegation(s) and safeguard everyone involved
- Keep a record of the legal purpose for sharing the information with any third party, including relevant authorities, and ensure that the third party has agreed to handle the information securely and to only use it for the agreed legal purpose
- Be mindful of and act in accordance with its safeguarding and data protection duties.

Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School will use the following guidance to assist in the managing of reports [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges: advice for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads](#).

Where necessary for effective safeguarding we will utilise/seek resources and seek support from established sources. We will consider and in some cases access the [Peer on peer abuse toolkit](#) to assist in our decision making and will also consider the [Brook traffic light tool](#).

In relation to sexting, also known as youth produced sexual imagery, this school will where necessary consult with guidance produced by [The UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\) Education Group Sexting in Schools and Colleges](#) and DfE guidance [Searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DSL (or deputy) will take the lead on these issues.

We will also make pupils and parents aware of the dedicated **NSPCC helpline number 0800 136 663** that goes live from Thursday 1st April 2021. This helpline is to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Run by the NSPCC it aims to provide advice and support to both children and adults who are victims of abuse in school. It will also

include how to contact the police to report crimes. The advice line is also available to support professionals and parents.

Risk Assessment for Peer on Peer Sexual Abuse/ Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The terms victim and alleged perpetrator are used to identify the children involved. NB: there should be no assumption of guilt on the part of the alleged perpetrator, pending investigation.

Each section/question will be considered from the perspective of both pupils. Considerations will be given for the impact on, and needs of, the wider school community. All concerns and proposed actions will be recorded.

The school will work with the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and other agencies as necessary when completing this risk assessment. This document should be reviewed frequently to ensure it is fit for purpose.

***A risk assessment should be completed for all cases relating to sexual violence or alleged sexual violence. Sexual violence is defined by the sexual offences act 2002 as "criminal acts: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault".**

***This risk assessment should be completed with reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education, DFE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools and colleges and the local West Midlands policy (2.26)**

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/pkoso/regional-safeguarding-guidance/children-who-abuse-others>

	Risk Assessment of Peer on Peer Abuse	School: Wrockwardine Wood CE (Aided) Primary School	Portfolio:	Carried out by:		
Date:	Review date:	Specialist assessment needed**:				
Considerations	Risk (Consider victim, alleged perpetrator, other pupils, and staff)	Risk rating L, M or H	Actions to reduce risk	By whom?	By when?	Revised risk level L, M or H
What was the nature of the incident?						
Was it a crime?						
Is it necessary to limit contact between the children involved? <i>Refer to KCSiE and DFE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.</i>						
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?						
Is there an actual or perceived threat from the alleged perpetrator to the victim and/or others?						

Is either the victim or the alleged perpetrator at risk of physical harm as a result of this incident (for example, bullying or 'retribution' by peers)?						
Do they share classes?						
Do they share break times?						
Do they share transport to/from school?						
Are they likely to come into contact with each other (or anyone else involved in/with knowledge of the incident) outside of school?						
How can such contact be limited?						
Is there a risk of harm from social media and gossip?						

Further action taken by the school:

Action	YES/NO	Date
Police informed		
Referral to MASH		
Referral to external support services		
Referral to internal support services		
Referral to Wellbeing Panel/Bee U service		
Referral to Strengthening Families		
Other		