TRURO HIGH SCHOOL
Girls First

POLICY 2

PEER ON PEER ABUSE (CHILD ON CHILD) ABUSE (CHILD ON CHILD) POLICY

(Including Bullying)

Policy reviewed by	Deputy Head
Governors' Committee	Full Board
Date reviewed	September 2020
Approval/Oversight	Approval
Approved by Governors	September 28th 2020
Next review date	Michaelmas 2021

Important contact numbers

Deb Freeman (DSL)   206 / (01872) 242906

MARU   0300 123 1116 (out of hours 01208 251300)

Safeguarding Adults   0300 1234 131 (out of hours 01208 251300)

LADO   01872 326536

<u>INDEX</u>

APPENDICES

TRURO HIGH SCHOOL

PEER ON PEER ABUSE (CHILD ON CHILD – PREP SCHOOL) ABUSE

1. Introduction

Truro High School is committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse both within and beyond the School.

1.1 This policy is applicable to all pupils in the School, including those in the EYFS.

1.2 This is the School's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, including all forms of bullying.

1.3 The policy should be read alongside the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and any other relevant policies including, Rewards and Sanctions, Online Safety and Mobile Devices, PSHEE policy and schemes of work, ICT Acceptable Use policy.

1.4 This policy is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020), and should also be read in conjunction with:

- the Local Safeguarding Partnership's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures,
- the DfE's advice on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE's Advice) (May 2018),
- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2017),
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, 2014)
- Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS)

1.5 The School recognises national and increasing concern about this issue. Research suggests that peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse affecting children in the UK. For example, more than four in ten teenage schoolgirls aged between 13 and 17 in England have experienced sexual coercion.

Two thirds of contact sexual abuse experienced by children aged 17 or under was committed by someone who was also aged 17 or under.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

2.1 The School recognises that abuse is abuse, and should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up',

2.2 We believe that schools should be aware of the nature and level of risk to which students may be exposed in the wider environment and take a whole-school community Contextual safeguarding (extra-familial harms)approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse,

2.3 The introduction of this policy is a preventative measure as we do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse in response to alleged incidents of it;

2.4 The policy aims to engage with parents so that if their daughter is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the School so that it can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response,

2.5 This policy sets out our strategy for improving prevention, and identifying and appropriately managing peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse.

2.6 This policy:

- does not use the term 'victim' and/or 'perpetrator'. This is because our School takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in concerns or allegations about peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused, and those who are alleged to have abused their peers,

Research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community themselves,

- uses the terms 'child' and 'children', which is defined as a person aged under 18. However, this policy applies to all students, regardless of age.
  Although the School's response to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse should be the same for all students, there may be some different considerations and actions in relation to their age.
- Recognises the complexities of peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse and as such, each incident will be dealt with on a case by case basis and with consideration of wider environmental factors.

3. **Understanding peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse:**

   3.1 What is peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse?
   Peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships and wider peer associations.

   3.2 Peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse can take various forms, including bullying, cyberbullying, relationship abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic violence and abuse, youth and serious youth violence, and prejudice-based violence including gender-based violence. For further explanation of these behaviours, refer to Appendix A.

   Examples of online peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse would include sexting, online abuse, peer-on-peer (child-on-child) grooming, the distribution of youth involved sexualised content, and harassment.

4. **Recognising Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse**

   All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

   Simon Hackett has proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a student's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it.

Sexual behaviours continuum model

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected • Socially acceptable • Consensual, mutual, reciprocal • Shared decision making	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour • Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group • Context for behaviour may be inappropriate • Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Problematic and concerning behaviour • Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected • No overt elements of victimisation • Consent issues may be unclear • May lack reciprocity or equal power • May include levels of compulsivity	• Victimising intent or outcome • Includes misuse of power • Coercion and force to ensure compliance • Intrusive • Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given • May include elements of expressive violence	• Physically violent sexual abuse • Highly intrusive • Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for the behaviour • Sadism

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond.

This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable,
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time,
- is socially acceptable within the peer group,
- is problematic and concerning,
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability,
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning,
- involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power, and
- involves a misuse of power.

5. Signs of Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse

5.1 Pupils who are being bullied or experiencing peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse may display changes in their normal behaviour, such as:

- becoming withdrawn and nervous;
- feigning illness;
- taking unusual or unauthorised absences;
- clinging to adults.

5.2 This list is not exhaustive and all staff should be alert to the well-being of students and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs to determine whether they are caused by peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which children will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ.

5.3 Staff should routinely record any behavioural incidents on PASS and raise any matters of concern with their Head of Faculty or the School's Welfare Team, who meet regularly to discuss behaviour and welfare matters, helping to identify any changes in behaviour or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage.

6. Vulnerable Pupils

Any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse due to the strength of peer influence during adolescence, and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children.

6.1 Individual and incidental factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. For example, following an image of a child being shared, they could become more vulnerable to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse due to how others react and now perceive them,

6.2 Peer group dynamics play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others or who are socially isolated from their peers may be more vulnerable to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse.

6.3 Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers.

6.4 Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers, and additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND, including:

- assumptions that signs of possible abuse (such as behaviour, mood and injury) relate to a child's disability and are therefore not investigated;
- the potential for children with SEND to not outwardly show any signs or effects of bullying or abuse;

- communication barriers and difficulties.

6.5 Some children may be more likely to experience peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse because of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

6.6 Children with a social worker (CiN or CP) may be more vulnerable and need more support.

7. What is Contextual safeguarding (extra-familial harms)?

This policy adopts a whole-school community Contextual safeguarding (extra-familial harms) approach, which means:

- being aware of and seeking to understand the impact of wider social contexts and environmental factors; (see Appendix B).
- creating a safe culture in the School by implementing policies, procedures and a curriculum that addresses peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse and harmful attitudes; promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender, sexuality and equality;
- being alert to and monitoring changes in students' behaviour or attendance, and
- working closely with local child protection agencies.

8. A whole school approach - School environment

The School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse by:

8.1 Training all staff and governors on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, and how to prevent, identify, and respond to it.
This includes:
- Contextual Safeguarding,
- the identification and classification of specific behaviours, including digital behaviours,
- the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse (no matter how 'low level' they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing,
- social media and online safety, including how to encourage children to use social media in a positive, responsible and safe way, and how to enable them to identify and manage abusive behaviour online.

8.2 Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via PSHE and the wider life of the school.

8.3 Communicating with parents on these issues by asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the School address those risks. The Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse policy is made available to parents on the School's website.

8.4 Supporting and prioritising the welfare of pupil mental health and providing in-school support, such as peer mentoring and counselling, to address underlying mental health needs.
A large proportion of staff are trained to meet low-level mental health difficulties within the pupils.

8.5 Working with all stakeholders to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community.

8.6 Creating conditions in which pupils can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture:

- which recognises that every member of the School community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships, and helping to create a safe School environment in which violence and abuse are never acceptable,
- which encourages pupils to develop trusting relationships with staff, and staff understanding the importance of these relationships in providing students with a sense of belonging
- in which students feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment.

8.7 Responding to cases of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse promptly and appropriately.

9. Multi-agency working

9.1 The School actively engages with and refers serious concerns to local safeguarding agencies in relation to peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, and works closely with the MARU, Early Help Hub, children's social care, the police and/or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures, and other schools.

9.2 The relationships with these partners are essential to ensuring that the School is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse.

9.3 Peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the alleged incident cannot be managed internally by the School itself) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

10. Responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse

It is essential that all concerns and allegations of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly.

Any response should:

10.1 include a thorough investigation of the concerns or allegations, and the wider context in which they may have occurred (depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident, it may be appropriate for the police and/or children's social care to carry out this investigation),

10.2 treat all children involved as being at potential risk – while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, she may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm herself.

The School should ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it, and additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter (see section 14).

10.3 take into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, such as the child's peer group (both within and outside the School); family; the School environment; their experience of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child's online presence.
- the potential complexity of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited, they are not consenting,
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL should discuss the proposed action with the child/children and their parents, and obtain consent to any referral before it is made.

It is particularly important to take into account the wishes of any child who has allegedly been abused or experienced bullying behaviour, and to give that child as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and how they will be supported.

11. Reporting Bullying or Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse

11.1 Any member of the school community should feel that he/she is able to report an incident of bullying or peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse. Pupils should report an incident to any member of staff; while parents/carers should contact either their daughter's class teacher (Prep School) or form tutor (Senior School). If the allegation is particularly serious, they may feel the need to report the incident directly to the Deputy Head (Senior School) or Head of Prep (Prep School).

11.2 Any member of staff who has an incident of peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse reported to him/her or thinks that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peers, or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peers will refer the matter to the Deputy Head (Senior School) or Head of Prep (Prep School).

11.3 Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to the MARU (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.
Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made (see Section 2 of the child protection policy).

11.4 If a child speaks to a member of staff about peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse that they have witnessed or are a part of, the member of staff should listen to the child and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement. For further details please see the procedures for dealing with a disclosure set out in the appendices of the child protection policy.

11.5 Every member of staff must adhere to these fundamental guidelines:
- Never ignore any suspicion of bullying or peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse;
- Do not make premature assumptions;
- Listen carefully to all accounts;
- Adopt a problem-solving approach.

12. Procedures for dealing with concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse

12.1 When bullying or peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse, in or out of school, is suspected by or reported to a member of staff, that person must take notes and immediately pass the information to the Deputy Head or the Head of Prep, as appropriate. The Deputy Head or the Head of Prep will make a decision on who should investigate the incident and will initiate an investigation.

12.2 The investigating member of staff will:
- Interview all the parties involved and maintain a record of these interviews, taking into consideration wider environmental factors;
- Report his/her findings to the Deputy Head or the Head of Prep;
- Recommend any immediate actions to be applied to protect all involved parties, including whether a referral to children's social care is necessary,
- Offer reassurance as part of a plan of action that will be devised to combat the abuse. This plan of action, which will address the requirement for counselling advice and general support, will have been discussed with the pupil in consultation with her parents/carers.

12.3 The Deputy Head or the Head of Prep will:

- Inform staff directly involved with the day-to-day care of the bullied pupil, including teachers, form tutors and pastoral staff, of any steps they need to take;
- In consultation with the investigating member of staff, determine an appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying or alleged peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse;
- Consult with the parents/carers of both the child experiencing alleged abusive behaviours and those exhibiting them;
- If appropriate, conduct a staged discussion with the child experiencing alleged abusive behaviours and those exhibiting them to develop mutual understanding and empathy;
- To offer restorative justice to the child experiencing abusive behaviours, if possible.
- Consider whether a referral to the MARU or the police is appropriate or whether the incident can be appropriately managed internally.

12.4 The victim will be advised not to retaliate, and, in the case of cyberbullying, not to respond to messages. A victim of cyberbullying will be asked to preserve and record all evidence of the abuse, including saving phone messages, recording or saving and printing instant messenger conversations, and printing or producing screen-grabs of social network pages.

12.5 Pupils must not be asked to forward youth involved sexual imagery and staff must not deliberately view such imagery, as this could constitute a criminal offence.

12.6 Where any concerns or allegations indicate that indecent images of a child may have been shared online, the DSL should consider what urgent action can be taken in addition to the actions and referral duties set out in this policy, and in the School's youth involved sexual imagery guidance (Appendix F), to seek specialist help in preventing the images spreading further and removing the images from the internet.

12.7 DSLs should always use their professional judgement to assess the seriousness of the alleged behaviour, and determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required.

12.8 Where the DSL considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour might be abusive or violent or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child in question might otherwise require it, the DSL should contact the MARU and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of the alleged behaviour.

12.9 For such cases, the DSL will discuss the concerns or allegations with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:
- Managing internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible.
- Undertake/contribute to an Early Help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of the child and their family.
- Referring the child to children's social care for a section 17/47 statutory assessment. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to the MARU (and, if appropriate, a report to the police) is made immediately.
- Reporting alleged criminal behaviour to the police.

12.10 In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with the MARU (MAAT), and/or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures on a no-names basis to determine the most appropriate response.

12.11 All concerns or allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis, and in light of the wider context.

13. **Safety plans**

13.1 The School will always carry out a safety plan 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, or
- any child who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child.

13.2 Where it is alleged that a child has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL will use her professional judgment (based on the particular concerns or allegations raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual child in question) to determine whether it would be appropriate to contact the MARU, and to carry out a safety plan.

Consultation is recommended with the MAAT if there is any doubt about this. Careful consideration should also be given to a range of factors, including the context, severity of the alleged behaviour, impact of the alleged behaviour on others, risk to others, and whether there are any patterns of behaviour occurring.

13.3 Further information on developing an appropriate safety plan can be found in Appendix C of this document.

14. Disciplinary action

14.1 Changing the attitude and behaviour of those involved in peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse behaviour will form part of the plan of action. This plan is likely to include counselling advice, behaviour management and general support. However, the School recognises that appropriate sanctions will also have to be used against those involved in abusive behaviour.

14.2 Any of the School's formal punishments may be used, including a genuine apology, against those involved in bullying behaviour. Refer to the School's Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

14.3 However, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that the School works in partnership with the police and/or children's social care.

14.4 Any disciplinary action must be balanced against the child's own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns.

14.5 The School will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. For example, action may still need to be taken by the School in relation to other students who have been involved with or affected by peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other children in the School.

14.6 Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, and the School will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above and below.

15. Record keeping and Information sharing

15.1 A record of any peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse allegation is kept on Pass/3Sys. If, after investigation, it is deemed a peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse case, details are also kept in a central 'Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse File' in the Head's PA's office.

The Deputy Head and the Head of Prep are responsible for recording allegations on Pass/3Sys. They keep detailed records which allow patterns to be identified and the effectiveness of the approaches to be evaluated. They also regularly review the 'Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse File'.

15.2 When responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, the School will:

- always consider carefully, in consultation with children's social care, the police and other relevant agencies, how to share information about the concerns or allegations with the pupils affected, their parents, staff, and other students and individuals,
- record the information that is necessary for the School and other relevant agencies to respond to the concerns or allegations 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, and
- be mindful of and act in accordance with its safeguarding and data protection duties, including those set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) and the HM Government advice on Information Sharing (updated in July 2018).

16. **Learning from incidents of Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse**

16.1 Following an incident of peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse, the School conducts a review as part of its pro-active, Contextual safeguarding (extra-familial harms) approach to continuing the prevention and early identification of peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse.

16.2 The review may include the School asking itself a series of questions about the context in which an incident of peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse occurred in the School, the local community, and the wider physical and online environment. See Appendix G.

16.3 Answers to these questions can be developed into an action plan that is reviewed on a regular basis by the School's leadership team and the DSL.

17. **Review**
17.1 This policy is reviewed annually, and updated in the interim, as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which students may be exposed. This review involves an assessment of the effectiveness of this policy over the previous year,
17.2 The policy will be reviewed if new legislation or guidance is published or existing legislation or guidance is updated;
17.3 A review will also take place if an incident suggests that a review may be required.
17.4 The School surveys pupils and parents on bullying regularly and uses the results as part of its review of policy and procedures.

APPENDIX A –

Types of abuse
There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and the following list is not exhaustive.

Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)
Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person.

There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently, before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Bullying (inclusive of all types)
The definition of bullying is, 'a person who habitually seeks to harm or intimidate those who they perceive as vulnerable'. (Taken from the Oxford, Cambridge and Collins dictionary, updated 2018)

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.
Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

Cyber bullying
Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (section 1) which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127, which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.

If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the School will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse (e.g. inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

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 well as the young person it is intended towards.

Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another, sexual assault, rape or abuse.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment
Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children. Both sexes may be affected, although girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence, and boys are more likely to be perpetrators of sexual harassment. Children with SEND are likely to be more vulnerable.

- **Sexual violence** refers to rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault.
- **Sexual harassment** includes such things as sexual comments, sexual jokes, physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, and online activity including sharing of images or video (sexting). Harmful sexual behaviours in children are those which are inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. When considering harmful sexual behaviour, the ages and developmental stages of the children involved should be considered.

Some situations are statutorily clear: a child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity (the age of consent is 16); sexual intercourse without consent is rape (as defined in law); creating or sharing sexual images or videos of under 18s is illegal, including children making or sharing these themselves. Online sexual violence or sexual harassment can be more complex, such as images shared at another school.

The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool click here can help professionals working with children to distinguish between three levels of sexual behaviour – green, amber and red, and to respond according to the level of concern.

Sexting (Youth Involved Imagery) (See Appendix F)
Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can occur in any relationship, to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

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 idea behind this practice is that it 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 – in particular, prejudices to do with 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 (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner.

Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

Upskirting
Upskirting 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.

APPENDIX B – **Contextual Circles of Vulnerability**

The influences of each circle should be considered in relation to the physical and on-line environment of the child.
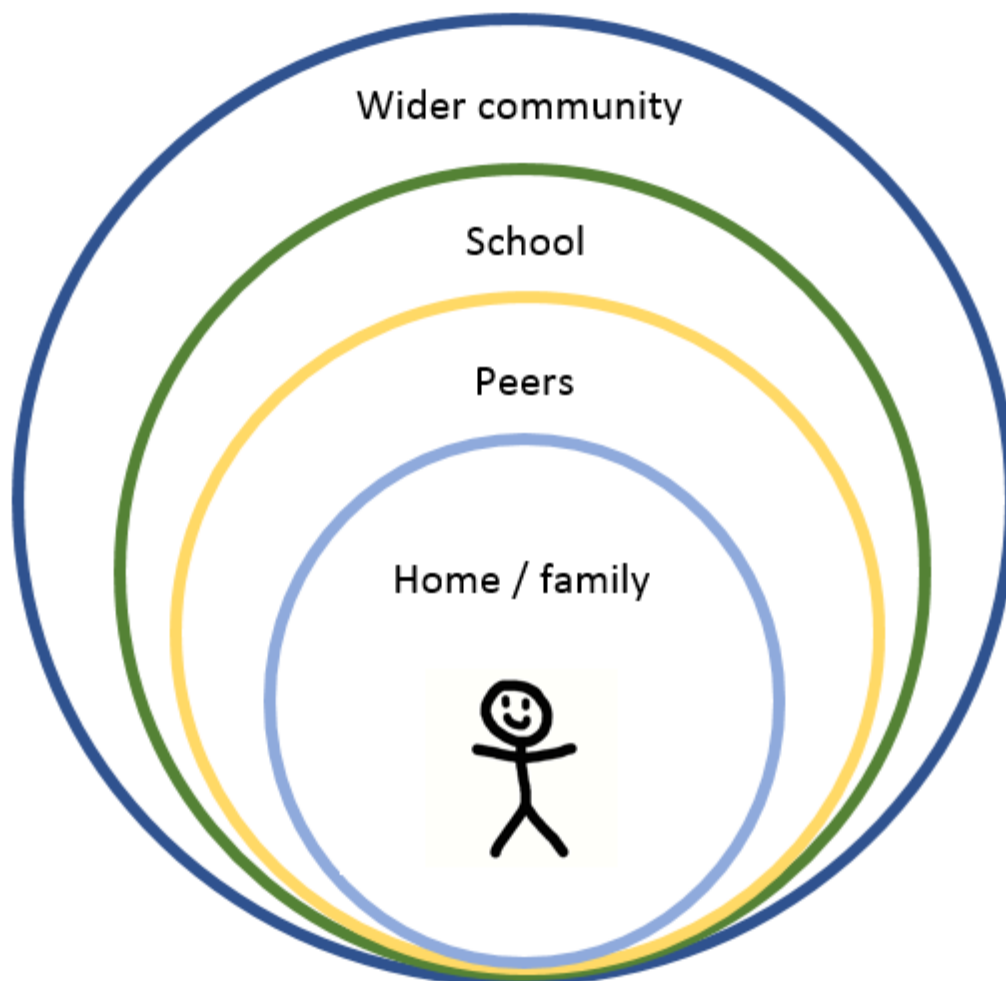
APPENDIX C – **Safety Plans**

1. In deciding whether a safety plan would be appropriate, and which children require a safety plan, the DSL should consider:
(i)   the extent to which a child may have experienced or otherwise been affected by the alleged behaviour, and the impact on them.
(ii) the importance of early intervention to address and to prevent escalation of inappropriate or problematic behaviours, and
(iii) whether there are any wider safeguarding concerns about a child – for example, where a child's behaviour may be considered to be inappropriate or problematic on Hackett's continuum, the DSL and/or external agencies may determine that a safety plan is required to prevent the behaviour from escalating.

2. In all cases where a safety plan is not considered to be appropriate, the school should nonetheless take steps to safeguard and support each child who is allegedly responsible for the behaviour, and any children affected by it, and should continue to monitor the situation. If risks increase consideration should again be given to developing a safety plan.

3. A safety plan should be developed in consultation with key statutory agencies to whom any referral or report is necessary. In developing a safety plan the school should:
(i)   always have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020), and Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018),
(ii) consult with the MARU, police and/or other relevant agencies regarding the concerns or allegations and need to have a safety plan, and seek their agreement to the plan whenever possible,
(iii) if an agency is not, for whatever reason, engaging, then the school should advise the agency that it intends to develop a safety plan and share it with them when completed. The school should also consider escalating their referral if they believe children's social care or the police should be engaged.
(iv) be consistent with any risk assessments or plans made by the School, children's social care, the police, or any other professionals working with the child,
(v)   give consideration to consulting and involving the child and their parents about the development of their safety plan,
(vi) hold a safety planning meeting and careful consideration will need to be given to whether the child presenting the alleged behaviour, and/or their parents should attend. If not in attendance, their wishes and feelings should be sought in advance of the meeting – in the case of the child, with a designated trusted professional with whom he/she has a positive relationship. A version of the plan which is appropriate for the child's age and level of understanding should be provided to the child and their parents. Efforts should also be made to ensure that they understand what is proposed and to seek their agreement to the arrangements.

4. These steps will help to ensure that the safety plan is appropriately tailored to the child's needs

   A safety plan should:
(i)   be proportionate and not stigmatise the child/ children allegedly responsible for or affected by the behaviour

(ii) set out relevant background information – including an overview of the context, the specific concerns or allegations, any relevant detail about the relationships, and any power differentials between the child allegedly

responsible for the behaviour, and any children affected by it, the frequency of the alleged behaviour and any changes in it over time. Details should also be shared of action taken regarding the alleged concerns or allegations, and any advice provided by the MARU, or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures, or the police, or any other professional working with the child/children,

(iii)   set out any relevant information regarding the child concerned. For example, any relevant medical information, any previous concerns about the child's behaviour, needs or harm that she may have been exposed to in the past. Information should be shared on their wishes and feelings regarding the proposed safety plan. Consideration may need to be given to having two or more separate but aligned safety plans for the child who is allegedly responsible for the behaviour, and the child or children affected by it,

(iv)   identify and assess the nature and level of risk that is posed or faced by the child / children in school such or with transport arrangements to and from school; and contexts outside the school, including at home, in relationships with friends, peer groups, interactions in the neighbourhood or during online activity,

(v)   set out the steps and controls that can be put in place to reduce or manage any risk. Issues that may be addressed include:
- how safety will be ensured in the classroom, out of the classroom, on transport, and during unstructured or extra-curricular activities, including trips and residential stays away from school. This may involve separating the child/ children who present risk from other children who may be affected by the alleged peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse,
- how to ensure that the child/children reportedly affected by the alleged behaviour feel supported, including by appointing a trusted member of staff (a 'critical friend') with whom they can speak if they have existing concerns or if there are any future developments which cause them concern,
- how best to draw on any other trusting relationships where these exist, and create them where they do not, to provide the children concerned with support and a sense of belonging,
- where relevant, how to manage the child's/ children's behaviour – this can be done in a number of ways including, for example, by way of a de-escalation plan for staff which identifies any triggers, explains how their behaviour can escalate, sets out the function of the behaviour for the child /children, and proposes an appropriate action or response to it; identifying language that should be used and avoided; a positive handling plan; or implementing controls and measures to reduce or manage any risk,
- whether restorative action would be appropriate and, if so, how best to take such action, bearing in mind the specific needs of the child/children concerned, and the appropriateness of any such action given the nature and seriousness of the concerns or allegations,
- whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of the child/children, any emotional and behavioural disorders, developmental disorders, or learning difficulties, or to meet the child's/ children's psychological, emotional or physical needs; drawing on local statutory, private or voluntary services as appropriate, and
- whether the behaviour is of such high risk that suitable controls cannot be put in place within the school setting which would enable it to be adequately managed. In this case consideration will need to be given to alternative plans for the child/children presenting the alleged behaviour. The principle that any child who is reported to have experienced peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse should not have restrictions or controls placed on them as a result of another child's alleged behaviour should be given priority consideration.

(vi)   identify and consider how to build on strengths and positive aspects that the child possesses or is exposed to, such as those emanating from activities or lessons that the child enjoys and engages with; positive characteristics and skills that the child possesses; or trusting relationships with the child's family, other students or staff,

(vii)   assess any risks that are posed or faced by the wider school community (including all other students and, where appropriate, staff and parents) and identify any steps that the school can take to mitigate these risks. This may include:
- consideration of how to support any students (and, where appropriate, staff and parents) who know about or may be affected by the alleged behaviour, or who may be required to participate in any investigation

consideration of work that can be undertaken with the wider staff or student population to help to protect children against peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse in the future. Careful consideration will need to be given to managing confidentiality for children affected by the alleged behaviour or engaged themselves in any such behaviour.

(viii)   set out the steps needed to implement the safety plan, including how to communicate with and what information should be shared with relevant staff members – in the strictest confidence – so that they are able to implement the actions set out in the plan and safeguard the children concerned appropriately, and

(ix)   be reviewed at regular intervals, or if there is a change in perceived risks or circumstances. Reviews should be carried out in light of the children's ongoing needs to ensure that real progress is being made which benefits the children concerned

APPENDIX D – **Referral Pathway.**

If you are concerned about a child's welfare or worried they are being abused, in the first instance discuss your concerns with the DSL and record them on the Cause for Concern form.

If you are worried that a child is in risk of immediate harm, you can make a referral to MARU, multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

- Multi-agency Referral Unit: 0300 123 1116
- Out of Hours Service: 01208 251300

Link for referral form: https://www.safechildren-cios.co.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-safeguarding-children-partnership/policies-procedures-and-referrals/

The Local Safeguarding Partnership (OSCP) has a statutory duty to co-ordinate how agencies work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Cornwall and to ensure the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.

OSCP: 01872 327225

ciosscp@cornwall.gov.uk

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall_scilly/index.html

APPENDIX E – **Examples of further resources.**

NSPCC guidance on the stages of normal sexual behaviour

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/healthy-sexual-behaviour-children-young-people/

Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool

Tender

http://tender.org.uk/

Works with schools providing educational programmes for children and staff training, aimed at preventing domestic abuse and sexual violence and promoting healthy relationships based on equality and respect

Childnet

http://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Cyberbullyingguidance2.pdf

Provides cyber bullying guidance

Digital Awareness UK

https://www.digitalawarenessuk.com/

Provides digital awareness training to educators, parents and students and has produced video resources for students and parents, in collaboration with the Girls Day School Trust

The NSPCC – has produced a range of resources aimed at educating children, staff, and parents about peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse. This includes (but is not limited to)

• PANTS (The Underwear Rule) resources for parents, and staff

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/ keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/

• Speak Out Stay Safe programme of assemblies and workshops which teaches children to speak out if they are worried

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/ working-with-schools/speak-out-stay-safe-service/

• Share aware campaign

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/ keeping-children-safe/share-aware/

APPENDIX F – **Sexual Imagery Guidance**

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting' there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. According to research, many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the internet.' Yet, recent NSPCC research has revealed that when children are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know.' Similarly, a recent ChildLine survey has revealed that many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

This guidance only covers the involvement of children in sexual imagery. Creating, keeping or sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal, and is classified as the making, possession or distribution of indecent images of a minor - under the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the Criminal Justice Act 1988. As such it causes the greatest complexity for schools (amongst other agencies) when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

This guidance uses the phrase 'youth involved sexual imagery' instead of 'sexting', or 'youth produced sexual imagery.' The School also recognises that 'youth involved' and 'sexting' are not terms that children generally use, and it is important for staff in schools to understand the language that is used by children when discussing this issue with them or creating a policy.

What is youth involved sexual imagery?

'Youth involved sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

• 'youth involved' includes children sharing images that they, or another child, have created of themselves, and

• 'imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos, and

• a judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context. The term 'sexual' is clearer than 'indecent', although the DSL will nevertheless always need to use professional judgement when determining whether a photo is 'sexual'.

What types of incidents are covered by this guidance?

Yes:

• A child creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer (also under the age of 18)

• A child shares sexual imagery created by another child with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult

• A child is in possession of sexual imagery created by another child

No:

• The sharing of sexual imagery of children by adults constitutes child sexual abuse and schools should always inform the police

• Children sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which do not contain imagery

• Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child

• Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child and shared with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult

Disclosure

Disclosure about youth involved sexual imagery can happen in a variety of ways. The child affected may inform a class teacher, the DSL in School, or any member of the School staff. They may report through an existing reporting structure, or a friend or parent may inform someone in School or a colleague or inform the police directly. There is also a possibility that a member of staff may be made aware of an image in circulation by other students not involved in either the production or initial transfer, but who have become exposed to the imagery as a result of wider distribution.

All members of staff (including non-teaching staff) should be aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosure of incidents involving youth involved sexual imagery. Staff should also be aware of the legalities around youth involved sexual imagery so they can best inform students in their care – messages such as "it's illegal" are not considered to be helpful (for reasons explained below).

Any direct disclosure by a child should be taken very seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in School is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

Handling incidents

All incidents of youth involved sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the School's child protection and peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse policy.

When an incident involving youth involved sexual imagery comes to a member of staff's attention:

• the incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible,

• the DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate School staff. The DSL will follow the procedures and guidance set out in [Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people,](#)

• there should be subsequent interviews with the children involved,

• parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm,

• where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately,

• any report to the police should be considered against the severity of the concerns or allegations, the impact on any child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and broader context of the production and distribution of the image (for example: was production consensual or coerced? Was sharing consensual? Was production volunteered or requested? What are the ages of the children involved?),

• depending on the facts of the particular concern or allegation, a report to the police does not necessarily mean that the child will be criminalised. Since January 2016, the police are able to record an "Outcome 21" against a reported crime, meaning it is not in the public interest to pursue a charge. The majority of youth involved sexual imagery would fall into this category. However, in the event of coercion, exploitation, further harm or aggravated behaviours, it is valid for police involvement to result in criminal charge. The School should communicate with their police liaison to determine awareness of Outcome 21 recording and its appropriateness in any given incident.

Education

Teaching about safeguarding issues in the classroom can prevent harm by providing children with skills, attributes and knowledge to help them navigate risks. The School will provide children with opportunities to learn about the issue of youth involved sexual imagery, as part of its commitment to ensure that they are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities. Children will be encouraged to share concerns with staff and that there are ways of removing images from the internet if they are reported quickly.

Education should be inclusive, age appropriate, and provide children with the opportunity to discuss and ask questions. In general, an assembly where they are told youth involved sexual imagery is illegal, and they should not do it, is not

sufficient. If education does consider the legal issues associated with youth involved sexual imagery, it should consider the nature of the legislation and likely police responses, rather than simple declarations of illegality.

When considering the sharing of youth involved sexual images among peers, a lot of online safety messaging focuses on telling children that they should not produce images of themselves and send them to people because it is illegal, or in doing so they are placing themselves at risk. We find this approach problematic because:

  i)   pupils feel that they cannot ask for help or disclose abuse because they did something wrong and, therefore, they deserve what is happening to them; and
  ii)   the nature of this messaging can contribute to blaming the victim rather than all parties involved. The troubles around the sharing of youth involved sexual images does not lie with the initial generation of the image but the distribution, or threat to distribute the image to third parties. Therefore, the School tackles the subject by focusing on the non-consensual sharing and the potential punishment for those individuals, rather than suggesting that for anyone who creates and sends an image deserves the abuse they receive.

Government guidance 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools (2019) provides further guidance.

APPENDIX G - **Reviewing Incidents of Peer on peer abuse (child on child) abuse**

1. What protective factors and influences exist within the School (such as positive peer influences, examples where peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse has been challenged, etc.) and how can the School bolster these?

2. How (if at all) did the School's physical environment or the students' routes to and from the School contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by improving the School's safety, security and supervision, or by working with local safeguarding partners to mitigate the risks to students' safety whilst travelling to and from the School?

3. How (if at all) did the online environment contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by strengthening the way in which the School encourages positive and safe use of the internet by students?

4. Did wider gender norms, equality issues, and/or societal attitudes contribute to the abuse?

5. What was the relationship between the abuse and the cultural norms between staff and students, and how can these be addressed going forward?

6. Does the abuse indicate a need for staff training on, for example, underlying attitudes, a particular issue or the handling of particular types of abuse, or to address any victim-blaming narratives from staff?

7. How have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had?

8. Does the case or any identified trends highlight areas for development in the way in which the School works with children to raise their awareness of and/or prevent peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse, including by way of the School's PSHE curriculum and lessons that address underlying attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work, respect, boundaries, consent, children's rights and critical thinking and/or avoiding victim-blaming narratives?

9. Are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the School engages with parents to address peer-on-peer (child-on-child) abuse issues?

10. Are there underlying issues that affect other schools in the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?

11. Does this case highlight a need to work with certain children to build their confidence, and teach them how to identify and manage abusive behaviour?

12. Were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the School?