

## Policy for Dealing with Bullying & Peer on Peer Abuse and Managing Allegations

Nisi Dominus Frustra - Without the Lord, everything is in vain

### MISSION STATEMENT

- \* A Rose Hill child's learning experience is one of aspiration, adventure, and achievement in a nurturing, caring school.

### AIMS

Working with **integrity** your child will:

- \* Be inspired to develop **confidence** to thrive in all areas of our rich curriculum.
- \* Foster the skills and talents which enable them to **organise** their learning and plan to achieve success.
- \* Demonstrate **persistence** to flourish in the face of challenge.
- \* Show **resilience** and learn from difficult situations.
- \* **Get along** with others, work collaboratively and accept everyone.

### Introduction

At Rose Hill School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other pupils.

We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

DfE guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2019) says that "governing bodies should ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children". The guidance also states the importance of minimising the risks of peer-on- peer abuse.

In most instances, the conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. However some allegations might be of such a serious nature that they become safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation; however we are aware that the abuse may take any form.

### Bullying Definition

Bullying can be described as being a deliberate act done to cause distress solely to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents causing a child to feel unhappy, scared or depressed for much of the time possibly leaving them psychologically damaged or even suicidal.

### Peer on Peer Definition

**All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This 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.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.
- The definition for domestic abuse (Home Office 2013) relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, and coercive control, in their intimate relationships
- The definition for child sexual exploitation (DCSF 2009) captures young people aged under-18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age – including another young person
- The definition for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours) (Hackett 2011, NICE 2014)
- Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences (as opposed to relationships/contexts) and captures all those of the most serious in nature
- including murder, rape and GBH between young people under-18 (London Safeguarding Children Board 2009)

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

### **The safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people<sup>i</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Taken from The safeguarding implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review (2015)

The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require professional judgments. Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. In our society generally the age at which children become sexually active has steadily dropped. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation

Staff, parents and children at Rose Hill School will work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of everyone to report and deal with any incidents quickly. Incidents should be reported in the first instance to the Head of Upper School (Pastoral).

### **The aims of the school**

- to provide a safe , caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care
- to instil in children the knowledge that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- to reassure children that they will be listened to, and that it is alright to tell someone what is happening.
- to heed parents and keep them informed of actions taken in response to a complaint.
- to investigate fully and keep detailed records of any incidents, reports or complaints to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified and suitable action then taken to reduce the incidents of bullying.
- to take appropriate action, including possible exclusion in cases of severe or repeated bullying

### **Prevention**

At our school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Providing PSHEE as part of the curriculum as well as regular assemblies, which promote a school culture that will help pupils develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, fosters the pupils to be 'up-standers', healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- Having effective systems within our school for pupils to be able to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be looked into and addressed such as worry boxes, CEOPs recording button is on school website.
- Liaising and working with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments for pupils that are identified as posing a potential risk to other pupils
- Liaising with specialists to deliver appropriate targeted work to pupils identified as being at potential risk e.g. protective behaviours work.
- Close monitoring of all unsupervised areas.

### **Allegations against other pupils (safeguarding issues)**

Allegations of abuse or that are a safeguarding concern maybe made against other pupils within our setting. These may include allegations of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Safeguarding concerns or reports of abuse in any form may be made against pupils in our setting

It may also be considered a safeguarding issue if the allegation:

- Is being made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a possible criminal nature
- Puts other pupils in the school at risk, or raises the risk factor for others
- Indicates that other pupils may have been harmed or be at risk or harm
- Includes bullying (under the definition of emotional abuse) or intimidation

Specific safeguarding issues against another pupil may include:

- Physical abuse:
  - Pre-planned violence
  - Physical altercations
  - Forcing other to carry out violence
  - Forcing others to use drugs, alcohol or other substances
- Emotional abuse:

- Bullying
- Threats and Intimidation
- Blackmail/extortion
- Sexual abuse:
  - Sexual assault
  - Indecent exposure
  - Indecent touching
  - Showing pornography to others
  - Forcing others to create/share/download indecent images
  - Sexting (see full guidance)
- Sexual exploitation
  - Encouraging/enticing other pupils to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour
  - Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
  - Sharing images through social media

### Procedure

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, which is of a safeguarding nature it should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.
- A factual record must be kept (as normal safeguarding child protection procedures) and updated with all actions and outcomes
- The incident should not be investigated at this time
- The DSL will contact the KSCMP to discuss the case, and make a formal referral where appropriate
- If the allegation indicates that a potential crime has taken place the KSCMP will refer the case to the police
- Parents of both the alleged victim and the pupil being complained about should be informed, this should be discussed during the consultation with the KSCMP.
- A risk assessment will be considered at this time to protect all parties involved.
- It may be appropriate to exclude the alleged culprit against whom the report has been made for a fixed time in line with our schools behaviour policy and procedures.
- Police and social care will lead any investigation, however where neither police nor social care thresholds are met, our school will then undertake a thorough investigation following our schools policies and procedures.
- A risk assessment should be considered along with an appropriate supervision plan
- Support should be given to all pupil involved, and they should be involved in the relevant meetings and sign and agree to the plans that are set
- The plan should be monitored and review dates set

### If allegations made directly to other agencies

In some circumstances parent or the alleged victims will report directly to other agencies. In these cases (if not police or social care) these agencies should make referrals to the KSCMP or the police.

KSCMP or police should liaise directly with the DSL for the school to inform them of the situation, or liaise with a member of the Designated Officer (LADO) and schools safeguarding team who will contact the DSL with the information.

All professional involved can support with the risk assessment and management of such allegations

### Methods used to try to prevent bullying & peer on peer abuse

- assemblies will be used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying

- assemblies will highlight exemplary character traits and attitudes
- all subjects will incorporate the teaching of British Values
- RS and PSHE will be used to reinforce the message through stories (both fiction and non-fiction), role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- circle time with the younger children, especially those in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives opportunities to talk about kindness to others.
- children in the Early Years will learn to respond positively to cultural, social and physical diversity (often the causes of bullying) as part of their curriculum.
- the school council as well as the anti-bullying committee will help staff to monitor behaviour in the playground and will try to encourage and help any child who seems to be unhappy.
- staff will endeavour at all times to create surroundings where each individual feels confident and at ease in school .
- Good character attributes will be displayed around the school and congratulatory postcards will be sent home regularly
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.
- An incident form available at playtimes to monitor any peer on peer abuse allegations

In order to try to reduce incidents of bullying and to recognise bullies, all staff watch for early signs of distress and marked changes in normal behaviour. We listen, believe and act.

#### **All staff receive training in recognising and dealing with bullying.**

Pupils with special educational needs might not be able to articulate experiences as fluently as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, as a result of their disability. Staff must be aware of this, and must make sure that their own behaviour does not unintentionally trigger bullying by singling out these children for special attention. They must also be careful not to make comments related to pupils' appearance or perceived character.

Teachers try to make classroom activities and lessons sensitive to the needs of all children. They teach assertiveness and other social skills and teach 'victims' to say 'No' and how to get help.

#### **Types of Bullying that may be encountered**

**Racial or Cultural:** Bullying based on the colour of a child's skin or hair type, or on any difference associated with culture e.g. celebration of different festivals, country of origin, different food or clothes e.g. a turban or veil.

It may take the form of verbal abuse, bringing racist literature into school, writing abusive notes or inciting others to racist behaviour or refusing to sit next to or play with children from other cultures. (see Equality Policy)

**Sexual:** Bullying associated with gender, homophobia, or sexual orientation. It will most likely involve name-calling or ostracising a child (or children), but may also involve inappropriate touching, or sexual notes or drawings being passed to other children. Comments may be made about appearance, attractiveness or emerging puberty, and there may be sexual innuendos or sexual harassment.

**Bullying associated with disability:** This will include bullying associated with obesity or its opposite, as well as that concerned with any physical or mental disability. Particularly vulnerable are children who cannot compete with others equally such as those with a learning disability, and those with Downs Syndrome or cerebral palsy, or who are confined to a wheelchair.

Also vulnerable are children with behavioural problems such as ADHD who are often targets for bullying. Taunting or ridiculing children for their disability is probably the most common form of bullying in this category.

**Religious:** This form of bullying is based around differences in worship, and practice e.g. non-celebration of Christmas or other festivals. Children who are withdrawn from assemblies or RE lessons may be the targets for unpleasant remarks or teasing, and also those who wear different clothes or have certain foods forbidden for religious reasons.

**Cyber Bullying:** This form of bullying is insidious and not easily controlled. It includes unpleasant or threatening text messages frequently sent, or repeated and abusive phone calls. Most children have computers at home and threats and bullying messages may be sent by email, sometimes with upsetting photographs. Children may become involved with a chat room or other social media websites and may become victims of cyber bullying in that way.

#### **Use of computers/ tablets in school for all users including staff and visitors**

- Only approved websites may be accessed.
- There must be online safety filters on all computers.
- All students must be supervised at all times if on the internet.
- No children's access to social media is permitted.

**Bullying associated with high achieving:** Children who achieve highly are often targets for bullying, sometimes to the extent that they become afraid to answer correctly in class for fear of being ridiculed or called names. They may have their belongings hidden or moved or may be ostracised. This form of bullying is often based on jealousy and should be taken just as seriously as other forms of bullying.

It is not always easy to spot when a child is being bullied as each child will respond to it in their own way.

#### **Useful Guidelines**

Children may:

- become upset and not want to come to school
- become introverted and isolate themselves
- appear worried or afraid
- react aggressively
- cling to adults
- develop nervous habits e.g. nail biting

#### **Strategy for dealing with Bullying & peer to peer abuse**

Strategies have been introduced at Rose Hill School to reduce bullying and peer to peer abuse. These strategies cover raising awareness of the nature of abuse, bullying and the Anti-bullying Policy, increasing understanding for victims and bullies and teaching pupils how to manage relationships in a constructive way.

In dealing with bullying, staff follow these fundamental guidelines;

- never ignore suspected bullying
- do not make premature assumptions
- listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils with the same version does not necessarily mean it is the truth
- adopt a problem-solving approach that allows pupils to move forward from self-justification
- always follow up proven cases to check that bullying has not returned
- keep detailed records of any incidents to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified and suitable actions then taken to reduce the incidence of bullying
- parents should be updated of repeated behaviour patterns

In response to a complaint of bullying, staff should initially follow the procedures set out in the schools 'Behaviour/ Anti-Bullying Policies' applying sanctions as necessary.

If the bullying behaviour continues, the member of staff must report it to the Head of Pastoral and if necessary, the Head, who will proceed as follows:

1. Discuss the nature of the bullying with the 'victim' at length, recording all the facts. This will require patience and understanding.
2. Identify the alleged bully/bullies and any witnesses.

3. Interview witnesses.
4. Discuss the incident(s) with the alleged bullies. Confront them with the allegations and ask them to tell the truth about the situation. Make it clear that this is only an investigation into the truth at this stage.
5. If the bully owns up, make it understood that bullying is not acceptable at Rose Hill School. Explain the effect it has on the 'victim' and also on other children in the class. Apply sanctions relevant to the type of bullying.
6. If the allegation of bullying is denied, investigate further. If there is sufficient evidence, apply relevant sanctions.
7. Hold separate discussions with the parents of both victim and bully.
8. Sanctions for the bully/ies include:
  - Withdrawal from favoured activities for a specified length of time, for example, a school visit or a match.
  - Loss of playtimes for a specified length of time.
  - Loss of a responsibility
  - Making some reparation to the victim for any damage to property that may have occurred.
  - In some cases it may be necessary to exclude the bully from school for a specified length of time after consultation (see Exclusions, Expulsion Removal and Review Policy).

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm". In this situation staff will follow the guidelines of the Safeguarding Policy which brings in external agencies.

Provide a pastoral support programme for the victim, monitoring and observing at break times and lunchtimes, and through discussion to make sure there is no repetition.

Provide a pastoral support programme for the bully/ies. This will include a behaviour support and opportunities for the children to discuss relationships, feelings and the effect bullying can have on individuals. The child's class teacher will support them during this programme and will keep a daily written record of behaviour.

**Parents must be kept informed at all stages of the process and must be given opportunities to discuss their child's progress and the sanctions to be employed.**

### **Bullying off the School Premises**

Rose Hill School cannot be held directly responsible for bullying that takes place off the school premises. However, if both the victim and the bully are from our school, action will be taken as if the incident had occurred on school property, and this includes informing parents.

### **Bullying of, or by, Adults**

Although bullying in school is mostly associated with the bullying of children by other children, other instances may occur. Occasionally bullying of a child by an adult may be reported and must be investigated using the procedures outlined above. Where a member of staff is involved, the governing body must be immediately informed and suitable sanctions imposed.

If a member of staff feels that they are being bullied or victimised by another member of staff or pupil, this should be immediately reported to the Head who will offer support and help to the victim. Full discussion with both parties should try to get to the bottom of the problem and the governors should be informed. Sanctions will follow if appropriate.

### **Police action and responsibility**

Kent Police will make an assessment on a case by case basis as to the legality, proportionality and necessity to share information with partner agencies, including schools. Where a report is made concerning a school-age child, and the school / educational establishment is already involved, the police should keep the DSL for that setting updated with developments in the case and police officer / staff dealing with the matter. In Kent, schools receive domestic

abuse reports where children are involved in those cases where the police identify a safeguarding need.

Where a report is made concerning a school-age child and the school / educational establishment is not already involved, the police must always give active consideration to sharing relevant information with the setting. This will ensure that the setting can take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the children involved and others they may come into contact with. The decision on appropriate measures to take should be made by the setting with support from the police as necessary.

In the case of police or court bail conditions for safeguarding cases, the police must notify the setting of the conditions which are relevant to keep the child and others safe in the setting.

If a report indicates a safeguarding concern regarding a child or a risk they may pose to others, the presumption is the report will be shared with those who need to know to help keep children safe. A review strategy meeting may be the most appropriate way of communicating and agreeing a suitable course of action.

### **Legal Guidance and Responsibilities**

The Department of Education guidance, '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies*' (October 2014 ) has been read and used to guide the school on the legal obligations, powers and responsibilities in terms of preventing and tackling bullying within the school.

The non-statutory document '*Cyber Bullying: Advice for Headteachers and school Staff*', (November 2014) has been used as a guide for tackling internet problems. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2019)

### **External Agency Contacts**

The School's local safeguarding **Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership**: Email: [central.duty@kent.gov.uk](mailto:central.duty@kent.gov.uk) . **KSCMP** responds to enquiries about children and young people as a result of police involvement with the child or their family and other safeguarding concerns. The website can be found [here](#). Or email: [central.duty@kent.gov.uk](mailto:central.duty@kent.gov.uk). Further information can be found: <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding>

The **Kent Social Services**: 03000 41 11 11. Email: [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk).

The one number above is used for all enquiries. The DSL must seek a consultation with a duty manager or social worker when not sure about making a referral. If a child's home address is outside Kent, the above number will also elicit the correct children's services contact point. Urgent child protection issue outside of working hours (5pm-8.30am) must be directed to of office hours the Central Duty Out of Hours Number: 03000 41 91 91 or, in an emergency, the Kent police should be called on 999.

**The Local Authority Designated Officer** (LADO): 03000 41 08 88. Email:

[kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk). The LADO manages allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Kent. It bears repeating here that any individual is able to make a referral, not just a DSL or member of the MT.

Please look at recent research:

Brook

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

---

Emma Neville  
September 2019