



THE LATYMER SCHOOL
Founded 1624

PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE POLICY

Policy adopted	Governing Body January 2018 Ratified at Full Governing Body Meeting 15.5.2018
Policy circulated	All staff in school January 2018
Review policy	May 2019

I The School's Responsibilities

Introduction

The Governors, Senior Leadership Team, and all staff and volunteers at The Latymer School are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the School.

This policy is designed to provide background information regarding 'Peer-on-Peer' abuse and inform school practice.

The Latymer School:

- believe that to protect children, all schools should (a) be aware of the level and nature of risk to which their pupils are or may be exposed, and put in place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to their specific safeguarding context; and (b) take a contextual whole-school approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse;
- regard the introduction of this policy as a preventative measure, and do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to peer-on-peer abuse in response to alleged incidents of it;
- recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy to ensure that our pupils are safe; and
- encourage parents to hold us to account on this issue, so that if their child 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.

This policy:

- sets out our strategy for preventing, identifying and appropriately managing peer-on-peer abuse.
- applies to all staff including teaching and non-teaching staff, temporary and supply staff, clerical and domestic staff, volunteers and staff working on site employed by other services and agencies and those working with children and families in the community.
- It is reviewed biennially, and updated in the interim, as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which pupils are or may be exposed. The Assistant Headteacher (Care, Guidance and Support), the Headteacher, members of the Child Protection Team and the school council are involved in each biennial review, which involves and is informed by an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of this policy over the previous year;
- is the School's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer abuse. It relates to, and should be should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on:
 - Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation
 - Behaviour
 - Health & Safety
 - Whistle Blowing
 - Anti-bullying
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
 - Model Code of Conduct for Employees and Workers in Schools and PRUs (Enfield Borough)
 - Sex Education Policy
 - Special Educational Needs Policy
 - Supporting Children in School with Medical Needs

- E-security
 - Online Safety
- does not use the term 'victim' and/or 'perpetrator'. This is because our School takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in allegations of or concerns about peer-on-peer 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 abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers¹;
 - uses the terms 'child' and 'children', which is defined for the purposes of this policy as a person aged under 18². We have nonetheless chosen not to restrict our approach to peer-on-peer abuse under this policy to children but instead to adopt a wider interpretation of our safeguarding responsibilities so that they apply to all pupils, regardless of age.
 - Although the starting point is that the School's response to peer-on-peer abuse should be the same for all pupils, regardless of age, there may be some additional considerations in relation to a pupil aged 18 or over in terms of how local agencies and/or partners respond.
 - Similarly, the School's response to incidents involving the exchange of youth produced sexual imagery will need to differ depending on the age of the pupils involved – see Appendix C for further information. There is also likely to be a more significant criminal justice response in relation to any pupil responsible for abuse who is aged 18 or over;
 - is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016);
 - should, if relevant according to the concerns/allegations raised, be read in conjunction with the Department for Education (DfE) advice on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE's advice) (December 2017), and any other advice and guidance referred to within it, as appropriate;
 - should be read in conjunction with the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

¹ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/child-abuse-neglect-uk-today-research-report.pdf> (see section 5)

² The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (ratified by the UK in 1991); the Children Act (1989); and Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2016) all define "child" as a person aged under 18

II Understanding Peer-on-Peer Abuse

What is peer-on-peer abuse?

For these purposes, peer-on-peer 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)³.

Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including: serious bullying (including cyber-bullying)⁴, relationship abuse⁵, domestic violence⁶, child sexual exploitation⁷, youth and serious youth violence⁸, harmful sexual behaviour⁹, and/or gender-based violence¹⁰.

These types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns. For example, a teenage girl may be in a sexually exploitative relationship with a teenage boy who is himself being physically abused by a family member or by older boys. Equally, sexual bullying in schools and other settings can result in the sexual exploitation of children by their peers. For 16 and 17 year olds who are in abusive relationships, what may appear to be a case of domestic violence may also involve sexual exploitation.

Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to peer-on-peer abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of peer-on-peer abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences¹¹. This can be done by adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach and by ensuring that our response to incidents of peer-on-peer abuse takes into account any potential complexity.

What is Contextual Safeguarding?

This policy encapsulates a Contextual Safeguarding approach, which:

- is an approach to safeguarding children that recognises their experiences of significant harm in extra-familial contexts, and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities;

³ Firmin, C. 2017. Abuse Between Young People: A Contextual Account. Oxon: Routledge (due to be published in December 2017)

⁴ Please see the School's anti-bullying policy

⁵ <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/relationship-abuse/what-is-relationship-abuse/>

⁶ This type of abuse relates to abuse between children aged 16 and 17 who are or have been intimate partners or family members. The abuse includes but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional

⁷ This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or children (under the age of 18) into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the child/children need(s) or want(s), and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the individual responsible for/facilitating the abuse. The child/children may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. [CSE] does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

⁸ offences such as violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, or gun or knife crime (London Assembly Police and Crime Committee)

⁹ This is any sexual behaviour by a child or child which is outside of developmentally "normative" parameters. This can (but does not always) include abusive behaviour such as sexual assaults

¹⁰ The term "gender-based violence" refers to violence that is directed against one gender as a result of their gender or that affects one gender disproportionately

¹¹ Carlene Firmin and George Curtis, MsUnderstood Partnership (2015), Practitioner Briefing #1: What is peer-on-peer abuse? (MSU 2015)

- recognises that as children enter adolescence they spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home in public environments (including on the internet) within which they may experience abuse; and
- considers interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse has occurred. For example, rather than move a child from a school, professionals could work with the school leadership and student body to challenge harmful, gendered school cultures, thus improving the pre-existing school environment¹².

When does behaviour become problematic or abusive?¹³

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.

Sexual behaviours

As the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) explains “children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. Staff should recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour... As both problematic and abusive sexual behaviours are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage, a useful umbrella term is harmful sexual behaviours or HSB.” This term has been adopted widely in the field, and is used throughout the NSPCC’s and Research in Practice's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework, as well as this policy¹⁴.

For the purpose of the NSPCC’s and Research in Practice's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework, and as adopted in this policy, harmful sexual behaviours are defined as "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult¹⁵.

Professor Simon Hackett (Durham University) chaired the practice development subgroup which produced the Operational Framework for Children and Young People Displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviours on behalf of the NSPCC¹⁶. He proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a [pupil's/student's] sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it¹⁷.

¹² Firmin, C. 2017 Contextual Safeguarding: An overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework Luton: University of Bedfordshire

¹³ Please see, for example, London Safeguarding Children Board, London Child Protection Procedures, Part B3: Practice Guidance, Section 15. Children Harming Others: http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/ch_harm_others.html

¹⁴ Please see pages 13 and 21 of NSPCC's and Research in Practice's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/publications/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid, page 12 - which cites reference to the above mentioned definition of harmful sexual behaviours as having been derived from Hackett, 2014

¹⁶ Operational framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours, London, NSPCC.

¹⁷ Ibid, page 13

<p>Normal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Developmentally expected •Socially acceptable •Consensual, mutual, reciprocal •Shared decision making 	<p>Inappropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour •Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group •Context for behaviour may be inappropriate •Generally consensual and reciprocal 	<p>Problematic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 	<p>Abusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 	<p>Violent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Physically violent sexual abuse •Highly intrusive •Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for the behaviour •Sadism
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Hackett's continuum relates exclusively to sexual behaviour and is not exhaustive. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can also be very helpful in identifying sexual behaviours by children¹⁸. Staff should always use their professional judgment and discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where an (alleged) incident involves a report of sexually harmful behaviour, staff should consult the DfE's Advice¹⁹.

Other behaviour

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical 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
- involves a misuse of power

It should be borne in mind that there are some aspects of Hackett's continuum which may not of course be relevant or appropriate to consider in response to other alleged behaviour involving reports of other types of abuse. For example, the issue of consent and the nuances around it, is unlikely to apply in the same way in cases

¹⁸ Learning project briefing on the role of schools in preventing, and responding to, peer-on-peer abuse

¹⁹ Department for Education, *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*, (December 2017)

where the alleged behaviour is reported to involve emotional and/or physical abuse, as it could in cases of alleged sexual behaviour which is reported to involve harmful sexual behaviour.

In addition, the School could be required to deal with cases involving a range of alleged behaviours including sexual behaviour, emotional, physical behaviour and digital behaviour²⁰.

It should also be recognised that the same behaviour presented by different children may be understood at different points on a spectrum, depending on the particular context. For example, an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery may be inappropriate in one context, for example, when exchanged between two children in a consenting relationship, and abusive in another, for example, when it is

- (a) shared without the consent of the child in the image;
- (b) produced as a result of coercion; or
- (c) used to pressure the child into engaging in other sexual behaviours.

Behaviour which is not abusive at first may potentially become abusive quickly or over time. Intervening early and addressing any inappropriate behaviour which may be displayed by a child is vital, and could potentially prevent their behaviour from progressing on a continuum to become problematic, abusive and/or violent - and ultimately requiring (greater/more formal) engagement with specialist external and/or statutory agencies. For example, a physical fight between two children may not constitute peer-on-peer abuse where the fight is a one-off incident, but may be abusive where the child's/children's behaviour subsequently deteriorates into a pattern of bullying behaviour and requires a safeguarding response from a multi-agency partnership – including a statutory assessment of whether this has led, for example, to a risk of significant harm to a child.

The importance of intervening early and addressing any inappropriate behaviour does not just apply on an individual pupil basis, but could also apply across the pupil body.

Behaviour generally considered inappropriate may in fact indicate emerging concerning behaviour to which schools need to take a whole-school approach in order to prevent escalation. For example, where multiple boys are making inappropriate comments about girls, one-off sanctions are unlikely to be effective and wider actions should be considered, such as arranging for an external person to deliver a year group intervention exercise; revising the School's RSE programme; and/or a discussion around whether anything is happening within the wider community that might be affecting the pupils' behaviour.

It will also be important to consider the wider context in which the alleged behaviour is reported to have occurred, and which may trigger the need for a referral. For example, some behaviour that is considered inappropriate may be capable of being dealt with internally. However, if there are wider safeguarding concerns relating to the child/children in question, a referral to statutory agencies may be necessary. Where the behaviour which is the subject of the concern(s)/allegation(s) is considered or suspected by the DSL to constitute peer-on-peer abuse, the School will follow the procedures set out below.

How can a child who is being abused by their peers be identified?

All staff should be alert to the well-being of pupils and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by peer-on-peer 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.

²⁰ Department for Education, 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, (December 2017)

Signs that a child may be suffering from peer-on-peer abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse (please see “Recognising Different Types of Abuse” section of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for indicators of abuse) and can include:

- (a) failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected;
- (b) physical injuries;
- (c) experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing;
- (d) becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much;
- (e) broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse;
- (f) changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age;
- (g) abusive behaviour towards others²¹.

Abuse affects children very differently. The above list is by no means exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse. The behaviour that children present with will depend on their particular circumstances. Rather than checking behaviour against a list, staff are trained to be alert to behaviour that might cause concerns, to think about what the behaviour might signify, to encourage children to share with them any underlying reasons for their behaviour, and, where appropriate, to engage with their parents/carers so that the cause(s) of their behaviour can be investigated. Where a child exhibits any behaviour that is out of character or abnormal for his/her age, staff should always consider whether an underlying concern is contributing to their behaviour (for example, whether the child is being harmed or abused by their peers) and, if so, what the concern is and how the child can be supported going forwards.

The power dynamic that can exist between children is also very important when identifying and responding to their behaviour: in all cases of peer-on-peer abuse, a power imbalance will exist within the relationship. This inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the child responsible for the abuse and the child being abused. It may, for example, be the result of their relative social or economic status. Equally, while children who abuse may have power over those who they are abusing, they may be simultaneously powerless to others.

Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

Any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to the strength of peer influence 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. For example, an image of a child could be shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family. Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others and/or who are socially isolated from their peers may be more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse. Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers.

Research suggests that peer-on-peer abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up²².

²¹ It should be noted that there is currently no definitive list of indicators of peer-on-peer abuse. The above list has been drawn from Signs, symptoms and effects of child abuse and neglect (NSPCC): <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>, and cases of peer-on-peer abuse

²² Barter C, McCarry M, Berridge D and Evans K, *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships* (2009)

III A Whole School Approach

How can the School raise awareness of and prevent peer-on-peer abuse?

School environment

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

- Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils, and parents about this issue.

This includes:

- training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes (a) Contextual Safeguarding; (b) the identification and classification of specific behaviours; and (c) the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing. Training includes case studies which the staff design themselves;
- educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via the Personal Development Curriculum (PDC) and the wider curriculum. For example, by addressing gender inequality in a statistics class, or by reviewing literature in an English class which addresses bullying and its effect on mental health. Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse. They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.

- engaging parents on this issue by:
 - a) talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
 - b) asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the School address those risks;
 - c) involving parents in the review of School policies and lesson plans; and
 - d) encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.

- ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the School's DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support

- challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);

- working with Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils 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 pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;

- creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to; and

- responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

Multi-Agency Working

The School actively engages with its local partners in relation to peer-on-peer abuse, and works closely with, for example, Enfield Safeguarding Children Board, Enfield Single Point of Entry (SPOE), Enfield Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies, 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.

They help the School:

- to develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist;
- to ensure that our pupils are able to access the range of services and support they need quickly;
- to support and help inform our local community's response to peer-on-peer abuse;
- to increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils.
- The School actively refers concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse where necessary to Enfield SPOE, Enfield MASH, children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies. This is particularly important because peer-on-peer 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 incident cannot be managed internally) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

IV Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Peer-on-Peer Abuse

General Principles

It is essential that all concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly. The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on our School environment.

Any response should:

- include a thorough investigation of the concerns/allegations and the wider context in which they may have occurred (as appropriate);
- 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, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. Schools should ensure 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;

We will take into account:

- that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved, and consider and address the effect of wider socio-cultural contexts - such as the child's/children's peer group (both within and outside the School); family; the School environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence.
- Consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the child's/children's needs and to mitigate risk; and the potential complexity of peer-on-peer abuse and of children's experiences 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, unless informing the parent will put the young person at risk of harm.
- Any decision not to inform the parents would generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed.
- The School should manage the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.

What should you do if you suspect either 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 maybe abusing their peer(s)?

If a pupil is in immediate danger, or at risk of significant harm, a referral to children's social care (if the pupil is aged under 18) and/or the police will be made immediately. Any member of staff 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 p.3 of the Safeguarding Child Protection policy).

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 without delay (in accordance with p.3 of the Safeguarding Child Protection policy) so that a course of action can be agreed.

If a child speaks to a member of staff about peer-on-peer 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 procedure set out in Section 3. Procedures and Guidance of the Safeguarding Child Protection policy.

How will the School respond to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse?

The DSL will discuss the concerns or allegations with the member of staff who has reported them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected - see Appendix D²³ for further information

DSLs should always use their professional judgement to determine whether it is appropriate for alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required. In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with children's social care and/or any other external agencies on a no-names basis to determine the most appropriate response. Where the DSL considers or suspects that the behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic), the DSL should contact the Enfield Referral and Advice Team immediately, and in any event within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of it. The DSL will discuss the allegations/concerns with the Enfield Referral and Advice Team and agree on a course of action, which may include:

A – Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible

Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic), scenarios B, C or D should ordinarily apply. However, where support from local agencies is not available, the School may need to handle allegations/concerns internally. In these cases, the School will engage and seek advice from external specialists (either in the private and/or voluntary sector).

B – Undertake/contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of a child/children and their family

These services may, for example, include CAMHS, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team, and/or youth offending services²⁴.

C – Refer child/children to children's social care for a section 17 and/or 47 statutory assessment

As a matter of best practice, if an incident of peer-on-peer abuse requires referral to and action by children's social care and a strategy meeting is convened, then the School will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it, and the contexts to which the abuse was associated.

²³ Peer-on-Peer Abuse Protocol Flowchart

²⁴ Schools to tailor depending on their local authority's services and response to peer-on-peer abuse. Please note that where the school's local partnership has a Harmful Sexual Behaviour framework in place this framework will need to be referred to in the policy

D – Report alleged criminal behaviour to the Police

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police. However, there are some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police. For example, where the exchange of youth produced sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors (please see Appendix C). All concerns/allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis, and in light of the wider context.

Individual risk and needs assessment

Where there is an incident of peer-on-peer abuse, the School will carry out a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse. These risk assessments will:

- i. assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and/or faced by the child;
- ii. engage the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term (unless informing the parent will put the young person at risk of harm. Any decision not to inform the parents would generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed).
- iii. Consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child; and
- iv. be reviewed at regular intervals in light of the child's on-going needs to ensure that real progress is being made which benefits the child.

If at any stage the child's needs escalate, the DSL should contact the Enfield SPOE or Enfield MASH to determine the appropriate course of action.

Support and intervention for the pupil who has been harmed

- in all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, school counselling or one to one support via a mentor will be offered
- additional support from an external agency (such as the NSPCC and Bernados) will be offered where applicable
- where a pupil feels able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends, the pupil will continue to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.
- if the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.
- other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc.
- it may be that through the continued curriculum of PDC and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently. If a pupil feels particularly vulnerable, a risk assessment will be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

Disciplinary Action

- The School will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any pupil/s involved – any such action should address the abuse, the causes of it, and attitudes underlying it.

- Disciplinary action may sometimes be appropriate, including:
 - (a) to ensure that the child/children take(s) responsibility for and realise(s) the seriousness of their behaviour;
 - (b) to demonstrate to the child/children and others that peer-on-peer abuse can never be tolerated; and
 - (c) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children.

- However, these considerations must be balanced against the child's/children's own potential unmet needs and any safeguarding concerns.
- Before deciding on appropriate action, the School will always consider its duty to safeguard all children from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the peer-on-peer abuse and the causes of it.
- it is important to find out why the pupil who has displayed harmful behaviour has behaved in such a way.
- It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way.
- In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.
- Support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.
- Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour.
- This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying.
- In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the pupil to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service).
- If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.
- Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the pupil has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multiagency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of the agencies involved including the pupil and their parents.
- This may mean additional supervision of the pupil or protective strategies if the pupil feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.
- The school response might include a sanction (in accordance with the School Behaviour Policy and the Behaviour and Sanction Ladder) such as an SLT Supervision or fixed term exclusion to allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour.
- The School will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or 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.
- 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, or, where the Headteacher, in their absolute discretion, considers the actions of the pupil/s to damage the school's ethos or reputation.
- Engaging in Fair Access Panel Processes to assist with decision-making associated to managed moves and exclusions can also be beneficial.
- Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer-on-peer 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.

On-going proactive work to a contextual whole – school approach

The School's response to concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse should be part of on-going proactive work by the School to embed best practice and take a contextual whole-school approach to such abuse. As such the School's response can become part of its wider prevention work. This response may include the School asking itself a series of questions about the context in which an incident of peer-on-peer abuse occurred in the School, the local community in which the School is based, and the wider physical and online environment - such as:

- (a) what protective factors and influences exist within the School (such as positive peer influences, examples where peer-on-peer abuse has been challenged etc.) and how can the School bolster these?;
- (b) how (if at all) did the School's physical environment contribute to the abuse, and how can the School address this going forwards, for example by improving the School's safety, security and supervision?;
- (c) did wider gender norms, equality issues and/or societal attitudes contribute to the abuse?;
- (d) what was the relationship between the abuse and the cultural norms between staff and pupils, and how can these be addressed going forwards?;
- (e) 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?;
- (f) how have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had?;
- (g) 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 abuse? Does the School's PDC (Personal Development) curriculum and lessons that address underlying attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work?;
- (h) are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the School engages with parents to address peer-on-peer abuse issues?;
- (i) are there underlying issues that affect other schools in the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?;
- (j) 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?; and
- (k) were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently and/or to address common themes amongst the behaviour of other children in the School?
- (l) Answers to these questions can be developed into an action plan that is reviewed on a regular basis by school leadership and the DSL.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF FURTHER RESOURCES

Peer-on-peer abuse statistics

- The crime survey data from 2013:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214970/sexualoffending-overview-jan-2013.pdf.
This includes information around sexual violence; and street based violence perpetrated by young men.
- NSPCC:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/partner-exploitation-violenceteenage-intimate-relationships-report.pdf>
This 2009 report explores partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships.
- The Centre for Social Justice: <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Bullying-RT-Report-1.pdf>
This 2016 roundtable report looks at how the education sector can best support children who self-exclude due to bullying. It sets out a number of important statistics.
- Parliament publication:
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/9105.htm>
This 2016 publication examines the scale and impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools.

Identifying, assessing and responding to behaviour

The following links are designed to help professionals working with children to identify, categorise and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours by children:

- NSPCC's and Research in Practice's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2016/harmful-sexualbehaviour-framework/>, which contains the continuum model proposed by Simon Hackett (2010), and provides schools with information about what to expect from local partnerships.
- NSPCC guidance on the stages of normal sexual behaviour:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/healthy-sexual-behaviourchildren-young-people/>
- NSPCC:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexualbehaviour/research-resources/>
- Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool:
<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

Here is a Fair Access Panel Referral **form** to capture peer-on-peer abuse as a reason for a move or exclusion, and accompanying practitioner **video**.

Educating staff and children

- Serious Youth Violence – Home Office 'This is abuse campaign for schools':
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410010/2015-03-08_This_is_Abuse_campaign_summary_report__2_.pdf
- New youth produced imagery guidance:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf
- Anti-bullying guidance:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf
- Cyber bullying:
<http://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Cyberbullying-guidance2.pdf>
- Learning project briefing on the role of schools in preventing, and responding to, peer-on-peer abuse
- AVA Prevention platform has produced guidance for schools on how to develop [pupils'/students'] understanding and skills to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG):
<http://www.preventionplatform.co.uk/>
- Tender 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: <http://tender.org.uk/>
- Childnet:
<http://www.childnet.com/resources/pshetoolkit>

Support and interventions

- The charity, the Lucy Faithful Foundation (LFF), provides services to agencies working with children and their families – for those with problematic sexual behaviour on the internet and in the 'real world':
http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/files/inform_yp_agencies_leaflet.pdf.
LFF also provides information for parents and carers of children:
http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/files/inform_yp_parents_leaflet.pdf.
- Red Balloon Learning Centres:
<http://www.redballoonlearner.org/>
- Leap Confronting Conflict:
<http://www.leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk/>
- Barnardo's:
https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/sexual_exploitation/cse-professionals/csecan-you-see-it.htm

General

- Contextual Safeguarding Practitioners' Network:
www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk

**APPENDIX B –
CONTACT DETAILS FOR LOCAL AGENCIES AND SUMMARY OF REFERRAL PATHWAYS**

- Police 999 or 101 (non-urgent)
- Enfield Children’s Social Care: 020 8379 2507 (Mon-Thurs: 9 am-5 pm; Fri: 9 am- 4.45 pm). Out of office hours call: 020 8379 1000 (select option 2).
- Enfield Referral and Advice Team: 020 8379 5555 or 2507 or 2618
- LBE Safeguarding Lead 020 8379 2800 or 07508009180
- Enfield CAMHS: 0208 379 2000 or 0208 360 6771
- Barnet Children’s Social Services (MASH): 020 8359 4066
- Haringey Children’s Service: 020 8489 4592 / 5652 / 4582 (Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5pm; Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm) Or: 020 8348 3148
- Hackney Children's Service: 020 8356 5500 or 020 8356 2710
- Islington Children’s Social Services: 020 7527 7400; 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or 020 7226 0992 at all other times.
- Waltham Forest Children's Service: 020 8496 3000
- NSPCC: 0800 800 500
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Stop it now: 0800 1000 900

APPENDIX C

YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY POLICY

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 policy only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by children.²⁵ Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal, and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools (amongst other agencies) when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management. On this basis, this policy introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting'.⁴⁶ This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.

What is youth produced sexual imagery?

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

- 'Youth produced' includes children sharing images that they, or another child, have created of themselves.
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent'. A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the policy).

What types of incidents are covered by this policy?

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.²⁷
- Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child.²⁸
- Sexual imagery downloaded from the internet by a child and shared with a peer (also under the age of 18) or an adult.²⁹

²⁵ For the purposes of this appendix, 'child', 'youth' and 'young person' refers to anyone under the age of 18; 'adult' refers to anyone aged 18 or over

²⁶ This is in accordance with the new advice *Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding children*, which has been published by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety

²⁷ All such incidents should be responded to with reference to the School's [online safety policy], and in line with the School's child protection policy

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

Disclosure

Disclosure about youth produced 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 colleague, or inform the police directly.

All members of staff (including non-teaching staff) should be aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosure of incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery. This will be covered within staff training and within the School's child protection policy.

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 involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the School's Safeguarding Child Protection policy.

When an incident involving youth produced 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 children*.
- There should be subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate).
- 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.
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

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 produced sexual imagery, as part of its commitment to ensure that they are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities – as also referred to in the School's E-security and Online Safety policies.

APPENDIX D

**PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE PROTOCOL
FLOWCHART**

Any member of the Lатыmer School staff: handle concerns sensitively, appropriately and promptly

