



# The Globe Primary Academy

# Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

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Review: July 2024

## **What is peer-on-peer abuse?**

Peer-on-peer abuse is a growing concern and one that we have little reliable data on at present. In 2019 NSPCC reported a 29% increase in children seeking help from Childline due to peer-on-peer sexual abuse. In 2021 an Estyn report 'We Don't Tell Our Teachers' 61% of female pupils reported having personal experience of peer-on-peer harassment and 82% reported seeing others experience it. This compares with a lower proportion of male pupils (29% and 71% respectively).

There is evidence to suggest that criminal exploitation and sexual abuse, both directly and in the form of grooming, are among the biggest concerns here.

## **Peer-on-peer abuse includes:**

- Physical and sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment and violence
- Emotional harm
- On and offline bullying
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Gang activity

## **Bullying (including cyberbullying)**

Bullying (including Cyberbullying) is defined as "behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."

There are many different forms of bullying: This abuse is prevalent in the real world as well as the virtual, and as such can go unnoticed.

- 'Cyberbullying': involves sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails or instant messages, posting malicious material online (e.g. on social networking websites) or sending or posting offensive or degrading images and videos. Cyberbullying was of particular concern during Lockdown, when children and young people were working remotely
- Sexual, Sexist and Transphobic Bullying: includes any behaviour, whether physical or nonphysical, where sexuality is used as a weapon
- Homophobic Bullying: targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation)

- Disablist Bullying: targets a young person solely based on their disability

## **Gang activity and youth violence**

This includes where a child or young person can be exploited (sexually and/or physically/criminally) by a gang, but this is not necessarily the reason why gangs are formed.

- Gangs - mainly comprising men and boys aged 13-25 years old, who take part in many forms of criminal activity (e.g. knife crime or robbery) who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers, for example, a territory, a name, or sometimes clothing.
- Groups - involves people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, coordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way. Types of exploitation may include using sex as a weapon between rival gangs, as a form of punishment to fellow gang members and/or as a means of gaining status within the hierarchy of the gang. Children and young people may be forced to gain entry into the gang by carrying out an initiation process that may be harmful to them and/or may inflict harm to others.

## **Who is at risk of peer-on-peer abuse?**

Research suggests that girls and young women are more at risk of abusive behaviours perpetrated by their peers; however, it can also affect boys and young men, those with special educational needs and disabilities, LGBTQ Children and young people, Looked After Children and those who are from different communities.

## **Supporting the victim and alleged perpetrator**

Abuse that involves or is believed to involve sexual assault and violence must always result in multi-agency response. As well as supporting and protecting the victim, professionals need to consider whether the perpetrator could be a victim of abuse and also have experienced abuse. Perpetrators may also be in danger of being subjected to abuse post an allegation. Measures to support them should be put into place here too.

In situations where the children or young people are in the same class or even school, risk assessments will be put into place, to safeguard both parties, these will consider how best to keep the two parties apart whilst at school and also whilst travelling to and

from school. If the allegation involves rape and/ or assault by penetration, then the statutory guidance states that the perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes. Any separation arrangements will continue for as long as is necessary to make sure children are safe.

Consideration to where the alleged abuse took place will also be given and will include ways that this can be made safe/ mitigated. The *Globe* will consider this not only for their grounds and buildings but also if the abuse took place in a public space. Whilst The *Globe* cannot act on this alone, we will ensure a multi agency approach.

It is also key that parents are aware of what constitutes acceptable language and behaviour at all times from the pupils- both within and outside of school.

### **The Globe has:**

- a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children
- a system that allows children to report concerns and enable their pupil voice - Learning mentors, class adults, anonymous question / worry box etc.
- a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of peer on peer abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported
- Has regular reviews to identify patterns of inappropriate behaviour.
- A vulnerable pupils list which is reviewed weekly by SLT
- All staff, including the wider school adults, have regular training for identifying and supporting victims of peer on peer abuse.