



St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Managing Allegations against Other Pupils

(Peer on Peer Abuse) Policy

To be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and the E Safety Policy

School Designated Safeguarding lead	Maxine Sewell – Head Teacher
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Ann Marie Feldman (Acting Deputy Head)
Safeguarding Governor	Carol Lawler (Chair)
ART (Action and Response Team)	01454 866000 (Mon – Fri 9am – 5 pm)
Emergency Duty Team	01454 615165 (out of hours and weekends)

Rational

At St Paul's Catholic Primary School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All our children must be free from harm by adults and other pupils.

We recognise that some pupils will occasionally negatively affect the learning and well-being of others – pupils and staff and such behavior will be dealt with under our Positive Behaviour Policy.

The terms “children”, “child” or “young person” refers to anyone under the age of 18 years old.

Introduction

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

In most instances, the conduct of our pupils towards one another will be covered by the schools behaviour policy and the schools expectation that all pupils follow “The St Paul's Way”. However we recognise some allegations may 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 might take any form, including the use of technology and social media.

Definition

- 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 (DfE 2017) captures children and young people under the age of 18, who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age – including another child and/or young person.
- The definition for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour refers to any young person under the age of 18, who engage in “sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or state of development” (Rich, 2011). Children and young people can also engage in harmful sexual behaviour online or through the use of technology e.g. grooming, exposing others to extreme/illegal pornography, sexual images and/or chat (Belton and Hollis, 2016)
- Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences (as opposed to relationships/contexts) such as violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery or gun or knife crime (Metropolitan Police, 2016)

The Safeguarding Implications of Sexual Activity between Young People*

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 one at least is below the age of consent) and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation.

- Taken from The Safeguarding Implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review(2015)

Prevention

At St Paul's School we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Providing PSHE as part of the curriculum, which will help pupils develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, 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
- Liaising and working with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments for pupils that are identified as posing a potential risk to other students
- Liaising with specialists to deliver appropriate targeted work and support to pupils identified as being at potential risk

Allegations against other pupils (safeguarding issues)

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

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

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

- Is being made against an older pupils and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable child
- Is of a possible criminal nature
- Puts other children in school at risk or raises the risk factor for others
- Indicates that other pupils may have been harmed or at risk of 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 others to carry out violence
- Forcing others to use drugs, alcohol or other substances

Emotional Abuse

- Bullying
- Threats or 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 "Sexting in Schools and Colleges", 2016)

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging/enticing other pupils to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
- Sharing (indecent) 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 as soon as possible. (See contact details on the front of policy).
- A factual record must be kept (as normal safeguarding Child protection procedures) and updated with all outcomes and actions
- The incident should not be investigated at this time
- The DSL will contact the Access and Response Team (ART) to discuss the case and make a formal referral where appropriate
- If the allegation indicates a crime has taken place, ART will refer the case to the police
- Parents/Carers of both the alleged victim and the student being complained about should be informed – this must be discussed during the consultation with ART
- A risk assessment will be carried out and actioned in order to protect all parties involved, this may involve a supervision plan
- It may be appropriate, for a fixed period of time, to exclude the pupil against whom the allegation has been made – in line with the schools behaviour policy
- Police and Social Care will lead any investigation, however where neither police nor social care thresholds are met, school will undertake a thorough investigation following the appropriate procedures and policies
- Support will be given to all pupils involved and where appropriate they should be in attendance at all relevant meetings and sign and agree to any plan put in place
- The plan should be monitored and review dates set.

If Allegations are Made Directly to Other Agencies

In some circumstances, parents/carers or the alleged victim(s) may disclose to other settings or agencies. In these cases (if not police or social care) these agencies should make referrals to ART or the police.

ART or the police should liaise directly with the DSL for the school in order to inform them of the allegations/situation.

All professionals involved can support the risk assessment and management of such allegations.

Police Action and Responsibility

Avon and Somerset 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-aged child and the school is already involved, the police should keep the DSL for that setting updated with developments in the case. In South Gloucestershire, schools receive domestic abuse reports where the children are involved in those cases where the police identify a safeguarding need.

Where a report is made concerning a school aged child and the school is not already involved, the police must always give active consideration to sharing 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 the appropriate measures to take should be made by the setting with advice and 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 in the setting, safe.

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.

Approval and Review

This policy was approved by the **FGB** at its meeting on **26th September 2019** and its review will be delegated to the Ethos, Environment and Enrichment Committee.

The committee has programmed a review of this document to take place annually and this review will be noted in the minutes of the committee.

Next Planned Review Date is **Autumn 2020**

Signed:

Head Teacher

Chair of Governors

Date: