



Peer on Peer Abuse
Statement of Intent for
Gusford Primary
School 2023-2024

Statement of Intent in conjunction with Gusford Primary School Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy 2023

Through this Statement we aim to ensure that:

At Gusford Primary school we will ensure that we treat every disclosure or allegation of peer on peer abuse with the upmost care. We will speak with all concerned and may implement a Student Support Plan and a Risk Assessment which could include a number of key elements such as different start and finish times or working in different buildings, we aim to meet the needs of all concerned in line with any further investigation being held in school or by outside agencies.

At Gusford Primary school we recognise that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually and emotionally; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up'. The setting will take this as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult, and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue.

We also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by peer on peer / child on child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

What is peer on peer / child on child abuse?

- Peer on peer / child on child abuse features physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of a child/young person by their peers. This is most likely to include but is not limited to:
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying);
 - Abuse within intimate partner relationships;
 - 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 standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
 - Upskirting¹, 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
 - Initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.
- It can affect any child/young person, sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:
 - Those living with domestic abuse or intra-familial abuse in their histories
 - Young people in care
 - Those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling or friend

¹ The Voyeurism (Offences) Act came into force on April 2019, upskirting is a criminal offence and anyone of any gender can be a victim

- Black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- There is recognition of the gendered nature of peer on peer / child on child abuse; it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators. However both girls and boys can experience peer on peer / child on child abuse but they are likely to experience it differently i.e. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group).
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children/young people spend their time - home, school, peer group and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer.
- Peer on peer / child on child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another, and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible.
- While perpetrators of peer on peer / child on child abuse pose a risk to others they are often victims of abuse themselves.

Actions Gusford Primary will take

At Gusford Primary we deal with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day to day basis and most cases will be dealt with via school based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- Positive Behaviour Policy, including bullying/ online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- E-safety Policy which includes sexting/ 'youth produced sexual imagery' and extremist material
- Relationships education/ relationships and sex education

The setting will also act to minimise the risk of peer on peer / child on child abuse by ensuring the establishment provides a safe environment, promotes positive standards of behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can raise concerns and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via PSHE and other curriculum opportunities. This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

Action on concerns

Peer to peer /child on child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made. In all cases the member of staff should take the concerns seriously and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe.

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the child and on a case by case basis with the Designated Safeguarding Lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as Children's Social care and the Police as required.