Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Executive Summary:

- At Eastbourne College we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with as soon as possible and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the pupil, with full consideration to impact on that pupil's emotional and mental health and well-being.

- Peer on peer abuse is very closely linked to the College anti-bullying policy and child protection policy, as well as other key documents which include mobile devices policy, code of behaviour and the College Rules.

- Staff should be able to recognise the importance of distinguishing between developmentally expected behaviour and problematic behaviour and highly abnormal / abusive behaviour.

- As covered in the Child Protection policy, abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific eg girls being sexually touched / assaulted and boys being subject to initiation / hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2019).

Background

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019 states that

'*Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with*'

''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 order to protect children, we need to be aware of the level and nature of risk to which pupils are or may be exposed, take a whole-school approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse and use the policy as a preventative measure, recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and encourage pupils to speak up should they or a friend feel unsafe.

Aims of the Policy

- To be preventative and minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse
- To help identify and manage peer on peer abuse
- To be a working document alongside the child protection policy and other relevant policies

Definition

What is peer on peer abuse?

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), friendships, and wider peer associations

It can take various forms including (but not limited to): bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth produced sexual imagery, youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and / or be gender–based.

Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

Types of Abuse

Sexually harmful behaviour / sexual abuse (including inappropriate sexualised language, touching, assault). The Hackett continuum model demonstrates the range of sexual behaviours, which in turn is useful to understand the level of behaviour and therefore how to respond. See Appendix A.

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

Bullying including cyber bullying. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason eg size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

In assessing if the behaviour is bullying it is worth considering the level of aggression and if it is repeated behaviour or a significant one-off incident.
- An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Relational aggression is a form of bullying set to intentionally manipulate and damage the relationships of their victims. This may include; spreading rumours, making friendships conditional, making fun of the individual's appearance, coercing or encouraging them to take a particular course of "negative" action or excluding the individual from a social group.

Relational abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and / or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18). Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and / or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

Prejudiced behaviour refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs,

ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Responsibility of Staff

- Identify the concern, take all concerns seriously never tolerate abuse as "banter"
- Log on PUPIL as a pastoral concern
- In particular, consideration must always be given to whether an issue should be responded to through the first stages of the bullying policy, as high-level bullying, or as peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should seek advice and support from the DSLs if they have any doubt.
- Inform the DSL
- Support all those involved (victim(s) and perpetrator(s)) through pastoral care system (tutor, hsm, medical centre, DSLs, friends, home)

Action and Ongoing Review

- Identify locations that may be vulnerable for pupils
- Language: Try to steer aware from victim and perpetrator, more understanding of the child and the reasoning behind their behaviour before labelling
- Identify any pupils who may be vulnerable (Hsms)
- Communicate with those who need to be aware (Hsms / tutors / DSLs)
- Actively promote gender equality and healthy relationships (diversity champion in SCR / raise awareness with Prefects, role of the College Peer Mentors)
- Pupils: Raise awareness and frequent messaging about healthy relationships. Examples of what is unhealthy and what is abusive. Link to positive mental health.
- Whilst Hackett's model is focused on sexual abuse, it is a useful generic starting point for categorising other types of peer-on-peer abuse

Date of this policy:	September 2019
Policy drawn up by:	GETH
Date of next policy review:	August 2020
Date for publication of revised policy:	September 2020

References:

Internal
- Anti-bullying policy
- Sexting policy
- ICT Acceptable use policy
- Mobile phone and mobile devices policy
- Safeguarding and Child protection policy
- College Rules
- Code of behaviour

External references

- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (May 2018) Part 5 KCSIE

- Preventing and tackling bullying (July 2017)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019)

- A continuum of behaviours (Hackett 2010)

- Protocol for Managing Peer on Peer Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Schools, Settings and Colleges (December 2018)

https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/4428/protocol-for-managing-peer-on-peer-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools-4-final.pdf

https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/farrer--co-safeguarding-peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit-2019.pdf

Appendix A

A continuum of behaviours

It is vital for professionals to distinguish normal from abnormal sexual behaviours. Chaffin et al (2002, p208) suggest a child's sexual behaviour should be considered abnormal if it:

- occurs at a frequency greater than would be developmentally expected

- interferes with the child's development

- occurs with coercion, intimidation, or force

- is associated with emotional distress

- occurs between children of divergent ages or developmental abilities

- repeatedly recurs in secrecy after intervention by caregivers.

Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
• Developmentally expected	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	• Problematic and concerning behaviours	• Victimising intent or outcome	• Physically violent sexual abuse
• Socially acceptable	• Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	• Includes misuse of power	• Highly intrusive
• Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	• Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	• No overt elements of victimisation	• Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance	• Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/ or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
• Shared decision making	• Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Consent issues may be unclear	• Intrusive	• Sadism
		• May lack reciprocity or equal power	• Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim	
		• May include levels of compulsivity	• May include elements of expressive violence	

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1 Responses

2 Prevention

3 Assessment

4 Interventions

5 Developments