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Penistone St John's Primary School

Sexual Harassment, Online Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy



Sexual Harassment, Online Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy – September 2021

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As set out throughout this guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report

We want everyone to feel included, respected and safe at St Johns'. We will not tolerate verbal abuse, which includes name-calling and sexist comments.

Sexist comments are those which discriminate based on sex, particularly against women.

Sexism also includes behaviour or attitudes that create stereotypes of social roles based on sex.

All staff and pupils are encouraged to call out and/or report this behaviour. If pupils make these comments, we will:

- Ask them to apologise to anyone the comment was directed at
- Support and educate them to improve their behaviour
- Monitor their behaviour for any recurrence
- Escalate the sanction (see detailed outline below) if the pupil refuses to apologise in the first instance and/or the behavior observed is more severe

Our RSHE curriculum will cover what healthy and respectful behaviour towards one another looks like.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos¹³ (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

What to do if you observe behaviours or a child makes a disclosure:

Systems at St Johns' are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible. This allows children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. It is important that ALL staff adopt an attitude of 'it could happen here' in order to remain vigilant and take all disclosures very seriously.

If you're dealing with an allegation of peer-on-peer abuse, you should follow our safeguarding policy. The policy refers to locally agreed multi-agency arrangements put in place by our local safeguarding partners.

Our 3 safeguarding partners are:

- Local authority (LA)
- Clinical commissioning group within the LA
- Chief officer of police within the LA

All staff need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. They should address inappropriate behaviour as soon as it happens, as this can help prevent abusive/violent behaviour further down the line. This is explained in paragraphs 429 and 430 of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, which you should read alongside the DfE's advice on sexual violence and harassment.

Staff should be clear on:

- The school's safeguarding policy and procedures
- Their role in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding to it if they believe a child may be at risk
- The indicators of peer-on-peer abuse, how to identify it and respond to reports
- The importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour between peers - if they don't, it can create an unsafe environment and lead to a culture that normalises abuse

You should also be aware that:

- Safeguarding issues can manifest in peer-on-peer abuse
- Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues

- Children are at risk of both online abuse and face to face abuse, both of which can take place inside and outside of school
- Children can abuse their peers online through:
 - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages
 - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
 - Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content
- Peer-on-peer abuse may be taking place, even if not reported

This is explained in paragraphs 24, 29 and 46 of KCSIE.

Respond immediately to concerns and disclosures. Staff should not wait for a disclosure.

If you have concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on these immediately. Indicators could include:

- A conversation suggesting a child may have been harmed (this may be a conversation the staff member overhears rather than is part of)
- A child's behaviour

If the member of staff who takes the disclosure is not the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), or a deputy DSL, the DSL or deputy should be informed **as soon as possible**. This should be done through the school's reporting and recording system: CPOMs

The importance of reporting behaviour:

'Lower-level' incidents are far more frequent than severe incidents, and can underpin problematic 'normalised' culture. At St Johns' we aim to dismantle this by encouraging pupils to call out and report anything that makes them uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they think it is.

It is vital that we, as a school, let pupils know that we will:

- Take their safety and wellbeing seriously
- Listen to them
- Act on their concerns
- Not tolerate or accept abuse

We will also highlight the supportive and protective aspect of a 'zero-tolerance' approach and make it clear that reporting incidents benefits everyone, including:

- The victim(s): by stopping the problem and getting the help and support they need
- Other people: by preventing it happening to someone else
- The alleged perpetrator(s): catching problematic behaviour early can help them avoid criminal offences later in life

Although we adopt a zero-tolerance approach to any sexually inappropriate behaviour at St Johns', it is important to understand that different sanctions will be appropriate for different 'levels' of sexual harassment and sexist comments. While we certainly won't tolerate this behaviour of any kind, we won't demonise anyone, but will support and listen to all of the pupils involved.

It is vital to reassure pupils that our response will be proportionate, considered, supportive and decided on a case-by-case basis. Based on this, the following sanctions will be considered:

In all cases:

- A verbal warning and, if appropriate, keeping the child behind to apologise to their peer

- A phone call home to parents

Only after serious incidents:

- A period of internal exclusion (length dependent on incident)
- Fixed-term (length dependent on incident) or permanent exclusion

The response to each incident should be proportionate and, where possible, lower level incident such as sexist comments should be addressed through education, our curriculum and the way the school promote respect. We will also look to balance the importance of safeguarding other pupils with the need to support, educate and protect the alleged perpetrator(s).

To do this, we must consider:

- The age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s)
- The nature and frequency of the alleged incident(s)
- How to balance the sanction alongside education and safeguarding support (if necessary, these should take place at the same time)

The use of exclusion will only be used in the most severe cases.

Online Safety (in line with KCSIE updates 2021):

At St Johns', we adopt a belief that 'it could happen here' and as a result, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Deliver an effective approach to online safety, which empowers us to protect and educate the whole school community in its use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate an incident, where appropriate

In line with current guidance, we have identified that this also applies to that fact that pupils may use mobile and smart technology to:

- Sexually harass their peers
- Share indecent images: consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups)
- View and share pornography and other harmful content

To do this, we have considered the 4 key areas of risk that have been identified when it comes to staying safe online: content, contact, conduct and commerce. These are defined in paragraph 124 of KCSIE 2021 as follows:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying;
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

As part of our curriculum offer, children will be taught:

In **Key Stage 1**, pupils will be taught to:

- Use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private
- Identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies

Pupils in **Key Stage 2** will be taught to:

- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly
- Recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact

By the **end of primary school**, pupils will know:

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- How information and data is shared and used online
- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in other subjects where relevant.

Where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some pupils with SEND.

For further information and guidance on staying safe online for staff, children and parents see Annex D (page 150-152) of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.