



Vyners School

Child on Child Abuse Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Vyners School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We recognise that children may face different forms of abuse and we work together to protect children from harm. Children can be abused by other children. This is known as 'child-on-child abuse' or previously 'peer-on-peer abuse'. The school is committed to preventing child-on-child abuse and will protect children that may be suffering, or at risk of suffering harm perpetrated by another child. We recognise that child-on-child abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". We appreciate that often there are barriers to reporting child on child abuse and as such, we understand that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

This policy has been written to

- ensure that the school, including all of those working on behalf of the school, follow all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about Vyners School works to prevent child-on-child abuse;
- provide stakeholders with information about how Vyners School responds to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to child-on-child abuse; and to
- provide stakeholders with information about how the school continues to support victims of child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

2 DEFINITIONS

The following terms and associated definitions will be used throughout this policy.

- 'Staff' or 'members of staff' refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school.
- Child/children refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as; protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Child-on-child abuse (or peer-on-peer abuse) refers to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The

children involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include (but is not limited to):

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). Bullying in whatever form is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- 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
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (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,
- 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).

3. LEGISLATION AND RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

This policy adheres to and must be read alongside the school Safeguarding Policy.

All staff and stakeholders should also refer to the Safeguarding Policy in relation to any safeguarding matters or concerns.

This policy is part of a suite of school policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. For further details, please see:

- Behaviour Policy
- RSE Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

This policy adheres to all statutory guidance and legislation, including (but not limited to):

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Equality Act (2010)

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and any other relevant statutory guidance.
- Ensure that the school's safeguarding policy includes all relevant information as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022).
- Ensure that policies, procedures and training in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The Headteacher will:

- Uphold all responsibilities under the school safeguarding and child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and any other relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.
- Ensure that this policy and all other relevant policies are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead about ongoing enquiries, particularly those under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes education opportunities to minimise incidents of child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that the school site promotes positive behaviour and minimises the opportunity for child-on-child abuse.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:

- Undertake any training required to uphold their post and the responsibilities outlined in this policy.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Manage disclosures of and concerns about child-on-child abuse.
- Make referrals to Children's Services and the police as appropriate.
- Ensure that this policy is known, understood and used appropriately by all staff.

Staff will:

- Recognise that the responsibility for dealing with child-on-child abuse incidents rests with all staff.
- Respond to parents'/guardians' concerns regarding child-on-child abuse issues raised.
- Record all incidents of child-on-child abuse on CPOMS and make referrals to the DSL where appropriate.
- Use a restorative approach towards incidents of child-on-child abuse, at least in the first instance.

Parents will:

- Stress to their child the importance of social behaviour and responsible use of social media.
- Report any concerns which they have concerning either victims or perpetrators.
- Actively support the school in strategies preventing child on child abuse.

- Recognise that the school has an impartial overview of incidents and trust that these will be investigated and actioned in a fair manner, using a restorative approach where appropriate.

Students will:

- Be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of bullying and the rationale behind them.
- Have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences.

5 MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

The school actively engages with its Local Safeguarding Partnership in relation to child-on-child abuse and works closely with the London Borough of Hillingdon Children's Services, the police and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures, as well as with other schools. These are essential relationships in the prevention, early identification, and the appropriate handling of child-on-child abuse.

Working together with local agencies is essential to understand any underlying trends and patterns of behaviour which are emerging in this wider context. Often, child on child abuse cases are complex and where the incident cannot be managed by the school itself, it is imperative that effective partnership working is involved, especially when wider safeguarding concerns exist.

6 SIGNS OF CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

The following may be signs that a student is experiencing child-on-child abuse, although there may be other explanations:

- Emotional - losing interest in school, poor attendance or punctuality, anxiety, tearfulness, signs of depression, lack of confidence, withdrawn, lacking in confidence, unusual shows of temper, headaches and stomach aches
- Physical - unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes or schoolwork. Loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches.
- Behavioural - asking to be taken to and or collected from school, frequent requests to attend the welfare room, taking longer to get home, asking for money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

7 STUDENTS THAT ARE VULNERABLE

The influence of peers is possibly the most significant factor in a child's social development and, as such, anyone can be subject to child-on-child abuse. However, there are certain groups who may be more at risk than others. For example, those with protected characteristics such as:

- Those who are socially isolated from their peer-group
- Those who are questioning their sexuality and identity
- Those with SEND needs: and a school must be careful not merely to assume that indicators of possible abuse relate only to their specific learning needs and are not investigated beyond this assumption
- Those with different ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

8 PREVENTION OF CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE THROUGH EDUCATION

The school recognises and values the importance of education in the prevention of child on child abuse. There is a comprehensive RSE programme delivered to all students with age appropriate resources to help support and guide them into healthy behaviours. The curriculum has a robust coverage of topics such as healthy relationships, consent, personal identity and online safety.

The school delivers regular assemblies and sessions celebrating diversity, tackling discrimination and promoting equality.

9 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OR DISCLOSURES

Disclosures made by a student:

- The school takes child-on-child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures immediately.
- The school creates a culture in which students feel comfortable to disclose incidents of child on child abuse and they can report this verbally or via email.

If a member of staff has a concern about child-on-child abuse, or if a child discloses child-on-child abuse to them, they will refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and log the disclosure on CPOMS, they will listen to the student and act in line with the school's Safeguarding policy.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take contextual factors into account when managing the report and complete a decision making log where necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will always consider the following;

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities;
- the impact on the victim;
- if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse; and
- if there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff.

Depending on the nature of the incident/s, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may

- Seek further information from those involved and witnesses.
- Undertake a risk assessment to ascertain steps necessary to safeguard all children involved, adults and other children.
- Decide to manage the concern internally.
- Organise a meeting with relevant staff and agencies to assess risk and agree a safety plan.
- Refer the victim and/or the perpetrator to local services for Early Help.
- Refer the case to Children's Services via a MASH referral.
- Liaise with social workers working with children involved (if applicable).
- Make a referral to the police.

Incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual harassment:

- The School takes a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) is an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and is not tolerated; it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are thoroughly investigated, addressed and logged; victims are fully supported by staff. Along with providing support to students who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the school provides the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

Supporting the victim:

- The school recognises that child-on-child abuse has a significant impact on young people and all child involved are likely to need ongoing support. The school will:
 - ensure appropriate support is be put in place for the victim involved in child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
 - do everything they can to maintain the victim's normal routine
 - do everything they can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment as a result of their disclosure.
 - allocate specific members of staff to support the victim

If a victim of child-on-child abuse moves to a new setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the necessary information to ensure that support for the child continues.

Supporting the alleged perpetrator:

- The school will:
 - ensure that an alleged perpetrator continues to receive a suitable education and will consider, if necessary, a range of options in continuing educational provision. Options may include moving to different classes, being educated in another school setting or alternative provision such as tutoring
 - continue to safeguard the alleged perpetrator and provide them with support. We recognise that children who perpetrate child-on-child abuse may be being abused themselves
 - create a plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse
 - where relevant, apply appropriate sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of child-on-child abuse. In this case, the school will follow the school Behaviour Policy in determining the level and severity of sanction.
- If the alleged perpetrator moves to another setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information as necessary to safeguard the individual and other child at the new setting.

When there is police involvement:

- In the case of police investigation the school will:
 - Implement a risk assessment
 - Take measures to limit interaction between the students in school; this may include but not be limited to:
 - timetable changes
 - allocated areas at social times

- Liaise closely with the police where appropriate
- Communicate with parents of both parties
- Allocate designated members of staff as a point of contact for each child and external agencies.

In a case where criminal processes and/or bail conditions are implemented the school will be guided by the following:

- The police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm. This could involve the use of police bail with conditions, prior to a suspect appearing in court or court bail with or without conditions after the first appearance.
- Alternatively, the person suspected of an offense could be ‘released under investigation’ (RUI). People released under RUI can have no conditions attached to their release from custody and it is possible for a person on bail also to have no conditions.
- Whatever arrangements are in place, the school or college will need to consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within their institution.
- Particular regard should be given to: the additional stress and trauma that might be caused to a victim within the institution; the potential for the suspected person to intimidate the victim or a witness; the need to ensure that any risk management measures strike a balance between management of risk and the rights of an unconvicted person (e.g. rights to privacy, family life, etc).
- Careful liaison with the police investigators should help to develop a balanced set of arrangements.
- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. Schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other children in the school or college. The risk assessment will help inform any decision.
- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment and consider suitable action in line with the behaviour policy.
- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. It will be important that the school or college ensure both the victim and perpetrator(s) remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as “no further action” (NFA) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school or college should continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated or was withdrawn does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. Schools and colleges should discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support.
- The alleged perpetrator(s) is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.



VYNERS SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Schools have a duty of care for students and staff alike and, to this end, Vyners School strives to create a safe and happy environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable. We believe that school should provide a safe, caring and purposeful place for young people to learn and for adults to work. Our approach fosters an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety both on the premises of the school and out of school hours.

The purpose of this policy is to make clear to students, staff and all who visit our school their roles and responsibilities and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs.

BACKGROUND

This policy draws on Department for Education guidance on dealing with bullying, particularly 'Preventing and tackling bullying – advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies' 2017. The policy should be read in conjunction with the School Behaviour Policy and is available on the school's website and can be requested from the school office.

Legal framework

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour with establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular:

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;

Provides that every school must have measure to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students

The Equality Act 2010

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going. The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions, therefore the harm could be physical, emotional, or both.

A paper for the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) outlined four key characteristics:

- repetitive and persistent
- intentionally harmful
- involving an imbalance of power
- causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence

Bullying behaviour can be direct or indirect

Direct bullying can include physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

Indirect bullying can include persistently ignoring a student so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the Internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

Bullying differs from 'friendship fall-out', or other aggressive behaviour:

"If two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. It is not bullying." (Olweus 1989, 1993, 1999)

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

All incidents of friendship fall-outs and aggressive behaviours will be dealt with via the school behaviour policy and pastoral systems.

HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

Students who are, or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender can be victims of homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or gender- based bullying. This abuse can be either verbal or physical. Vyners School will not tolerate bullying on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. Students are taught to accept one another for their differences. All incidents of a homophobic biphobic or transphobic nature will be logged and the behaviour policy employed. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident and may be asked to attend a meeting together with their child, which may also include the presence of the Safer Schools Officer.

RACIST BULLYING

Students from various backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, religions can be the victim of racist bullying. This abuse can be either verbal or physical. Vyners School will not tolerate bullying on the basis of religion, ethnicity or background. Students are taught to accept one another for their differences. All incidents of a Racist nature will be logged. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident and may be asked to attend a meeting together with their child, which may also include the presence of the Safer Schools Officer.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber-bullying uses technology to harm a person, group of people or a relationship and can happen both inside and outside of school and at any time of the day or night.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. The school will follow guidance as set out in the [‘Searching, Screen and Confiscation: advice for schools 2022’](#)

REPORTING BULLYING

Students are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another student or by an adult. The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the bullying. Whenever a student experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school. Information can be reported to a member of staff, a tutor, a Year Leader or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

Teaching and non-teaching staff, who feel that they are being bullied in the workplace, either by a staff member or by a student, can report their concern to their line manager or Headteacher. If such managers are involved, staff may contact the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

We are a ‘telling’ school and promote a ‘no bystanders’ approach to reporting bullying. Students are regularly taught the difference between ‘telling’ and ‘snitching’

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Stage 1: Creating an environment of awareness

Vyners School embedded values of Community, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour form the basis of creating a safe learning environment and anti-bullying culture. Through the schools rewards and consequences system, RSE sessions and well-being activities students are empowered to recognise bullying and how they should respond to it. Daily tutor contact time and access to the Pastoral Mentor and wider pastoral team ensure that students know that bullying can be reported at any point during the school day.

Stage 2: If bullying occurs:

Rewards and Consequences System; Students who perpetrate acts of bullying will be subject to the consequences set out in the school's behaviour policy.

The Restorative Approach; We recognise that young people make mistakes and that after a bullying incident it is essential for all parties to feel that they are safe and are able to function in the school community. The restorative approach encourages the reporting of incidents by reducing the victims' anxieties about repercussions and educates the perpetrators, by increasing their understanding of the difficulties caused by bullying, and encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions.

Based upon legislation in the Children Act (1989), in serious cases, it may also be appropriate to consider bullying as a child protection concern if 'there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school must follow the school's safeguarding policy and may draw on external professionals to support the victim or to tackle issues which have contributed to a child becoming a perpetrator of bullying.

As a last resort, the school may report a bullying issue to the police; particularly if staff feel that the nature of the bullying contravenes the law and other measures have been unsuccessful in preventing its recurrence.

Ratification by Local Governing Body

Ratification Date **November 2022**

Date of Next Review: **November 2024**