



Brentford School for Girls

Child on Child Abuse Policy

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Introduction

Brentford School for Girls is committed to ensuring all staff and students feel safe and secure. School life is calm and a purposeful environment is underpinned by relationships built upon mutual respect. Our expectation is that all students and staff will behave in appropriate and socially acceptable ways. Pupils must feel that they can come to school and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Every member of staff has a key role to play in promoting and sustaining the highest standards of behaviour for learning. We aim to provide a safe learning environment where everyone feels able to enjoy, achieve and fulfil their potential free from abuse and bullying.

The well-being of every young person is of paramount importance; every learner has the right to a high quality learning experience at school, free from harm, neglect and abuse. All staff have a duty of care and a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of students

We acknowledge that bullying and abuse in some form happens, however bullying or abuse of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. If bullying or abuse does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We believe that it is possible to take action not only to help the victims of abuse or bullying, but the abusers/bullies too, who are often very troubled individuals.

At Brentford School for Girls we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

There is a consistent approach to how abuse or bullying incidents are dealt with. Parents are involved at the earliest opportunity. Students are empowered to develop effective personal strategies rather than building dependency upon teachers and others to solve issues.

Aim

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that 'Governing bodies and proprietors have a strategic leadership responsibility for their schools safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under this legislation. They must have regard to this guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training in their school are effective and comply with the law at all times. Headteachers should ensure that the policies and procedures, adopted by the governing bodies (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect), are understood and followed by staff.)

Whilst it is recommended that Child on Child abuse is dealt with as part of the Child Protection Policy and procedures, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with Child on Child abuse, this policy has been formulated and is designed to be read in conjunction with the overarching principles of the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

The aim of this Policy is therefore to ensure that any form of Child on Child abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently and victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Consequently, when allegations are made and appropriate responses put in place, this will reduce the extent of harm to those involved and minimise the potential impact on emotional and mental health and well-being, including clarity that the victim is reassured that they are not creating a problem or feel ashamed for making a report,

Entitlement

We accept and embrace our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments). Each child in our school, regardless of their background or home circumstances could be the victim of Child on Child abuse.

They are therefore all entitled to the same degree of protection and support. Each child in our school will also develop the skills appropriate to their age and understanding which could enable prevention of abuse by learning about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

Introduction

What is Child on Child abuse?

Child on Child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group of individuals which can be a one-off incident or repeated over time.

Child on Child abuse is behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Child on Child abuse can take many forms including serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, financial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups steered by a dislike for a person's:

- race
- religion
- gender
- sexual orientation
- special educational needs or disabilities

or where a child

- is adopted or in care
- has caring responsibilities
- is suffering from a health problem
- is frequently on the move (e.g. those from military families or the travelling community)
- is experiencing a personal or family crisis
- has actual or perceived differences, (e.g. physical or cultural differences)

These types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns and all staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they do not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build a trusted relationship with children and young people which facilitates communication.

Abusive behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

There may be reports where the alleged incident is between two pupils from the same or different schools but is alleged to have taken place away from the school premises. The safeguarding principles, and the school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils remain the same regardless of where the incident took place and regardless of whether the incident was online or offline.

Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'girls being girls'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. We will not dismiss abusive behaviour between children as 'normal' and our thresholds for investigating claims and allegations are the same as for any other type of abuse.

Preventing violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our school's first priority but we also acknowledge that emotional abuse can be just as damaging if not more so than physical violence. We recognise that abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim.

This could involve perpetrators of abuse having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

We also acknowledge that low level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as 'banter' or 'horseplay', it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

Contextual Safeguarding

Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to Child on Child abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of Child on Child abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. Social care assessments should

consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside of the home, so it is important that schools provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

This can be done by adopting a 'contextual safeguarding' approach and by ensuring that our response to incidents of Child on Child abuse takes into account any potential complexity.

This policy and procedures encapsulate a contextual safeguarding approach, which:

- is an approach to safeguarding children that recognises their experiences of significant harm in extra-familial contexts and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities
- recognises that as children enter adolescence they spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home in public environments (including on the internet) within which they may experience abuse; and
- considers intervention

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that can occur between children and the following list is not exhaustive:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

Bullying – physical, name calling, homophobic etc.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Young people who bully and those who are bullied can have long-term problems.

To be considered as bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- 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

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for cyberbullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile devices, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. to harass, threaten or intimidate someone.

Cyberbullying can fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1) which states that a person who sends electronic communications which are “indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim” would be deemed to be have committed an offence.

The Communications Act 2003 (Section 127) further supports this and states that a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or if for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another he/she sends a message by means of a public electronic communications network knowing that the message is false.

If the behaviour involves the taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 (consensually or non consensually) then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no option but to involve the Police to investigate these allegations.

Bullying which occurs outside the school premises

We will follow the procedures outlined in the Whole School Behaviour Policy and our disciplinary powers to address the conduct of pupils when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff.

This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, off site during lunchtimes, during the evening at weekends or during the school holidays.

Where abuse outside of school is reported to the school, we will investigate and take appropriate action. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police if we believe an offence has taken place.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video (consensual and non consensual sharing of nude and semi nude images and / or videos) This includes sending ‘nude pics’ or ‘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.

Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and the image could end up anywhere. By having in their possession or distributing to others indecent images of a person under 18, many young people are not aware that they could be committing a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Any direct disclosure by a pupil (male or female) will be taken very seriously. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is

likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

When an incident involving sexting comes to a school's attention we will follow the guidance as set out in the UKCCIS publication Sexting in Schools and Colleges : Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people.

Initiation ceremonies /Hazing

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school or sports team etc. Hazing can also be used as initiation into a street or other 'gang'. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older or established members of the organisation or 'gang', because they have all experienced this as part of a 'rite of passage'. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.

Prejudiced bullying/behaviour

The term prejudiced-related bullying 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 related to 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).

Teenage relationship abuse / CSE/CCE

Teenage relationship abuse CSE/CCE 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) against a current or former partner, child or children. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse can occur online and offline and is never acceptable.

Child on Child Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

Schools should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school, including intimate personal relationships. All staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour.

A model continuum to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children can be used when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it. This model is replicated at Appendix A.

In relation to any reports or disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children we will:

- make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable, is not an inevitable part of growing up and Brentford School will take a zero tolerance approach
- challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and other private areas of the body.

Ultimately any decisions on how to proceed with an allegation of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be made on a case by case basis with the DSL (or deputy) or the Headteacher taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the Police as required.

Some situations, however, are statutorily clear:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law; and
- creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (see Sexting). This includes children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves.

Responding to reports of Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should the victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Children who have experienced sexual violence display a wide range of responses to their experience, including in some cases clear signs of trauma, physical and emotional responses or no overt signs at all. Schools should remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting these signs and show sensitivity to the child.

Responsibilities

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers should have an understanding of what abuse/ bullying is.

- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on abuse/bullying, and follow it when abuse/bullying is reported
- All pupils and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on abuse/bullying, and what they should do if abuse or bullying arises

All Staff

- All staff should be aware that abuse and bullying does take place and should be alert to the signs of abuse/ bullying
- All staff should follow the procedures listed in the Child on Child abuse and anti-bullying policy

Heads of Year

- To monitor SIMS and take appropriate action.
- To work with AHT in dealing with serious cases of abuse/ bullying.
- To ensure pupils understand the schools approach to abuse/ bullying and are clear about the part they can play to prevent abuse/ bullying, including when they find themselves as a bystander.

Assistant Head Teacher

- To monitor the action agreed is taking place in line with the Child on Child abuse and anti-bullying policies.
- To ensure staff receive training/ reminders via staff briefing in what to look for and can therefore implement both policies.
- To work with safeguarding officer to ensure all incidents are investigated and all parties involved have strategies to promote student wellbeing
- To review the school policy and school practices

- To ensure parents and pupils feel confident that the school will take any complaint about abuse/ bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child and reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

Deputy Headteacher

To support the Assistant Headteacher in the administering of the policy and practices

HeadTeacher

To have overall responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of all pupils

To ensure that the school fully implements the school policy

Referral to the Child Protection Officer

Where a decision is made to make a referral to the Child Protection Officer and a strategy meeting is convened, then the school will hold every professional involved in the case accountable for their

safeguarding response, including themselves, to both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it.

Reporting to the Police

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police. There are, however some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police e.g. where the existence of youth produced sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors. All concerns/allegations will be assessed on a case by case basis and considering the wider context.

Implementation

The school takes a proactive stance to raise awareness about abuse/ bullying. This is done through a range of strategies including, assemblies, PSHCE lessons, peer mentoring and high staff presence and visibility during lessons change over, break, lunch time and after school. Each pupil has a form tutor and tutor groups are small so the form tutor can develop positive relationships quickly.

Minor incidents or disagreements should be addressed by form tutors or subject teachers; however, any suspicions of abuse/ bullying must always be reported to the appropriate year leader as soon as possible.

DETECTING ABUSE/ BULLYING

Not all victims report abuse/ bullying. All adults must be alert to the signs of abuse/ bullying:

- Physical injury
- Damaged clothes
- Loss of dinner money
- Isolated and withdrawn behaviour
- Deterioration of work
- Frequent absence or lateness
- Unusual attachment to adults
- Tearful behaviour
- Mood swings
- Lack of confidence
- Hostile/defensive
- Anxiety
- Avoiding social formerly enjoyable social situations
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self-esteem

All of the above could, of course, indicate other problems and many victims do not show any of these signs. However, if adults are vigilant and are aware of the possible signs then we may save much distress.

PROCEDURES

Pupil will inform someone, a member of staff/parent/peer mentor or friend, that they are being abused/ bullied.

The informed person should tell the form tutor or a member of staff. If the incident is a serious, violent form of bullying the head of year should be informed. If the abuse/ bullying involves text messages or video messages on line, the teacher should aim to view these and ensure that they are saved.

According to The Education Act 2011/ Searching, screening and confiscation document January 2018, where an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules or that a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, staff may examine any data or files on the device where there is a good reason to do so. They may also delete data or files if they think there is a good reason to do so, unless they are going to give the device to the police. Parental consent **is not** required to search through a young person's phone but this will be done in the presence of the DSL/DDSL.

The circumstances leading to the incident should be investigated by form tutor and Head of Year.

The relevant teacher will need to complete a statement on SIMS. This should be added to the behaviour database.

The head of year / tutor, will investigate the concern or allegation thoroughly to clarify the facts, taking statements from the alleged abuser/ bully, victims and witnesses. Careful consideration of all circumstances will be made before sanctions or next actions are decided. This will in the vast majority of cases involve parents/carers of both alleged bully and victim being informed at the earliest opportunity. A range of approaches will be used to support the victim and help them build resilience. The Head of Year or the HUB team could offer:

- 1) Support
- 2) Coaching,
- 3) Mentoring
- 4) Counselling

The tutor's role will be to ensure that following the actions taken by the head of year/ AHT, the students involved are monitored to prevent any further incident.

This will enable the victim to deal with what has happened; this builds their resilience and confidence, nurturing lifelong learning in resolving issues. This approach is suitable for lower level problems and where the victim wants to regain some control. If the abuse/bullying is more serious a support package will be developed with the victim, their parents and the school.

Any of the following actions may be taken, this is very dependent on the wishes of the victim:

- Head of year to speak to abusers/bullies
- Head of year to set up meeting between victim and those abusing/bullying to aim to resolve any conflict

- Contact parent of the victim
- A record will be kept on file
- No further action but continued support from form tutor and head of year and outside agencies e.g. counseling, referral from child protection officer. All parties including the abuser/s/bully/ies to be given support from the Pastoral Team. In some cases, this may lead to referral to the Educational Psychologist or CAMHS.

Sanctions will be given in line with the Exclusions/ Positive Behaviour Policy.

In cases of serious and persistent abuse or bullying, where the above preventative measures have not worked, the following action may be taken:

- The AHT in charge of behavior will become involved. Parents will be contacted and invited in for an interview.
- Internal or external suspensions may be implemented, depending on the seriousness of the incident, previous conduct and the co-operation of the parents.
- Student may be presented to the governors' disciplinary panel.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be contacted.

MONITORING

- Behaviour incidents recorded on SIMS.
- Half termly reports indicate the frequency of reported incidents.
- Reports detail type of abuse/ bullying and monitoring analyses types of incidents e.g. verbal, emotional, racist, homophobic etc.
- Fixed-term suspensions.
- Counselling referral
- HUB referrals.
- School Council minutes termly
- PASS Survey will be carried out annually.

EVALUATION

Evaluations will take place on a termly basis through a report.

- Reduction in the number of incidents reported.
- Staff following procedures.
- Pupils, parents and staff feel reported incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Staff are more vigilant and responsive to abuse/bullying.
- More pupils say they would intervene if they observed abuse/bullying.
- More pupils say they would not join in abuse/bullying.

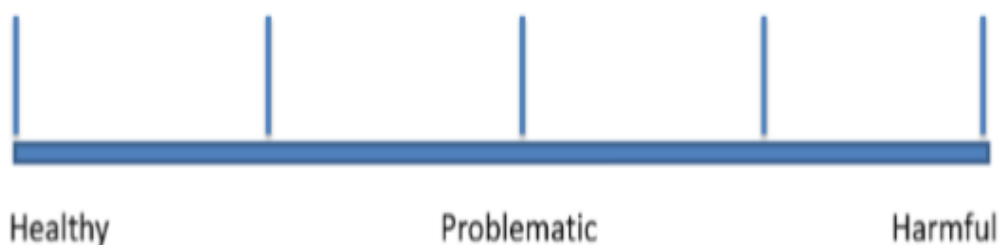
STAFF TRAINING

All staff will receive training to ensure they know the policy and the procedures with regards to the identification and disclosure of any abuse/bullying incident. This will happen through regular safeguarding updates as well as through staff briefing and pastoral meetings.

Appendix A

Model continuum for sexual behaviour

This model relates exclusively to sexual behaviour and is not exhaustive. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool can also be very helpful in identifying sexual behaviours by children. Staff should always use their professional judgement and discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where an (alleged) incident involves a report of sexually harmful behaviour, staff should consult the DfE's Advice 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges : advice for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (May 2018).



1. Type of sexual behaviour	Age appropriate, mutual, exploratory	Not age appropriate, sexualised language, touching under clothing	Penetrative, aggressive, violent, highly coercive
2. Context	Open, spontaneous, playful, light hearted	No secrecy or force but other child/ren are uncomfortable	Planned, secretive, elements of threat or coercion
3. Child's emotional response when challenged	Embarrassed, takes responsibility, understands the impact on others	Ashamed, may struggle to accept responsibility but can show empathy / remorse	Angry, denying, aggressive – cannot take responsibility, blames others
4. Response of other children / adults	Engaging freely, happy, may be embarrassed	Uncomfortable but not fearful	Unhappy, distressed, frightened – possible physical injuries
5. Relationship between the children	Similar age / ability, would normally play together	Would not normally play together and / or one child may be more in control than the other	Clear power differences – age, size, status, gender, strength, personality, ability
6. Frequency of the behaviour	Ad hoc or single incidents	Intermittent but may be increasing in frequency	Frequent and disproportionate to other aspects of their life
7. Persistence	Behaviour is ad hoc and the child is easily diverted	Recurring behaviour and difficult to distract / deter but child is responsive	Compulsive / cannot be distracted / appears to be a means to gain comfort or attention
8. Background information	No known concerns	Few or some concerns about the family / other difficult behaviours	Poor attachments / previous abuse / trauma / fire setting / abuse of animals / poor peer relationships

Responses can be 'plotted' on the graph above to reach a decision across all 8 areas of behaviour