

# Peer on Peer Sexual Abuse

## Action Plan 2021 - 2022



**Approved by:** Governing Body

**Last reviewed on:** September 2021

**Next review due by:** September 2022

## **Introduction**

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children, and can affect any age group (*Department for Education (DfE), 2018*). Children can experience peer-on-peer sexual abuse in a wide range of settings, including:

- at school
- at home or in someone else's home
- in public spaces
- online

(*NSPCC, 2018*).

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.

## **Recognising peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

It can be difficult to work out if a child is displaying appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexual behaviour.

Examples of sexually abusive behaviour may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- pressurising, forcing or coercing others to perform or take part in sexual acts
- pressuring, forcing or coercing someone to share nude images (sexting)
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent
- taking a picture under a person's clothing, without their consent ('upskirting')
- sexual harassment
- sexual or sexist name calling

(*Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020*).

## **Signs that a child may have experienced peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

Indicators that a child has experienced peer-on-peer sexual abuse may be physical or behavioural. A child or young person may appear withdrawn, frightened or begin to act differently from usual. They may also display physical signs such as noticeable discomfort in their genital or anal area.

## **Barriers to disclosure**

Children do not always feel able to speak out about their experiences of peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

They may be afraid of:

- being considered a 'snitch'
- getting in trouble themselves
- how they will be perceived by others
- teachers or other adults not being discrete
- their parents being informed

*(Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020).*

If a child is unsure about whether or not they have been sexually abused, they might be worried about causing a fuss or getting someone else in trouble for 'no reason'.

## **Children's understanding of peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

Children may not always understand that they have experienced or carried out peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This might be because:

- they don't understand what constitutes appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexualised behaviour
- they have experienced sexual abuse themselves and don't realise that what happened to them was wrong
- they don't know whether consent was given
- the abuse happened between friends or partners
- the abuse took place online
- they blame themselves for the abuse they received
- younger children lack knowledge of sex and sexuality as they are less likely to have received any relationships and sex education

## **Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

All organisations and individuals that work with children have a responsibility to keep them safe. At Cornfields we understand the importance of creating a healthy and safe environment for all children and young people and challenge societal norms that may allow peer-on-peer sexual abuse to take place.

## **Peer-on-peer Sexual Abuse Action Plan**

This action plan focusses on areas where a dedicated action plan will improve the safeguarding afforded to children who may be at risk of peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

Area of responsibility	Actions to be taken	Outcome	Deadline	Update
Leadership and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and maintenance of an appropriate school policy to reflect peer-on-peer sexual abuse in which current advice from the DfE is followed.</li> <li>• Development and maintenance of rigorous recruitment policies which include core school values and ensure signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse are identified and addressed as appropriate</li> <li>• Key individuals amongst governors, managers and staff with responsibility for safeguarding also understand the subject of peer-on-peer sexual abuse.</li> <li>• Creation and maintenance of a culture where peer-on-peer sexual abuse is not tolerated in any form and where children are explicitly taught social norms and are encouraged to speak up about any concerns they may have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe learning environment is created across the school, behaviours which harm the ability of different individuals and groups to work together are challenged</li> <li>• All new staff are aware of the school's expectations and subscribe to its values</li> <li>• All members of SLG undertake safer recruitment training.</li> <li>• The school leadership takes ownership of peer-on-peer sexual abuse concerns and appropriate oversight is provided</li> <li>• Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is considered as a risk at a leadership level within the organisation with any such concerns being reported promptly to SLG</li> <li>• Daily staff group debriefs ensure an appropriate culture is maintained and modelled.</li> </ul>	September 2021	Ongoing compliance

Area of responsibility	Actions to be taken	Outcome	Deadline	Update
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of a single point of contact for peer-on-peer sexual abuse to coordinate information sharing between different departments and curriculum areas</li> <li>• Development of links with other schools on the agenda</li> <li>• Development of links between key school staff/governors and external partners, including the Local Authority and Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School communications and the sharing of concerns relating to peer-on-peer sexual abuse are coordinated effectively</li> <li>• SPoC sits with the DSL/Deputy DSL</li> <li>• The school is able to benefit from existing best practice and resources</li> <li>• The school shares information and is able to access statutory assistance where necessary to support vulnerable individuals</li> </ul>	September 2021	Ongoing compliance
Safeguarding and pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of peer-on-peer sexual abuse within safeguarding policy and procedure</li> <li>• Development and implementation of rolling cross-organisation training plan to increase organisational awareness</li> <li>• Consideration of a cross-school safeguarding panel to assess and manage concerns relating to extremism and radicalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All are aware of the safeguarding procedure and that peer-on-peer sexual abuse is included within it</li> <li>• All understand what is meant by the terms peer-on-peer sexual abuse and are comfortable sharing concerns about peer-on-peer sexual abuse</li> <li>• A whole school approach is taken to the support of learners who may be vulnerable to any sexual abuse</li> </ul>	September 2021	Ongoing compliance

Area of responsibility	Actions to be taken	Outcome	Deadline	Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff feel confident and protected in raising any concerns which may place the safety of learners at risk</li> <li>• Learners are protected whilst they are studying or working externally to the school.</li> </ul>		
Student and learner resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include activities within existing lesson structure to enhance student and learner resilience for example, internet safety sessions and activities to improve critical thinking skills</li> <li>• Raise awareness and confidence amongst tutors and enrichment colleagues about the importance of critical thinking skills</li> <li>• Raise awareness of all colleagues and students or learners about the risks which may occur outside school times</li> <li>• All staff receive appropriate training to educate and challenge on the principals of mutual respect and tolerance and encourage democratic participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and learners have good critical engagement skills and understand the need and value of mutual respect and tolerance</li> <li>• Students and learners feel comfortable sharing any concerns they have about behaviour or information in or outside school</li> <li>• Development of school council and greater understanding of the responsibility of being a representative and all it entails.</li> <li>• All learners are encouraged to respect others with particular regard to sexual behaviour and are educated in the options for civic engagement</li> <li>• Learners understand what the school values mean in practice</li> </ul>	September 2021	<p>School council to be developed as numbers grow.</p> <p>Ongoing compliance</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to promote values are identified and utilised within the curriculum and within enrichment activities</li> </ul>			
Internet safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of reference to peer-on-peer sexual abuse within ICT code of conduct</li> <li>• Deliver awareness raising training to ICT colleagues about how peer-on-peer sexual abuse may manifest itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues understand what peer-on-peer sexual abuse looks like and are confident to share concerns through the appropriate processes if they do encounter such incidences</li> <li>• Students and learners understand the risks attached regarding peer-on-peer sexual abuse and understand the social norms, standards of behaviour expected and the school's process in dealing with these areas</li> </ul>	September 2021	Ongoing compliance. Limited internet access. Closely monitored internet access
Reputation and brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of policies which outline when the school's branding can be used and the responsibilities which come with its use</li> <li>• Development of a protocol for monitoring the school's online presence which includes sexual or sexualised references</li> <li>• Delivery of awareness raising training to communications colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any references to the school online are picked up quickly and referred for action if they have links to peer-on-peer sexual abuse or sexualised connotations</li> <li>• School administration, tutors and learners are aware of their responsibility in the online space regarding the school's brand and reputation</li> </ul>	September 2021	Search engine alerts utilised for this purpose. Ongoing compliance

Area of responsibility	Actions to be taken	Outcome	Deadline	Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of awareness raising to all administration, tutors and students or learners advising of responsibility in the online space</li> </ul>			
School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of policies governing events organised by staff, learners or visitors on school premises</li> <li>• Creation of a code of conduct policy and communication plan for setting expectations on learner behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are aware of the conduct expected by the school in creating a safe space for all groups on site</li> <li>• A safe learning space is created, avoiding the likelihood of peer-on-peer sexual abuse and where sexualised behaviour is not tolerated</li> </ul>	September 2021	Ongoing compliance