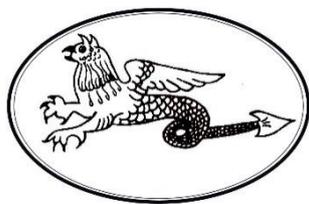


WHERWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child on Child Abuse policy



At Wherwell School, we offer a curriculum designed to equip the children with the resilience, confidence, knowledge, skills and experiences to enable them to thrive at school and in the future.

Agreed	Prepared By	Agreed By	Comments
October 2019	CSL	FGB	
September 2021	TLC	HT	
19 October 2022		FGB	

DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2021) says that ‘governing bodies should ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children’. The guidance also states the importance of minimizing the risks of child-on-child abuse. In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be covered by the school’s behavior and safeguarding policies. Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is also likely that incidents dealt with under this policy will involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable.

The safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young peopleⁱ

The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require difficult professional judgments. Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. In our society generally the age at which children become sexually active has steadily dropped. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation. It may also be difficult to be sure that what has or has been alleged to have taken place definitely does have a sexual component.

As usual, important decisions should be made on a case by case basis, on the basis of an assessment of the children’s best interests. Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children;
- Any disability or special needs of the children;
- Their social and family circumstance;
- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed;
- Any evidence of pressure to engage in sexual activity;
- Any indication of sexual exploitation.

There are also contextual factors. Gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge can all be used to exert power. A sexual predator may sometimes be a woman or girl and the victim a boy.

Policy

At Wherwell Primary School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and **are never acceptable**. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school’s behaviour policy.

Prevention

As a school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by:

- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE and Safeguarding syllabus which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.
- Providing a clear set of values (respect, care, resilience and responsibility) and standards, underpinned by the school’s behaviour policy and student support systems, and a Safeguarding skills based content delivered through the curriculum.
- Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.
- Continues training and raising awareness with staff of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions (i.e. ELSA)
- Developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse). Although abuse is more likely to happen to girls and perpetrated by boys, there are occasions where boys can be abused. All allegations will be taken seriously. Allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation:

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil.
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school.
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student.
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- Violence, particularly pre-planned. Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Emotional Abuse

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (for example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight).
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
- Sexual harassment: such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

Procedure

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported. If the report includes an online element, staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice for school DfE (January 2018) guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>.
- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation on CPOMS, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- Staff taking the report will never promise confidentiality.
- The DSL should contact the children's reception team (CRT) to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, CRT will refer the case to the multi-agency safeguarding hub where the police will become involved.
- Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral, unless this would put the child at greater risk.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern via CPOMS, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' files.

- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Services

Phone 0300 555 1384

Email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

ⁱ Taken from The safeguarding implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review (2015)