

The Divine Mercy RC Primary School



Child on Child Abuse Policy Guidance

Annex to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Foreword

Protected characteristics:

These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

At The Divine Mercy RC we believe that every child has the right to equality of outcome and to achieve their full potential. In order to achieve equity we embrace the principles of fairness, social justice, inclusion, global citizenship and community cohesion.

The Divine Mercy RC Primary School is a happy, safe and welcoming environment where everyone is valued. Our Catholic faith is central to moral development, mutual respect and an appreciation for the cultural diversity within our community. It is our intention to provide opportunities for every child to succeed and to strive towards excellence in everything they do.

We are a family, our strength is in our love and respect for one another.

Jesus, I Trust in You.

While it is recommended that Child on Child abuse is associated with the School Safeguarding Protection Policy, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with child on child abuse this separate policy guidance has been completed as an annex to our School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

At the Divine Mercy, we are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child on child abuse and to ensure that any form of child on child abuse or sexually harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently. This will reduce the extent of harm to the young person and minimise the potential impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

The NSPCC have set up a helpline at the government's instruction. The dedicated number (0800 136 663) will provide both children and adults who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with the appropriate support and advice. This includes how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish. The helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals too.

This policy applies to governors and members of staff including volunteers.

Definition Child-on-child abuse

Definition child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations.

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, child-on-child grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content and harassment.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues.

However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged young person.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Vulnerabilities

As a school we will recognise any child can be vulnerable to child on child abuse including

- Individual and situation factors can increase a child's vulnerabilities to abuse by other children such as the sharing of an image or photograph
- Children who are socially isolated from their peers
- Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse
- Children with certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs
- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND

Prevention

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

- In line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance 2019, providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops pupils understanding of acceptable behaviour, keeping themselves safe, the nature of child on child abuse and what is meant by consent
- Having a robust Online and Mobile Technology safety programme which develops pupils knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self protection when using the internet and social networking
- Having robust monitoring and filtering systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and act appropriately when using information technology in school
- Having systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued in a non-judgemental environment
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk

- Developing robust risk assessments and providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils
- Creating a safe culture in school by implementing policies and procedures that address child on child abuse and harmful attitudes, promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender and sexuality

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by other young people in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, teenage relationship abuse and sexual exploitation, bullying, cyber bullying and sexting. It should be considered as a safeguarding allegation against a pupil if some of the following features are present.

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 pupil could include:

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in a sexually violent way. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described as;

Rape A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents

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 or sanctions to be undertaken.

Sexual Harassment

Child on child Sexual Harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. 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 (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
 - sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered 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. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e. g. size, hair colour, race, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc. to harass, threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyberbullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could be deemed to be criminal behaviour. If the behaviour involves the taking, sharing or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18, 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, if a child is 10 and above, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending ‘nude pics’, ‘rude pics’ or ‘nude selfies’. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, regardless of their age, gender or sexual preference. However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Emotional Abuse

Can include blackmail or extortion and may also includes threats and intimidation. This harmful behaviour can have a significant impact on the mental health and emotional well- being of the victim and can lead to self harm.

Sexual Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse. . It can also include indecent exposure, indecent touching /serious sexual assaults or forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting.

Teenage Relationship Abuse

Teenage relationship abuse 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. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teenager uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

Sexual Exploitation

This can include encouraging other young people to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour or grooming and recruiting members of the peer group into being sexually exploited by other young people or adults. It can also include photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.

Upskirting

This typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their buttocks or genitals to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or harm.

Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals

Hazing or initiation ceremonies refers to the practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group. Hazing is seen in many different types of social groups, including gangs, sports teams and school groups. The initiation rites can range from relatively benign pranks, to protracted patterns of behaviour that rise to the level of abuse or criminal misconduct. Hazing may include physical or psychological abuse. It may also include nudity or sexual assault. Staff need to be alert to such behaviour and act in line with their child protection and behaviour policies

Identifying a child who is being abused by other child(ren)

The school will recognise that the signs that a child may be suffering from child-on child abuse can also overlap with signs indicating other types of abuse and can include:

- failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected,
- physical injuries,
- experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing,

- becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much,
- broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse,
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age
- abusive behaviour towards others. Abuse affects children very differently.

The above list is not exhaustive, and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse. The behaviour that children present with will depend on the context of their circumstances. Where a child exhibits any behaviour that is out of character or abnormal for his/her age, the school will consider whether an underlying concern is contributing to their behaviour including, whether the child is being harmed or abused by other children).

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Child on Child Abuse

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, or about a child on child incident they have witnessed or been a part of, 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.

- The member of staff will listen to the disclosure, using open language and demonstrate understanding without judgement.
- The school and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will also take account of the wider context in which the alleged incident(s) of child on child abuse took place, for example the physical environment of the school; route/travel to and from school; online environment and gender norms
- A factual record should be made of the allegation on CPOMS, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should contact social services, contact centre on 0161 234 5001 to discuss the case.
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, through social services the police will become involved.
- Parents, of both/all the student/s concerned with the disclosure/allegation and the alleged victim/s, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome on CPOMS
- If the allegation highlights a potential risk to the school and the pupil, the school will follow the school's behaviour policy and procedures and take appropriate action.
 - 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.
 - Where a disclosure or allegation indicates that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL will consider what line of action after consultation with social services.

Equalities Statement:

The Divine Mercy RC Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital

status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at The Divine Mercy RC Primary school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.