Child on Child Abuse Policy

Aims of the Policy
• To ensure that staff are able to recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, what child on child abuse is and the different forms it can take.
• That it is clear that this is abuse and will not be tolerated.
• To ensure staff are clear as to the school policy and procedures for managing allegations made against other children/young people.
• To ensure there are clear procedures linked to how all children involved and affected will be supported in school.
• To ensure that the safeguarding arrangements the school have in place minimise the risk of child on child abuse.
• To ensure our children are taught how to keep themselves safe, particularly online, and are aware of safeguarding risks including child on child abuse, through planned teaching and learning opportunities, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Introduction
At Cayton School, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Pupils should be free from harm, which includes harm from other pupils. As a school, we promote positive behaviour and encourage relationships based on respect, where empathy and tolerance is shown towards others and where each individual is valued.

We recognise that children and young people's behaviours can and do exist on a wide continuum from normal and developmentally appropriate to problematic. Behaviour is often a form of communication of need and we must recognise that a child's problematic or inappropriate behaviour could be a sign that s/he is upset and that something is not right. Problematic behaviours in a child may be non-verbal techniques to try to get their unmet needs resolved. Therefore, it is crucial that staff respond to all witnessed or reported instances of inappropriate behaviour.

We recognise that individual children's behaviour can have a negative impact on the wellbeing of others. Generally, these incidents can be dealt with under our Behaviour policy and procedures which in most cases, impacts on and deescalates incidents of unwanted behaviour. These cases are not generally seen as child on child abuse.

However, all staff recognise
• That children are capable of abusing their peers and that this may be happening in an online context.
• That such abuse may well be taking place and is simply not being reported.

There is not always a clear boundary between incidents that could be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as behaviour issues. This is a matter of professional judgement and circumstances involved in each case.

Children may be harmful to one another in several ways which would be classified as child on child abuse and must be dealt with as a safeguarding issue if some of the following features are found:

1. There is an imbalance in power causing a vulnerability (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned:
2. The pupil being complained about has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children
3. There are concerns about the intention of the pupil being complained about
4. The incident/s are of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
5. The incident/s raise risk factors for other children in the school and beyond.

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

The NYCC Safeguarding Children Partnership thresholds offer further information and signposting to services to help practitioners distinguish developmentally appropriate and/or harmful behaviours. If at any stage you

are worried that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, follow normal child procedures in school. (See child protection and safeguarding policy).

Types of Child on Child Abuse
There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.) 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 child has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

Emotional Abuse
Emotional abuse involves one child having significant power or control over another child. It is often rooted in fear and may involve blackmail, extortion, threats or intimidation.

Sexual Violence, Harassment and Abuse
Sexual harassment includes sexual comments, remarks and jokes both in person and online, which may be stand-alone incidents or part of a broader pattern of abuse. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. It can occur online and face to face, both physically and verbally.

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 children 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: Children 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, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyber bullying
Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and is also supported by the Communications Act 2003. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of children under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support children may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

Consensual or Non-Consensual Sharing of Nude or Semi-Nude Images or Videos
Consensual or Non-Consensual Sharing of Nude or Semi-Nude Images or Videos 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, whatever 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, children are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Initiation/Hazing
Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony, which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of 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 members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

Prejudiced Behaviour
The term prejudice-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 to do with 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)

Recognising the Risk
School staff should never dismiss peer to peer abusive behaviour as normal 'banter' between young people or develop high thresholds before taking action. We recognise that although all children are potentially vulnerable to abuse by their peers, some children are more vulnerable such as those children:
• receiving statutory care/support or known to have experienced harm, abuse or exploitation
• with a disability, ill-health or developmental difficulties – including mental ill health and special educational needs
• living in households or families with characteristics that may indicate higher levels of risk such as poverty, substance abuse, domestic abuse or where they may be a young carer
• who are vulnerable or of concern by virtue of their identity or nationality – including LGBTQ+ children and young people and refugees.
Children's Commissioner Vulnerability report 2018

It is also recognised that the abuse between peers may happen beyond the school environment and online spaces can be a place where abusive behaviour between young people is played out. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.
The Contextual Safeguarding Network

Evidence suggests that such children displaying harmful behaviours may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. Our school will always consider that the pupil being complained about is likely to have considerable unmet needs themselves as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. They may therefore be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and in need of protection themselves. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the pupil being complained about must also address their individual and specific needs.

Prevention
It is not enough to respond to incidents as they arise. At Cayton School we strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it. In our school this includes
• A clear Behaviour Policy which supports our aim of 'Being Kind – not hurting or upsetting other's'.
• A strong consistent PSHE and SMSC curriculum which specifically teaches children about the different types of abuse they may be at risk from and what to do if they are worried about themselves or a friend.
• A whole school, consistent approach to rewards and sanctions.
• Work with other agencies such as NSPCC, Police and LA.

Actions to be taken

Pupil to pupil incidents are usually managed through our behaviour policies and procedures. However when allegations against other pupils are more serious in nature and raise safeguarding concerns, they could be considered as potential peer to peer abuse and normal safeguarding procedures should apply.

• **Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL**

• The DSL will contact all parents of children involved and NYCC Safeguarding board to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through any actions and outcomes of the discussion and will make any appropriate referrals to children's social care which could be for the child/ren affected and/or the pupil being complained about. (As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023).

KCSIE 2023:-
Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment
447. This part of the statutory guidance is about how schools and colleges should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online (what to look out for and indicators of abuse are set out in Part one of this guidance). As set out in Part one of this guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussions and any actions/outcome and will keep a copy in the pupil files (all pupils involved in the allegation) using CPOMs system.

• If the allegations indicate a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity. However, in school we are mindful that the age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 years old meaning that children under 10 can't be arrested or charged with a crime. There are other punishments that can be given to children under 10 who break the law. Further advice can be sought regarding this from agencies involved.

• Parents, of both the pupil being complained about and the child/ren affected should be informed and kept updated on the progress of any referrals, actions and/or interventions.

• If the case does not meet thresholds for others services to be involved, school will continue to deal with the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

• The needs and wishes of the affected child/ren should be taken in to account as much as is reasonably possible but DSLs and deputy DSLs will also need to consider if they have suffered significant harm and the need to protect others. Affected pupils should be offered support from specialist services.

• In situations where the school considers an ongoing 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.

The guiding principles for dealing with these situations are outlined below:

• Basic safeguarding principles should apply throughout

• The needs of the children affected and the needs of the pupil being complained about must be considered separately

• The pupil being complained about is likely to have considerable unmet needs and actions must include addressing this person's behaviour and its causes

• All agencies involved must consider whether the pupil being complained about poses a risk to other children in including but not limited to school, the community or online

• There should be a co-ordinated approach by children's social care, education and health agencies. No agency should start a course of action that has implications for any other agency without appropriate consultation

• School will only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and or be involved in any investigations.

This policy forms part of our Safeguarding arrangements in school and must be read in conjunction with the following school policies for,

- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Anit-Bullying
- E-Safety
- PSHE Policy
- RSE Policy

Please see the school's Child Protection policy for full details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy DSLs and Locality Teams.

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