



# School Policies

## Anti-Peer-on-Peer Abuse & Bullying

### **Mission Statement**

Horton Education and Care supports children, young people and adults through their difficulties, fosters their ability to manage their own behaviour, and develops their knowledge, skills and independence, enabling them to live as full and rich a life as possible.

## **1. Statement of Intent**

Horton House School is committed to safeguarding children and young people from peer-on-peer abuse and bullying and we expect all our people to share this commitment.

This policy sets out how we will deliver these responsibilities. This policy should be read in conjunction with the latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', which is statutory guidance and alongside 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advice to schools 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'.

This policy is our overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer abuse. It relates to, and should be read alongside, the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and any other relevant policies.

This policy sets out our strategy for improving prevention and identifying and appropriately managing peer-on-peer abuse.

The policy applies to all members of the school community, pupils, staff and volunteers.

This policy recognises that abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up'. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. We take a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in concerns or allegations about peer-on-peer abuse, (in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required) including those who are alleged to have been harmed and those who are alleged to have harmed another child.

Although the starting point is that our response to peer-on-peer abuse should be the same for all pupils, regardless of age, there may be some different considerations in relation to, for example, a child aged under 10, or aged over eighteen in terms of how local agencies and/or partners respond.

### **In particular:**

We believe that in order to protect children, all schools should be aware of the nature and level of risk to which their pupils are or may be exposed and put in place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to their specific safeguarding context; and take a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse.

We regard the introduction of this policy as a preventative measure. We (a) do not feel it is acceptable merely to take a reactive approach to peer-on-peer abuse in

response to alleged incidents of it; and (b) believe that in order to tackle peer-on-peer abuse proactively, it is necessary to focus on all four of the following areas:

- Systems and structures
- Prevention
- Identification
- Response/intervention.

We recognise national and increasing concern about this issue, and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and peer-on-peer abuse in the school setting, and encourage parents to challenge us on this issue, so that if their child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the school directly so that we can ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response to safeguard all pupils.

Furthermore, we will follow the procedures set out by the local safeguarding partnership:

*Horton House School Child Protection & Safeguarding  
Advice and contact list September 2021*

<b>Role / Agency</b>	<b>Name &amp; role</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Safeguarding and Partnership Hub</b>	<p><b>CP initial referral Support &amp; Advice:</b> Intensive &amp; Specialist Safeguarding support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Urgent C P concerns</li> <li>2. Consultation with Social Worker</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mon to Thu 8:30am – 5:00pm Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm</b></p> <p><b>01482-395500</b></p> <p>Request for service forms to: <b>safeguardingchildrenshub@eastriding.gov.uk</b></p>
<b>Children’s Emergency Duty Team</b>	Urgent CP concerns outside of office hours where a child is at risk of significant harm.	<b>01482 393939</b>
<b>Early Help Locality Hub</b>	<b>Early Help</b> Additional Support for children & family’s initial consultation	<p>Consultation 01482 391700</p> <p>Request for Service form to the Hub nearest to where the child lives</p> <p><a href="mailto:ehp.bridlington@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.bridlington@eastriding.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:ehp.beverley@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.beverley@eastriding.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:ehp.goole@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.goole@eastriding.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:ehp.halterprice@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.halterprice@eastriding.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:ehp.hedon@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.hedon@eastriding.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:ehp.wolds@eastriding.gov.uk">ehp.wolds@eastriding.gov.uk</a></p>

		North Hull Locality Hub 01482 828901 East Hull Locality Hub 01482 708953 West Hull Locality Hub 01482 305770  Doncaster Early Help 01302 734110
<b>Local ER Children Safeguarding Team</b>		
<b>Local ER Children Safeguarding Team Manager</b>		
<b>Education Safeguarding Manager (ERYC)</b>	<b>TBA</b> General strategic and operational School Safeguarding & CP advice	TBA  safeguardingineducation@eastriding.gov.uk
<b>ERYC LADO</b>	Referral of possible allegations against staff & volunteers.	LADO@eastriding.gov.uk
<b>School critical incident, bomb threats etc &amp; Educational Visits Emergencies (not Child Protection)</b>	<b>24-hour Guidance &amp; support</b>	01482- 392999
<b>Humberside Police</b>	<b>ER Protecting Vulnerable People Unit</b>	01482 220809
<b>Humberside Police</b>	<b>Hate Crime / incident reporting</b>	101 <a href="https://www.reportingcrime.uk/HPHatecrime/">https://www.reportingcrime.uk/HPHatecrime/</a>
<b>East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership</b>	General strategic and operational Safeguarding & CP advice and multiagency training	<a href="https://www.erscp.co.uk/">https://www.erscp.co.uk/</a> 01482-396994 erscp.enquiries@eastriding.gov.uk
<b>ER Safeguarding Children Partnership Training</b>	Training Admin & Information	<a href="mailto:erscp.training@eastriding.gov.uk">erscp.training@eastriding.gov.uk</a>
<b>Hull North Yorks North Lincs North East Lincs</b>	Children's Social Care	01482- 448879 EDT 01482- 300304 01609- 780780 EDT 01609- 780780 01724- 296500 EDT 01724- 296500 01472- 326292 EDT 01472- 326292
<b>Prevent Referral</b>	Humberside Police  ERY LA	101 <a href="mailto:prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk">prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:prevent@eastriding.gov.uk">prevent@eastriding.gov.uk</a>

We ensure that pupils are taught about peer-on-peer abuse and bullying, including online behaviours, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. We will work with parents to build an

understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

## **2. Legal framework and guidance**

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and relevant guidance including, but not limited to:

- The Education Act (2002)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to do if you are worried about a child (2015)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners (2018)
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings (2019)
- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Prevent Duty (2015)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement (2013)
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance (2018)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges September 2021

## **3. Scope of this Policy**

This policy defines a 'child' as anyone under the age of 18 years or any learner of any age on the school roll. This policy applies to all members of our staff, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, directors, proprietor, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the safeguarding and child protection policy. The directors, proprietor, governors, senior leadership team, and all staff (which term shall apply to all volunteer staff members) are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the school.

The Strategic Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Rebecca Sayer (Executive Head Teacher)**

The Operational Designated Safeguarding Leads is: **Rhonda Crossland (Pastoral Manager)**

## **4. What is peer-on-peer abuse?**

For these purposes, peer-on-peer 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.

We recognise that it is statistically more likely that girls will be victims of peer-on-peer abuse and that boys will be perpetrators and that peer-on-peer abuse can be perpetrated by the same gender but that all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously and never tolerated.

**Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):**

This is most likely to include but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced/involved sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

## **5. What is contextual safeguarding?**

This policy encapsulates a contextual safeguarding approach, which is about the way that professionals approach child protection when risks occur outside of the family (extra familial harm) thereby requiring all those within a Local Safeguarding Partnership to consider how they work alongside, rather than just refer into, children's social care, to create safe spaces in which children may have encountered peer-on-peer abuse.

We adopt a whole-school community Contextual Safeguarding approach, which means:

- being aware of and seeking to understand the impact that these wider social contexts may be having on our pupils
- creating a safe culture in the school by, for example, implementing policies and procedures that address peer-on-peer abuse and harmful attitudes; promoting healthy relationships and attitudes to gender/ sexuality, identifying any risky areas in the school and conducting training
- being alert to and monitoring changes in pupils' behaviour and/or attendance, and contributing to local child protection agendas by, for example, challenging poor threshold decisions and referring concerns about contexts to relevant local agencies.

## 6. Understanding behaviour

We understand that all behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

### 6.1. Sexual Behaviour:

Simon Hackett has proposed the following continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children, which may be helpful when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it.



When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time

- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- Involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power
- involves a misuse of power.

## **7. Identification of peer-on-peer abuse:**

7.1 All schools must be alert to the well-being of pupils and to signs of abuse, and will engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by peer-on-peer abuse. However, schools should be mindful of the fact that the ways in which children will disclose or present with behaviours as a result of their experiences will differ and that there are known barriers to disclosing this abuse to adults.

7.2 We will review behaviour incident logs which can help to identify any changes in behaviour and/or concerning patterns or trends at an early stage.

7.3 Any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse and schools should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. For example, an image of a child could be shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family.

7.4 Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse. For example, children who are more likely to follow others and/or who are socially isolated from their peers may be more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse. Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers.

7.5 Peer-on-peer abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and this difference may be the result of societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different.

7.6 Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND and additional barriers exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's disability without further exploration
- the potential for children with SEND to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs



- communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

Some children may be more likely to experience peer-on-peer abuse than others as a result of certain characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs.

## **8 A whole-school approach:**

8.1 We actively seek to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by educating governors, our senior leadership team, staff, pupils, and parents about this issue.

8.2 This includes training governors, the senior leadership team, and staff on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify, and respond to it.

### **This includes:**

- contextual safeguarding
- the identification and classification of specific behaviours, including digital behaviours
- the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how 'low level' they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing
- social media and online safety, including how to encourage children to use social media in a positive, responsible and safe way, and how to enable them to identify and manage abusive behaviour online
- educating pupils about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the unequivocal facts about consent, via PSHE and the wider curriculum

8.3 Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse. They are regularly informed about our approach to such issues.

### **Educating pupils about consent includes teaching them basic facts such as:**

- 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

### **Engaging parents on these issues includes:**

- Talking about them, both in groups and one to one, – asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks.

- Supporting the on-going welfare of pupils by drawing on multiple resources that prioritise pupil mental health.

### **Wider context**

- Working with directors, proprietor, governors, senior leadership team, and all staff, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of, acceptance, tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community.
- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-school culture which is founded on the idea that every member of our school community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships, and helping to create a safe school environment in which bullying, violence and abuse are never acceptable.
- Responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately
- Ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the school's safeguarding team/DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support.

## **9. Multi agency working**

9.1 We actively engage with our Local Safeguarding Partnership in relation to peer-on-peer abuse, and work closely with, for example, children's social care, the police and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures. The relationships that we have built with these partners are essential to ensuring that the school is able to prevent, identify early, and appropriately handle cases of peer-on-peer abuse.

They help us to:

- develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in our local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist
- ensure that our pupils are able to access the range of services and support they need quickly
- support and help inform the school's local community's response to peer-on-peer abuse
- increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our pupils.

9.2 We respond to each incident individually and proportionately. We actively refer concerns and allegations of peer-on-peer abuse where necessary to children's social care, the police and MASH and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures. This is particularly important because peer-on-peer abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the alleged

incident cannot appropriately be managed internally by the school itself) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.

## **10. Responses to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse:**

10.1 All concerns and allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately, proportionately and promptly using professional judgement and listening to the wishes of the pupils involved and their parents.

Any response will:

- Include a thorough investigation of the concern or allegation, and the wider context in which it may have occurred (as appropriate) – depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident. (It may be appropriate for the police and/or children's social care to carry out this investigation).
- Treat all pupils involved as being at potential risk – while the pupil allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other pupils, they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves.
- Take into account that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the pupils involved, and consider and address the effect of wider sociocultural contexts – such as the child's/ children's peer group (both within and outside the school); family; the school environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the pupil/pupils online presence.

10.2 We will consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the pupil/pupils needs and to mitigate risk, and – the potential complexity of peer-on-peer abuse and of pupil's experiences, and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While pupils may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited, they are not consenting, – the views of the pupil/pupils are affected.

10.3 Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL/appropriate member of the safeguarding team will discuss the proposed action with the pupil/pupils and their parents/carers, and obtain consent to any referral before it is made where possible.

10.4 We will manage the pupil's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so. It is particularly important to take into account the wishes of any pupil who has allegedly been harmed, and to give that pupil as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and how they will be supported.

10.5 We will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the pupil who has allegedly experienced the harm, and the pupil who has allegedly been responsible for it (and the additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter).

**What should you do if you suspect either that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s)?**

10.6 If a colleague thinks, for whatever reason, that a pupil may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a pupil may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss the matter with their DSL as soon as possible to explain their concern and register a cause of concern.

10.7 Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, the police) is made immediately.

10.8 Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made in line with the Safeguarding and Child protection policy.

10.9 If a pupil speaks to a member of staff about peer-on-peer abuse that they have witnessed or are a part of, the member of staff should listen to the pupil and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement without promising confidentiality. For further details please see the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

**How will we respond to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse?**

10.10 The DSL will discuss the concern or allegation with the member of staff who has reported it and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected.

10.11 Where any concern or allegation indicates that indecent images of a child or children may have been shared online, the DSL will consider what urgent action can be taken in addition to the actions and referral duties set out in this policy. See the Youth involved sexual imagery section below to seek specialist help in preventing the images spreading further and removing the images from the internet.

10.12 The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has a trained team that can evaluate and remove illegal images from the internet when the images are reported to them quickly. They will also share the image with the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command to facilitate an investigation. Any report to IWF will be made in consultation with the police.

10.13 DSLs will always use their professional judgement to assess the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour and determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and, if so, whether any external specialist support is required. In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with children's social care or other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures on a no-names basis (where possible) to determine the most appropriate response.

10.14 Where the DSL considers or suspects that the alleged behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum or where the needs and circumstances of the individual child/children in question might otherwise require it, the DSL should contact children's social care and/or the police immediately and, in any event, within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of the alleged behaviour.

The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action.

**The DSL will always refer to the police if there are aggravating factors:**

- If the incident involves an adult (over 18).
- If there are concerns about the capacity to consent (inc SEND).
- Images show atypical sexual behaviour for their development stage or abusive, violent or harmful acts.
- Images show sex acts with a child.
- The disclosure places the pupil (or any child) at risk of imminent harm (self-harm, exploitation, harmful response from home etc.).

**12. Information sharing, data protection and record keeping:**

When responding to a concerns or allegation of peer-on-peer abuse, we will:

- always consider carefully, in consultation with children's social care, the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), how to share information about the concern or allegation with the pupil(s) affected, their parents, relevant staff, and other appropriate individuals
- record the information that is necessary for the school and other relevant agencies (where they are involved) to respond to the concern or allegation and safeguard everyone involved
- keep a record of the legal purpose for sharing the information with any third party, including relevant authorities
- be mindful of and act in accordance with duties, including those set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children and the HM Government advice on Information Sharing.

**13. Disciplinary action**

13.1 We will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any pupil involved in peer-on-peer abuse linked into the behaviour policy. In addition, if there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that we work in partnership with the police and children's social care.

13.2 Where a matter is not of interest to the police or children's social care, school leaders will still consider what is the most appropriate action to take to ensure positive behaviour management.

Disciplinary action is appropriate to:

- ensure that the pupil(s) involved take responsibility for and realise the seriousness of their behaviour;
- demonstrate to pupils and others that peer-on-peer abuse is not acceptable and will never be tolerated; and
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of other pupils.

13.3 These considerations must be balanced against any police investigations, children's own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns.

13.4 Before deciding on appropriate action we will always consider our duty to safeguard all pupils in its care from harm; the underlying reasons for a pupil's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the pupil; the risk that the pupil may pose to other pupils; and the severity of the peer-on-peer abuse and the causes of it.

13.5 School leaders will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognizing that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. For example, action may still need to be taken by the school in relation to other pupils who have been involved with and/or affected by peer-on-peer abuse.

13.6 Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other pupils in the school. In the event of a move to another provision, consideration must be given to sharing information with the receiving school regarding the peer-on-peer abuse in order to allow best protection of children in the new school.

13.7 Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer-on-peer abuse, and the school will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above and below.

## **Appendix 1: Bullying Specific Procedures**

We will refer to and work within the guidelines set out in the DfE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying.

### **Definition: (repeated, deliberate harm – likely power imbalance)**

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group and includes peer-on-peer abuse.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)
- Deliberate Isolation
- Microaggressions
- Disguised compliance

**Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**Homophobic and Bi-Phobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's actual or perceived transgender status.

Gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Specialist support for schools on sexual and sexist bullying can be found here:  
[https://antibullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Sexual%20bullying%20%20antibullying%20guidance%20for%20teachers%20and%20other%20professionals%20-%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://antibullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Sexual%20bullying%20%20antibullying%20guidance%20for%20teachers%20and%20other%20professionals%20-%20FINAL_0.pdf)

**SEND/Bullying:** Bullying behaviour based on another person's special educational needs or disability.

### **Signs and indicators of Bullying:**

Some of the signs that a pupil may be victim of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental issues, so will still be investigated.

### **Prevention:**

Prevention is at the forefront of our Anti-Peer-on-peer Abuse (Anti-Bullying) Policy. Staff treat reports of bullying very seriously and never assume that it is 'just banter'. Any disclosure of bullying is reported through the Cause of Concern Form to DSL.

Staff take action immediately; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored. Staff respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of



bullying are not discussed with others in-line with the safeguarding disclosure process, please refer to the safeguarding and child protection policy.

Follow-up support is given to both the alleged victim and alleged bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

Staff colleagues follow up with a meeting with those involved to discuss how effectively they felt the incident has been dealt with to inform future practice and to inform the reviews

At Horton House School we minimise the risk of bullying by:

- teaching the importance of healthy relationships through the PSE/RSE program,
- Reinforcing positive values and attributes through our enrichment activities
- Encouraging daily, positive interactions between all stakeholders through our inclusive, nurturing ethos and adherence to the Fundamental British values.
- Ensuring all staff are adequately trained, supporting all staff to ensure they are confident in identifying potential signs and are able to deal with it effectively.
- Ensuring staff are well equipped to be able to efficiently log concerns as well as reporting to appropriate members of staff (DSL and safeguarding team).
- Implementation of policies which are shared and understood by all staff.

### **SEND Bullying:**

Pupils who are on the SEND register are more prone to bullying than their mainstream counterparts, but this does not mean that all pupils with SEND will be bullied. We continually monitor all pupils through the pastoral teams.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

(If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to a first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries and proceed as advised)

- An incident will be recorded using Cause of Concern form to ensure that the DSL is aware and can monitor that the process is followed in line with the policy.
- Statements will be sought from both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and the school will do everything possible within the new context to establish the most truthful version of events.
- Members of staff seek to reduce the possibility of contact between the pupils interviewed, including electronic communication during the process.
- A room or safe quiet place is used that allows for privacy during interviews.
- A witness' viewpoint is sought when appropriate.
- Unless there is a very strong reason not to engage parents, they will be contacted and the situation explained.

- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgmental at this stage; members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.
- Support will be offered to both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and consequences will be considered where appropriate in line with our behaviour policy.
- Where appropriate we will seek to support the pupils in understanding each other's point of view and offer additional sessions (face to face or remotely as required) to help them to overcome their situation.
- Where a pupil/pupils are at risk of harm as a result of this incident, we will make appropriate external referrals to seek support for those involved.
- Some pupils may experience poor mental health or feel anxious after experiencing bullying and the school will seek to support and address this by working closely with the pupil, family and relevant external agencies.
- Where the impact of bullying has a significant impact on the relative academic achievements of the pupil involved the school will seek to address these through targeted interventions and supportive strategies process will be overseen by the DSL, though other colleagues will likely support the process.
- The incident will not be closed until both pupils agree that they are happy with the outcome. Until then, the school will continue to address the pupil's concerns as far as possible and work towards a resolution to address their concerns. The school will agree with the pupils how often they feel able to review the situation but ideally:
  - The DSL/ members of the safeguarding team informally checks whether the bullying has stopped on a weekly basis for a month after the initial complaint of bullying.
  - The Executive head Teacher formally checks whether the bullying has stopped the week after the bullying, and again during the same half term.

Where all those involved with an incident agree that the issues have been resolved; the case will remain open for at least a further six weeks to allow staff to seek pupil voice after a reasonable time has passed to ensure that the issues have not resurfaced or to seek to offer support if they have.

### **Bullying outside of the school:**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying, or peer-on-peer abuse incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff. The Executive head Teacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act

2006 gives the Head teacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

## **Appendix 2: Harmful or Problematic Sexual Behaviour**

In addition to Keeping children Safe in Education, we will follow the guidance for schools: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999239/SVSH\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999239/SVSH_2021.pdf)

Sexual Harassment:

- Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.
- Sexual harassment violates a pupil's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment.
- If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence. Sexual harassment includes:
  - Sexual comments such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
  - Sexual "jokes" and taunting.
  - Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone else.
  - Sexual threats or pushing someone to do something sexually that they don't want to or aren't ready for. Online sexual harassment includes:
    - Non-consensual sharing of images and videos, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
    - Sharing of sexual images and videos (often known as sexting, nudes or pics)
    - Inappropriate comments on social media, exploitation, coercion and threats – online sexual harassment may be isolated or part of a wider pattern.

Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

### **Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:**

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with a 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.

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB):**

The term “harmful sexual behaviour” is used to describe behaviour that is problematic, abusive and violent, and that may cause developmental damage.

All behaviours receive a proportionate response and even low level HSB is treated as an opportunity to reflect and learn to how to make positive healthy choices and be mindful of risks or harm.

Harmful sexual behaviour may include:

- Using sexually explicit words and phrases.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Sexual violence or threats.
- Full penetrative sex with children or adults.
- Sexual interest in adults or children of very different ages to their own.
- Forceful or aggressive sexual behaviour.
- Compulsive habits relating to sexual or body-focused behaviours.
- Sexual behaviour affecting progress and achievement.
- Sexual behaviour can also be harmful if one of the individuals is much older (especially where there is two or more years difference, or where one individual is prepubescent and the other is not) and where the child may have SEND.

Identifying Harmful or Problematic Sexual Behaviour:

All school and colleagues are aware that pupils of any age and gender identification are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

All colleagues are aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including sexting, nudes or pics, gender based abuse, being sexually touched or assaulted, and pupils being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

Pupils will be made aware and actively encouraged to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

We recognise the numerous additional barriers that young people face in disclosing harmful sexual behaviour to adults and will never rely on disclosures alone; colleagues are trained to be vigilant to the signs and indicators of abuse and act on them appropriately and in line with the guidance.

Recognising one or more of the following signs in a pupil may mean they are a victim of harmful sexual behaviour:

- Missing school completely or showing an unwillingness to attend certain lessons
- Injuries such as bruises – either being sustained at school or the pupil may come to school with injuries
- Showing signs of anxiety or depression, or feeling panicked
- Being withdrawn, shy or feeling nervous
- Looking dishevelled due to a lack of sleep
- Being abusive to other pupils or staff members

**Allegations of harmful sexual behaviour:**

**Support available if a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger, or at risk of harm:**

- If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children’s Services and the police.
- The social worker should respond to the referrer to explain the action that will be taken.

**Support available if early help, section 17 and/or section 47 statutory assessments are appropriate:**

- If early help, section 17 and/or section 47 statutory assessments (assessments under the Children Act 1989) are appropriate, school staff may be required to support external agencies.

**Support available if a crime may have been committed:**

- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report includes such an act, the police will be notified. The DSL will be aware of the local process for referrals to both Children’s Services and the police.
- The school will report criminal activity to the police irrelevant of the alleged perpetrators age. In these cases, the police will take a welfare approach rather than a criminal justice approach.
- The school has a close relationship with the local police force and the DSL will liaise closely with them.
- The school recognises that there is potential for an online incident to extend further than the local community and for a victim, or the alleged perpetrator, to become marginalised and excluded both online and offline. There is also strong potential for repeat victimisation if the content continues to exist.
- If the incident involves sexual images or videos held online the Internet Watch Foundation or childline will be consulted to have the material removed. Report Remove Tool <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobilesafety/remove-nude-image-shared-online/>

- Staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child. If they are made aware of such an image, they will contact the DSL.

### **Managing disclosures**

We will refer to guidance for schools: sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools and college 2021:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999239/SVSH\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999239/SVSH_2021.pdf)

- Alleged victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Alleged victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.
- If a friend of an alleged victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will take action – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of the DSL.
- Where an alleged incident took place away from the school or online but involved pupils from the school, the school's duty to safeguard pupils remains the same.
- All staff will be trained to handle disclosures.
- All staff will ensure that they use the formal reporting system to record and share with the DSL any information or concerns that they have about the safety or wellbeing of a pupil.
- Where online sexual harassment has taken place or images are involved staff will not or forward any illegal images of a child but will instead consult the guidance from UKCIS: sharing nudes and semi nudes:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharingnudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-youngpeople>
- The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate the devices to preserve evidence and hand them to the police of inspection.

### **Effective safeguarding practice includes:**

- Never promising confidentiality at the initial stage.
- Only sharing the report with those necessary for its progression.
- Explaining to the victim what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to.
- Recognising that the person the child chose to disclose the information to is in a position of trust.
- Being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Not asking leading questions and only prompting the child with open questions.
- Waiting until the end of the disclosure to immediately write a thorough summary. If notes must be taken during the disclosure, it is important to still remain engaged and not appear distracted.

- Only recording the facts as the child presents them – not the opinions of the note taker.
- Where the report includes an online element, being aware of searching, screening and confiscation advice and UKCCIS sexting advice.
- Wherever possible, managing disclosures with two staff members present
- Informing the DSL as soon as possible after the disclosure if they could not be involved in the disclosure.
- If the allegations of harmful sexual behaviour is against a pupil with SEND, they will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO and the DSL, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

**The DSL should decide the school’s initial response, taking into consideration:**

- The victim’s wishes.
- The nature of the incident.
- The ages and developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
- Any ongoing risks.
- Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a child’s life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
- The best interests of the child.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration should be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other children involved. For reports of rape and assault by penetration, whilst the school establishes the facts, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes shared with the victim. The school will consider how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises, and on transport where applicable. These actions should not be seen as a judgement of guilt on the alleged perpetrator.

For reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and the suitability of shared classes, premises and transport should be considered immediately. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated and the wishes of the victim, nature of the allegations and requirement to protect all children should be taken into consideration.



### Appendix 3: Weapons

If a pupil is discovered to have brought a weapon into the school the parents and the police will be informed as soon as it is safe to do so. The DSLs will consider contextual safeguarding risks to the pupil who carried the weapon and risks to any intended harm to individuals and the wider school community.

Referrals to children's services will be made as soon as it is safe to do so where there is a concern for the welfare of any person. The pupil will likely be placed on a fixed term exclusion and an investigation will be carried out.

Weapons include guns, pellet guns, BB guns, air guns, replica guns, knives, nunchucks, death stars and other martial arts objects; screwdrivers, hammers, chisels and any tool that has/attempted/threatened to be used offensively; razors, razor blades, aerosols, chains, scissors, etc. This list is not exhaustive, but it should be noted that weapons also describe 'home made' implements manufactured to injure, threaten or intimidate. If an item such as a pair of scissors is picked up in the school and used or threatened to be used as a weapon then any sanction referred to in the behaviour management policy may be enforced.

End of Policy

Audit Trail

Version	Change	By Whom	Date	Review Date
1.0	New Policy		August 2013	
1.1	Update for School	Janjer Ltd	June 2015	
1.2	Update	Principal Plus (SJH)	August 2016	
1.3	Policy updated	Geoff Evans, Fay McHugh (SEMH), Catherine Jones (head teacher)	March 2018	
1.4	Review of Policy and Accuracy Check	Head Teacher and School Secretary	July 2018	July 2021
1.5	Policy Rewritten	Executive Manager/Head Teacher	July 2021	July 2023

