



Blackpool FC School

Child-On-Child Abuse Policy

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Name and role of Person amending	Date of Creation/Amendment	Review Dates
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1. Definition and context

Child-On-Child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their children. Everyone directly involved in child-on-child abuse is under the age of 18.

Child-On-Child abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation), and crucially it does not capture the fact that the behaviour in question is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim.

2. Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2024 states that

‘Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and sets out how allegations of Child-On-Child abuse will be investigated and dealt with’.

It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard

‘Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.’

Child-On-Child abuse is referenced in the Safeguarding Children Policy. The sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer on peer require separate policy guidance.

At Blackpool FC School we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour including sexualised behaviour and or language is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the degree of harm to the young person, giving full consideration to the impact on emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

3. Purpose of policy

This policy provides planned and supportive response to peer on peer abuse issues. This policy supports the following policies:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy

4. Types of abuse

4.1. Domestic abuse

Relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, and coercive control in their intimate relationships

4.2. Child sexual exploitation

Captures young people aged under-18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age - including another young person

4.3. Sexual violence and sexual harassment – ALWAYS immediately refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will follow the DfE Guidance: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf

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.

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 to the young person it is intended towards.

Sexually harmful behaviour may include:

- inappropriate sexual language
- inappropriate role play
- sexual touching
- sexual assault/abuse.

4.4. 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, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

4.5. 'Cyberbullying'

Online Bullying / Cyberbullying is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messages, e-mail, chat rooms etc.) to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

Online bullying can take many forms:

- Abusive or threatening texts, emails or messages
- Posting abusive comments on social media sites
- Sharing humiliating videos or photos of someone else
- Stealing someone's online identity
- Spreading rumours online
- Trolling – sending someone menacing or upsetting messages through social networks, chatrooms or games
- Developing hate sites about another person
- Prank calls or messages
- Group bullying or exclusion online
- Anonymous messaging
- Encouraging a young person to self-harm
- Pressuring children to send sexual messages or engaging in sexual conversations

4.6. Sexting

The term 'sexting' relates to the sending of indecent images, videos and/or written messages with sexually explicit content; these are created and sent electronically. They are often 'shared' via social networking sites and instant messaging services.

This must always be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

DSL will follow the UKCCIS: Sexting in schools and colleges guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.24_39_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB_1_.PDF

4.7. 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 ceremony 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.

4.8. Prejudiced behaviour/British Values/Discrimination

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 – for example 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.

4.9. Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is 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 teen 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. This abuse may be child sexual exploitation.

5. Expected staff action

Staff should consider the seriousness of the case and make a quick decision whether to inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately before taking any action. Where a member of staff is uncertain what to do, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Where applicable delivery staff must always inform the onsite lead staff member when any concerns arise. If the concern is identified during delivery of a session with an external provider e.g. school provision, then the external providers safeguarding process must be followed. In this case it is important to also inform the BFCCT DSL as well as the head teacher immediately verbally in the first instance.

A written record of the concern must be completed using MyConcern as soon as possible.

6. Recognising and reporting child-on-child abuse

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of child-on-child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

6.1. Taking action

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Children's Social Care (to be undertaken by the DSL)

- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

6.2. Recording sexualised behaviour

- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection policy
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks and capital letters.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.
- Use the 7 minute briefing for managing a disclosure for guidance.

6.3. Gather the facts

Speak to all young people involved separately, gaining a statement of facts from them using consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask them to tell you what happened using 'where, when, who, how'. Do not ask leading questions. Be clear and concise to prevent confusion.

6.4. Consider the intent

Has this been a deliberate or planned situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

6.5. Decide on your next course of action

Report the information gained to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will inform parents/carers.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the young person should be encouraged to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be nervous of doing this).

6.6. Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

7. Next steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not reoccur and the DSL should consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

7.1. For the young person who has been harmed

- What support do they require – counselling, mentor or family and friends support network
- Guest speakers about topics such as cyber bullying, relationship abuse
- Implementation of a risk assessment and support strategy.

7.2. For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

- What support do they require, they may be experiencing their own difficulties?
- Early help referral to prevent ‘reoffending’
- Ensure the young person receives a consequence of their behaviour. This could be restorative justice or removal from a programme if young person is deemed not suitable after the investigation (in particularly if it is a criminal investigation)
- Implement a risk assessment to allow for better behaviour management and risk reduction. Use a multi-agency approach to do this.

7.3. After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

8. Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the DSL and following any serious incidents where:

- A child is known or suspected to have been abused and
- Either the child has died or the child has been seriously harmed and there is a concern in how BFCCT responded to deal with the incident.