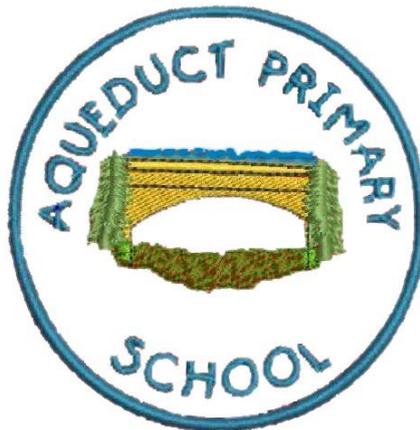# Aqueduct Primary School
Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

2021/22

Designated Safeguard Leads	Tammy Lockley, Jo Clarke, Ash Palin, Cara Duppa, Eloise Harrow and Lisa Batchelor
Discussed and Agreed by Governing Body	24th MAY 2021
Discussed and Agreed by All Staff	12th MAY 2021
Next Review Date	MAY 2022

Signed _____Date_____

Signed_____ Date_____

The dedicated <mark>NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136663</mark> This helpline is to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Run by the NSPCC it aims to provide advice and support to both children and adults who are victims of abuse in school. It will also include how to contact the police to report crimes. The advice line is also available to support professionals and parents.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for safeguarding in school are;
- Tammy Lockley (Head, Supervising DSL)
- Jo Clarke (Deputy Head, Lead DSL)
- Ash Palin (Assistant Head DSL)
- Cara Duppa (Early Years Manager DSL)
- Eloise Harrow (SEND Co DSL)
- Lisa Batchelor (Inclusion Support manager DSL)
- Mrs Louise Aubrey (Governor with responsibility for safeguarding)

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with the following groups; Senior leaders, governors, staff and children.

Introduction

Aqueduct Primary School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Peer on peer abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of "banter" or "growing up".

We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer on peer abuse within our school and beyond.

In cases where peer on peer abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by the situation.

What is Peer on Peer Abuse?

All children are capable of abusing their peers. This can manifest itself in a whole spectrum of behaviours including –

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Physical abuse
- Sexting
- Upskirting (now a criminal offence and has reporting requirements)
- Initiation /hazing type violence and rituals

All schools need to include peer on peer abuse in their schools' policies and procedures and all staff need to be aware of these and ensure they are part of their everyday practice.

Children also need to know how to report concerns and know that they will be listened to and supported.

These should include

- Procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse
- How allegations are recorded, investigated and dealt with
- Clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected will be supported
- Recognition of the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse but recognising, that all forms of this behaviour are unacceptable and will be taken seriously

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways, including but not limited to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour

Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti- bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

This policy concentrates on peer on peer abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019) and should be read in conjunction with Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

Aims

The policy will: -

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing peer on peer abuse

- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children. Acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer, parents or adults in the community.

Understanding Peer on Peer abuse

Peer-on-Peer abuse can include sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing and have an impact on academic achievement and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence may also occur online and offline.

Children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers

Any child can be vulnerable to peer-on-peer/bullying abuse due to the strength of peer influence. Staff 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.

- ❖ Those aged 10 and upwards (although children as young as 8 have been identified)
- ❖ Girls and young women are more likely to be abused/bullied and boys and young men more likely to be abusers
- ❖ Black and minority ethnic children often under identified as being bullied/abused and over-identified as being abusers
- ❖ Young people with intra-familial abuse in their histories or those living with domestic abuse are more likely to be vulnerable
- ❖ Young people in care and those who have experienced loss of a parent, sibling or friend through bereavement
- ❖ Young people who have been abused or have abused their peers.
- ❖ 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.

Abusers can be younger than those they are abusing.

Supporting SEND children

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 can sometimes 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, and – overcoming these barriers.

Therefore, any change in behaviour or report from another child or adult regarding bullying/peer-on-peer abuse, would be reported to the class teacher who would closely monitor this, following school procedure of logging details of any event. The information would then be shared with the families of parents/guardians of both

parties involved. Parents are encouraged to share with the school any concerns of this nature they have regarding their own child.

How can a child who is being abused by their peers be identified?

All staff will be alert to the well-being of students and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by bullying or peer-on-peer abuse

Signs and symptoms for all staff to be aware of:

- absence from school or disengagement from school activities
- physical injuries
- mental or emotional health issues
- becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem
- lack of sleep
- changes in behaviour
- out of character
- inappropriate behaviour for age
- abusive towards others

All staff will have training for this.

Responding to Alleged Incidents

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

All reports of peer-on-peer abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputies taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care, Family Connect or the police as required.

The immediate response to a report

- The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- All staff will be trained to follow reporting procedures
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the incident has been reported as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.

Risk Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs' assessment (**Appendix 2**). Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs' assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support;
- The alleged perpetrator; and
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them;

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic and kept securely with the Child protection data) and be kept under review. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will ensure they are engaging with Family Connect.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

Following an incident, we will consider

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;
- The ages of the children involved;
- The developmental stages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged abusersignificantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff; and other related issues and wider context?

Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom:

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:
- The alleged abuser will be removed from any classes they share with the victim.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged abuser a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport to and from the school.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged abuser.

Options to manage the report internally

1. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the Behaviour Policy and by providing support from or Inclusion Support manager, Mrs Batchelor (DSL).

This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will include all DSLs and recorded and stored with the secured child protection files.

2. In line with the above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address nonviolent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

3. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to Family Connect following locally agreed protocols. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged abuser and any other children that require support.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be made through Family Connect as above. The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point for this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged abuser under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

Where a report has been made to the police, the we will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged abuserand their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought in order to help us.

Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.

The end of the criminal process

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our Behaviour Policy. If the abuser remains in school we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the abuser now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable.

Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils in the school.

We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).

Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged abuser for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continue to support all parties in this instance.

Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

Support for children affected by sexual assault through peer-on-peer abuse is available from a variety of agencies (see below).

We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to do so we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL will support this move.

Where there is a criminal investigation the alleged abuser will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the abuser to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our Behaviour Policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

Where the abuser is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and abuser in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.

All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Should the procedure result in the child remaining in school.

- A risk assessment will be put in place for the abused child (**Appendix 2**)
- A risk assessment will be put in place for the alleged abuser
- A risk assessment will be put in place for all other children involved

- A DSL will open and begin a Report/Support/Review form (**Appendix 1**)
- A DSL will be designated to work alongside those involved and the Inclusion Manager will be part of the Report/Support/Review Plan
- Inform lunchtime supervisors and all staff at weekly meetings to ensure they are extra vigilant, including when on duty at lunch and playtimes.
- If there are concerns about a particular child being bullied then that child should be monitored (monitoring document) and all observations noted down. All parties should be informed, including Lunchtime Supervisors, Teaching Assistants, Teachers and parents.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of peer on peer abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police.

The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases. *Please read this policy, in conjunction with the anti-bullying policy.

Online Behaviour

Many forms of peer on peer abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviours such as cyberbullying and sexting. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found (in anti- bullying policy, online safety policy, and child protection policy).

Prevention

Aqueduct Primary actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:
• Educating all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils and parents about this issue. This will include training all Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This includes
(a) Contextual Safeguarding;
(b) The identification and classification of specific behaviours; and
(c) 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.

• Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum.

• Children 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.

• Children are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zerotolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.

• Engaging parents on this issue by:

(a)Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;

b) Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the School address those risks;

(c) Encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.

• Ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the School's safeguarding team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify children who maybe in need of additional support. [This is done by way of a weekly staff meeting at which all concerns about children (including peer-on-peer abuse issues) are discussed];

• Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom);

• Working with Governors, , Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, children] and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community;

• Creating conditions in which our children can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;

• Creating a culture in which our children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to; and

• Responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

Multi-agency working

The School actively engages with its local partners in relation to peer-on-peer abuse, and works closely with, Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership Telford's Safeguarding Team (Family Connect), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies, and other schools.

The relationships the School has 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 the School

(a) To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways that operate in its local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist;

(b) To ensure that our children can access the range of services and support they need quickly;

(c) To support and help inform our local community's response to peer-on-peer abuse;

(d) To 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 children]. The School actively refers

concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse where necessary to Family Connect, children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies.

Appendix 3

Support for Young People: Local and National.

[Protecting children from peer-on-peer sexual abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Peer on peer abuse | Safeguarding Network - confidence in safeguarding](#)

[What is peer-on-peer abuse? - Ofsted blog: schools, early years, further education and skills](#)

[Peer on Peer Abuse | The Education People](#)

www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC-RUN HELPLINE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

0800 136 663

Department for Education

Peer on Peer Appendix 1

Report/Support/Review

Part 1: Report

Complete Part 1 and ensure the following steps are taken. Report discussed with DSL/ Head/Deputy, where appropriate. Where appropriate to be included in weekly DSL meeting where next steps will be agreed.
Be as detailed and specific as possible with the information taken.

Pupil's Name:		
Adult completing reports name:		
Date:	**Class (if pupil)**	**Shared with all staff (date)**
Report: (*be as specific as possible, include* history of incidents)		
How frequently has abuse occurred?		
Children name or names relating to concern *(ages of the children*):		
Has the pupil shared their concerns with any other pupils or adults in the school? If so when?		

Any ongoing risks and any wider context?
Have parents of the victim or those accused of abuse been informed? (Add reasons for answer given)
What are the wishes of the victim?
Suggestions/wishes of parents
Next steps taken, included names of those that the report has been shared with. **RISK ASSESSMENT- must be completed and shared with appropriate staff**
REVIEW DATE: (add who it will be reviewed by and keep dates tight to ensure support)

Part 2: Support

List the support given- Ensure names and dates are specific *Include a time line and link to review date*
Pupil's Views- wishes

Part 3: Review

This must be shared with abused and the child/children involved. Include child's parents

RISK ASSESSMENT – Bullying/Peer-On-Peer Abuse   DSL(responsible for case)_____

Date of Assessment: xxx   Date of Review: xxx (dates in stages e.g next day- next few days)

The school will always carry out a risk assessment in respect of:
- Any child who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent.
- Any child that is being sexually harassed
- Any child sending or receiving inappropriate images on social media
- Any child who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child.
- Any child that may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another child as deemed appropriate by the DSL.
  Where it is alleged that a child has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent) a DSl will use their professional judgement as to if a risk assessment is needed.

REPORT in summary	Abused/Bullied or Alleged abuser/bully	CHILD'S NAME Year and class
E.g. Tom has reported to Robbie evans (CT) that he feels he has been bullied. The first report of this was September 23rd (two days ago). It began with name calling a few weeks ago but there is now continuous physical abuse, such as punching and kicking. Following an investigation by TL (Head) it has been concluded that a risk assessment needs to be put in place for all parties concerned. Tom was allocated adults and a DSL to monitor this Tom and for Goldilocks to ensure this does not continue.	E.g. Reported being bullied/Abused OR Allegedly bullying Goldilocks	e.g. Tom Smith (boy) Year 5 RE class
The makeup of the group of children involved, including specific characteristics that might affect their vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse such as, for example, gender, age, learning difficulties, special educational needs and/or disabilities, sexual orientation and/or religious belief	Names of parents contacted/how and date	DATE of ASSESSMENT
e.g.Tom is a SEND pupil, with severe anxiety and a reluctance to share his concerns with certain adults in school. At times he does say that all is ok when it has been found that it isn't.	E.g. Three Bears, asked to come into school, both parents attended. 25.09.21	24.09.21 Time: 10:15
The nature and level of risk of the different variants of peer-on-peer abuse within the school	**The various sociocultural contexts** to which those students are associated including, for example, their peer group (both within and outside the school),	**Please specify type of abuse (see low)**

	family, the school environment, their experience(s) of crime and/or victimisation in the local community, and their online identities – which may impact on their behaviour and engagement in school. This risk assessment	
Physical abuse- punching and kicking, however this has escalated from name calling. Concerned will become more severe.	Tom only has one or two friends and these tend to be other pupils who are also quite vulnerable. He can be quite lonely if his fiends are away or on a different lunch.	

TYPES OF ABSUSE

- ❖ Physical – violence such as hitting, kicking, punching and pinching.
- ❖ Emotional – persistent teasing, excluding and ridiculing (often because of what a child may be wearing), or body shape, looks or disability.
- ❖ Verbal – name-calling, making someone look inferior.
- ❖ Racist – racist taunts and gestures.
- ❖ Sexist – abusive comments
- ❖ Homophobic and transphobic.
- ❖ Cyberbullying- using social media

RISK	Working Procedures/ Risk Control /Action Required	Adult Responsible	Review- add additional support needed. Complete and link to support plan
Risk of abuse in the classroom	E.g. All Staff informed – staff meeting and morning meeting (add date)		

Risk of abuse at break times	E.g. Lunch time supervisors informed to observe Group of friends/or friend part of support for child to be with or go to		
Risk of abuse at lunchtimes	As above + Ensure Pit Stop available- inform when there are changes		
Risk of abuse outside school	Parents informed and explained how to report to school. Parents given leaflet that includes on-line support Add any outside agencies involved e.g. Early Help Sexual harassment- Police informed		
Ensure include any risk			

Assessment led by …	Authorised by …………………………………………… Date ………………………

REVEWED- Include all those concerned, although not all together. Inform parents of review and capture their understanding of progress. Explain next steps.	Names attending review.