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**Anti-Bullying and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy**

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| **Completed by:** | Lianne Cole Deputy Headteacher and DSL | Date: January 2025 |
| **Approved by:** |  | Date: January 2025 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | January 2025 | |
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**1. Introduction**

Our school is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form. This policy outlines what our school will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse. It is based on DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024”. This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour and Relationship Policy.

**2. Legal framework**

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

* Equality Act 2010
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Sexual Offences Act 2003
* The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
* Data Protection Act 2018
* Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
* DfE (2018) ‘Working together to safeguard children’
* DfE (2022) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2022’

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

* DfE (2015) ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’
* DfE (2018) ‘Information sharing’
* DfE (2021) ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’
* DfE (2020) ‘Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people’
* This policy should also work alongside the school’s policies below:
* MSE Behaviour and Relationship Policy
* MSE Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

**3. Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of:

The Headteacher and Proprietor have overall responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of this policy supported by the Deputy Headteachers for Behaviour and Safeguarding.

The Governors will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy

All staff, including: governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, will support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly

Parents/carers will support their children and work in partnership with the school

The school will ensure that pupils understand this policy and why it is important.

**4. Definition**

**Bullying** can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)

**Bullying** is recognised as being a form of **child on child abuse**. Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

* Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
* Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
* 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced 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)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as appropriate.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

1. **Whole school approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse**

Music Stuff Education will continue to involve all members of the school community, including the governors, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse and bullying.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including child-on-child abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the school.

Music Stuff Education will ensure that procedures for handling child-on-child abuse and bullying are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the staff who wishes to access them.

1. **Music Stuff Education School culture**

Music Stuff Education will implement a contextual approach to safeguarding pupils against child on-child abuse and bullying, and will ensure that all procedures take into account incidents of child-on-child abuse that occur outside of school or online. The Headteacher will ensure that all staff receive adequate training on handling child-on-child abuse and bullying.

MSE prioritises cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils, and ensures that all pupils are aware that the school adopts a zero tolerance stance on child-on-child abuse of any kind.

The school promotes respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff model appropriate and respectful behaviour. Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as ‘boys will be boys’ or describing such behaviour as ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’ as these phrases can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and normalised abuse.

The school will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of child-on-child abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage. The school will have a clear set of values and standards that will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life and will be underpinned by the school’s policies, procedures and curriculum. The school manages all early help and intervention for pupils showing early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

1. **The Curriculum**

Music Stuff Education maintains the position that education surrounding respectful and healthy attitudes and behaviour towards others is the best way to combat child on-child abuse in the school.

All staff, not just teaching staff, are responsible for passing this knowledge on to pupils. In order to prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum.

MSE will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They will also teach a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE, School Themes delivered in weekly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

Such content will be fully inclusive, age and stage development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of pupils with SEND), and tackle issues such as the following:

* Healthy and respectful relationships
* Boundaries and consent
* Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
* How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
* LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
* Body confidence and self-esteem
* Consent

1. **Supporting pupils to share concerns**

All pupils are informed how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

All pupils have a keyworker and one to one time with them to discuss any concerns about bullying or child-on-child abuse; and in centres there are contact details of the safeguarding/pastoral team if they wanted to contact them directly.

All staff are aware of how to report concerns as per the safeguarding and child protection procedures and to report on CPOMS.

Displays around centres also have information and guidance about how to report bullying and any other safeguarding concerns in and out of school.

1. **How MSE responds to bullying and child on child abuse**

If a child makes a disclosure of bullying or staff are noticing bullying incidents within their centres, we will take the following actions, depending on the case:

* Report incidents of bullying on Arbor and CPOMS
* Make calls to parent/carers of both victim and alleged perpetrator
* Ongoing monitoring of the pupils involved
* Restorative conversations/mediation
* Suspensions and placement withdrawal in extreme cases

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

* staff must record the allegation and tell the PSO/DDSL and the DSL, but do not investigate it
* The DDSL or DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
* The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
* The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

1. **Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of bullying and child-on-child abuse**

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of bullying and child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

* Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
* Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
* Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
* Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
* Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
* Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
* Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
* Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplinary action of the alleged perpetrator(s) alongside the Headteacher as well as providing the relevant support from other agencies.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn’t (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

* Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or local authority children’s social care to determine this
* There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

**Further guidance on Child on Child Abuse is available in the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**