



# St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

## Parent Safeguarding Newsletter- Autumn 2021

### Peer on Peer Sexual Abuse

Each term we will bring the latest safeguarding developments and information to you in order that we all work together to keep our school community safe.

#### Safeguarding Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Harrop
Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Tiernan, Mrs Farrell, Mrs Sutton
Mental Health First Aiders	Mrs Harrop, Mrs Tiernan, Mrs Sutton, Mrs Farrell, Mrs Castro, Mrs Gee and Mrs Robinson.
Emergency First Aiders	All staff
Wellbeing Champions	Mrs Sheldon, Mrs Bullock, Mr Nichols, Mrs Dreniew, Mrs Conway, Mrs Davidson and Mrs Raw.
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs Donnachie
Online Safety Governor	Mrs Butler
Health and Safety Governor	Mr Thorgaard

#### Safeguarding Information: Peer-on-peer sexual abuse

Ofsted were recently asked to carry out a rapid review of sexual abuse and harassment, and sexual violence in schools, including online. The review considered more than 2,000 testimonies on the 'Everyone's invited' website regarding allegations of sexual assault and harassment.

We want to educate children in an age appropriate way about how we should treat each other. That way we can prevent inappropriate sexual behaviour from escalating into teenage years into adulthood.

#### Definitions

Peer-on-peer abuse is abuse of any type between children. It can include:

- Bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or any way of causing physical harm)
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos (also known as 'sexting')
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence
- Up skirting (taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, (e.g. forcing them to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Initiation/hazing violence and rituals

**Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It can happen online and offline. It can include:**

- Sexual comments (e.g. telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks about clothes or appearance)
- Sexual jokes (e.g. sexualised so-called "banter"), or sexual taunting
- Physical behaviour (e.g. deliberately brushing against someone, lifting up someone's skirt, pulling someone's cropped top or bra strap)

- Online sexual harassment (e.g. sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos, sharing of unwanted explicit content, sexualised online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages on social media, sexual exploitation, sexual coercion and threats)
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### **What to do if you have a concern or an allegation is made**

- Always report it to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)
  - Always challenge behaviour that could be sexual harassment.
  - If an act of sexual violence has been reported, we'll need to involve the police as well as children's social care.
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### **In the moment that a child is making an allegation**

#### **Do**

- Listen carefully and reassure the child that you're taking them seriously and that they'll be supported and kept safe
- Remain non-judgemental
- Make sure the child knows the next steps you will be taking
- Make it clear that this kind of behaviour is never acceptable, and the allegation will be taken extremely seriously
- Record the allegation straight after the conversation, but avoid taking notes while the child is talking

#### **Don't**

- Ask leading questions (anything that suggests an answer, e.g. "Did he/she force you?")
- Interrupt the child to clarify details
- Promise confidentiality – be clear about who you'll need to tell and why
- Record your interpretation or personal opinion on the allegation – make sure you note down only the facts as the child presents them
- Give the impression that they're creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment
- Make them feel ashamed for making a report
- Dismiss any allegation as 'just having a laugh', 'just banter', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'
- View any photos or videos of a sexual nature

### **How we work to prevent peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

- We make it clear to all pupils via assemblies, PSHE and RSE lessons that sexual harassment and sexual violence are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up
- Staff don't tolerate or dismiss sexual harassment or sexual violence as "just banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- We immediately challenge sexually inappropriate behaviour whenever you see it – such as grabbing body parts, flicking bras and lifting up skirts
- Have discussions in PSHE and RSE lessons with pupils about:
  - Promote healthy and respectful relationships
  - Teach what respectful behaviour looks like
  - Educate what consent is
  - Gender equality and sexism (e.g. challenging gender stereotypes)
  - Promote body confidence and self-esteem
  - Zero tolerance for prejudiced behaviour
  - Teach that sexual harassment and sexual violence are always wrong

### **Policies, procedures and codes of conduct**

- Our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures include information about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. We have created a version of our policies and procedures that are suitable for children and young people.

- We also have behaviour codes of conduct which clearly set out what behaviour is and is not appropriate for adults and children. This helps make sure young people know what behaviour is suitable for your setting and what the consequences will be if they breach the rules.

### Helping children speak out

- We know that children might not feel able to talk to adults about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. But there are actions we take so that children have opportunities to speak out if they are worried.
- Our pastoral support team have a high presence and children know they can speak with them by putting a note in the pastoral box of a talk token with their name on. This allows staff to speak with the child.
- Children may feel more confident speaking out if they have a positive, trusting relationship with a trusted adult. This can be done by encouraging them to share their thoughts and opinions, responding to their concerns, and respecting and listening to them. This is reinforced in assemblies RSE and PSHE lessons.
- Three staff are trained in counselling and we offer outreach counselling sessions too. Having specialist staff in pastoral care or counselling roles can make it easier for children to share their concerns.

### Safe environments

- We have thought about how we make our environment safe for children and young people. We have identified any location where there are concerns about peer-on-peer sexual abuse taking place. This might include toilets, unsupervised corridors and areas that are poorly lit or hidden from adult view. We have addressed this by ensuring children feel safe in these areas by increasing supervision levels in certain areas or improving lighting.

### Educating about abuse and harassment: Curriculum Coverage PSHE and RSE Lessons

- We talk to the children about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. We discuss sex and healthy relationships in an age appropriate way and in line with our RSE policy. Our RSE scheme covers aspects such as relationships, respect, sex and sexuality. Children also learn about appropriate sexual behaviour, trust, consent, boundaries and responsibility.

### Topics we discuss include:

We explain what peer-on-peer sexual abuse is and what it may look like. This may help children understand if they have seen or experienced abuse. We make sure children know who they can talk to if they are concerned about anything or have experienced something upsetting by offering pastoral drop ins, talk tokens and the pastoral note box children can post notes to the pastoral team.

We use Child line age-appropriate information about sexual abuse, which includes information about peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

- [Child line's information about sexual abuse for children and young people](#)
- [Read our advice on how to have difficult conversations with children](#)
- [Find out more about how to promote healthy relationships, from early years through to older children](#)

### Jigsaw PSHE Scheme

Our PSHE scheme of work is called Jigsaw. It is a progressive programme and includes the following topics:

- Being me in my world
- Celebrating difference
- Dreams and goals
- Healthy me
- Relationships and changes
- RSE

### Journey in Love RSE Scheme

- The Journey in Love RSE scheme focuses on social and emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of a person. It is a developmental scheme and is mapped to the DfE guidance on RSE ensuring full coverage of the requirements. It is a progressive programme and includes the following topics:
- The wonder of being special and unique

- We meet God's love in our family
- We meet God's love in the community
- How we live in love
- God loves us in our differences
- God loves us in our changing and developing
- **The wonder of God's love in creating new life**

### **PANTS Resource**

We use the NSPCC PANTS resource to ensure children are educated each year about keeping themselves safe. We use the following NSPCC resources:

- a lesson plan
- a presentation that's age-appropriate for young children
- activities for the lesson
- a film featuring our friendly dinosaur mascot Pantosaurus who introduces the core messages and helps make talking PANTS easier
- guidance regarding curriculum links in England
- a list of books to read to the children
- support for parents
- guides for children with autism or learning disabilities and a video for deaf children.
- By using this resource we:
  - give children support to seek help and safety
  - challenge myths surrounding sexual abuse.

### **Training**

Make sure all the adults in our school are trained to recognise and respond to peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This will help them understand what is normal, inappropriate or abusive sexual behaviour and what action to take.

### **Pupil to Pupil Support**

Our wellbeing ambassadors, school buddies and digital leaders all help to champion positive relationships. They know who to contact if they are worried about themselves or their friends.

### **Sources**

- GOV.UK – DfE, *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- NSPCC, *A child's legal rights: legal definitions*. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/legal-definitions/>