



# Montpelier Primary School Guidance on dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse

## Introduction

Peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

All staff at Montpelier should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from Peer on Peer abuse including:

- *physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm*
- *sexual violence and sexual harassment*
- *sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)*
- *bullying (including cyberbullying); and*
- *initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.*

This guidance addresses how staff at Montpelier deal with Peer on Peer abuse and signposts staff to the relevant school policies

## Our procedures and Actions

There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important **to understand why** a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including **accidentally** before considering the actions to be undertaken.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse **immediately and sensitively**. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred before the child/ren has forgotten or been influenced.

It is equally important to think about the language used and its impact on both the children and the parents when they become involved.

In all cases of Peer on Peer abuse, all staff deal with any incident, **by talking to the child/ren** and putting immediate support in place in a calm and consistent manner.

Staff will ensure they:

### **1 .Gather the Facts**

*Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. We do this by asking the child to explain what happened and we will ask open questions to gain clarity*

### **2. Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess)**

*We consider if this has been a deliberate or contrived situation for a child to harm another.*

### **3. Decide on the next step**

*From the information that we gather, if we believe a child to be at risk of significant harm we will make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately or follow the procedures as outlined below*



## Montpelier Primary School Guidance on dealing with

### Peer on Peer Abuse

#### 4. Inform parents

*We always seek to talk face to face with parents. We recognise that the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a child may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child has been harmed or harmed another.*

#### Types of Abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail below followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

##### 1. Physical Abuse

*This may include hitting, kicking, nipping/pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person.*

All forms of physical abuse should follow the guidance outlined in **the Behaviour and Anti- Bullying Policies**. Any incident should be recorded on our behaviour record of light changes and CPOMS, following investigation by a member/ members of staff. Concerns and actions should then be discussed with a member of the **Senior Leadership Team** and then with parents where necessary

##### 2. Sexual violence, harassment and sexting

*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.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

*Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending ‘nude pics’, ‘rude pics’ or ‘nude selfies’. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture*



## Montpelier Primary School Guidance on dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse

*can happen in any relationship and to anyone, regardless of their age, gender or sexual preference. However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.*

All incidents must always be referred **immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy** who will assess the risk, inform parents where appropriate, monitor or take advice from other services or report to the Police if necessary. The safeguarding team will refer to the Safeguarding Policy and other legislative documents including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and refer to the E safety Flow chart guidelines. All record keeping will be held on CPOMS by the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy.

### 3. 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.*

*Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, race, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.*

- All incidents of bullying will follow the procedures outlined in the **Anti – Bullying Policy**
- **Prejudiced Behaviour-** All incidents should follow the **Behaviour Policy** and then be **reported** to a member of the **Senior Leadership Team**. Racial incidents will be recorded separately by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- **Online Bullying/ Cyber bullying** – *Cyber bullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.*  
Any incidents of Online Bullying should follow the E safety Flow chart guidelines. All concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding team, who will in conjunction with Paul Farr, risk assess and consider the next steps
- **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.*

All incidents of Initiation will follow the procedures outlined in the **Anti – Bullying Policy** and then reported to the Senior Leadership Team



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### Preventative Strategies

Montpelier has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying, There is a strong and positive curriculum that tackles the above issues. We remind children of the acronym **STOP** ( **S**tart **T**elling **O**ther **P**eople) and use the NSPCC PANTS rule. The school promotes safer internet use through lessons and E Safety days.