




Policy for Managing Allegations against Other Children.

Policy Originator	Haringey LA
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1. Introduction

At Campsbourne School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following;

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

2. Safeguarding allegations

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. In some cases there is a danger that the behaviour is passed off as "banter" or "just part of growing up". Behaviour such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them. At Campsbourne, we do not tolerate such behaviours and respond to reports of child-on-child abuse, which are decided on a case to case basis with our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) taking a lead role and supported by other agencies as required in line with the Behaviour Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

In some cases the allegations are of a more serious nature. This may include serious physical abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, sexting or initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found:

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- Violence, particularly pre-planned
- Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)
- Encouraging other children to attend inappropriate gatherings
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

Sexting

- All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to the school or college's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

For further information refer to the guidance 'Sexting in Schools'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551575/6.2439_KG_NCA_Sexting_in_Schools_WEB_1_PDF

3. Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards pupils from other children

Evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk of peer on peer abuse. We strongly believe in creating an environment where everyone feels safe and comfortable to talk and share their concerns.

Every classroom has a bubble box which provides children with the opportunity to share any concerns with their class teacher or another member of staff by writing a note; these boxes are regularly checked by teachers.

We also make sure that children are aware that they can talk to any adult about any concerns which they have. Posters can be found around the school promoting key individuals who children can talk to e.g. Pastoral Manager, Learning Mentor, Deputy Head Teacher and Head Teacher, in addition to the staff who work in their class. Workshops are

arranged with the NSPCC to support and create an environment where everyone feels safe and comfortable to talk and share their concerns.

On occasion, some students will present a safeguarding risk to other children. The school should be informed that the young person raises safeguarding concerns, for example, they are coming back into school following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves. These students will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

4. What to do if an allegation is made

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern.

- If there is a safeguarding concern the DSL should be informed.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- You should not promise confidentiality, be clear about who you'll need to tell and why
- Reassure the child that they're being taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe
- Listen carefully, remain non-judgemental, and avoid leading questions
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible
- Record the facts as the child presents them – do not add your own opinion
- Do not view any photos or videos of a sexual nature
- The DSL should contact children's services – single point of access to discuss the case. It is possible that social services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' files.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the child being complained about and the alleged victim).
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. Where there has been a report of sexual violence the DSL (or deputy) should make an immediate risk assessment considering the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator and all other children at the school (as well as adult students and staff, if appropriate).
- The risk assessment plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. There are 4 likely scenarios for your school to consider when investigating an allegation:

1. Manage internally, where this is considered appropriate in the circumstances, and early help or statutory interventions are not required
2. Early help, as outlined in chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children, where statutory interventions are not required
3. Referrals to children's social care, where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger
4. Reporting to the police (usually in parallel with a referral to children's social care), where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made

Where scenarios involve working with children's social care, we do not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children. The DSL (or deputy) works closely with children's social care to ensure the school's actions do not jeopardise a statutory investigation.

5. What support is provided for children affected by peer on peer abuse?

The school has a Pastoral Team consisting of a Pastoral Manager, Learning Mentor, School Psychologist and Play Therapists. In the first instance support would be provided by the Pastoral Team regardless of whether it is requested. We recognise that in some cases children may be reluctant to share their true feelings about an incident immediately and so it is important to provide them with ongoing support via a safe space and a person who they feel comfortable with to talk to should they wish to. In more serious cases referrals may be made to Early Help or CAMHS to provide additional specialist support.

Decisions about what support is required are based on the following factors:

The Victim

- The age and developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse
- The needs and wishes of the victim

The victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately, so dialogue should be open and encouraged.

The alleged perpetrator

- The age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator
- The nature of the allegations and risk of harm to other children
- Any unmet needs that the alleged perpetrator may have