



The White Rose Federation

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15th November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Early in the spring term this year, the Department for Education launched a review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges. The outcome of this noted the prevalence of **peer-on-peer** sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, in their lives and the lives of their peers. This was not limited to secondary schools and colleges. One of the findings in primary schools was that the children did not realise that the behaviours were problematic and therefore didn't report them.

In response, the Department for Education updated its policy on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. The link for the policy is below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014224/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf

All schools have a statutory duty to keep children safe. But exactly what this means is being constantly reviewed by Government, and, as a consequence, schools need to update their policies regularly. We are sure that all will agree that it is really important that our schools provide safe places for children to learn, thrive, feel safe and develop skills that will give them the best opportunities for the rest of their lives.

In August this year, the Government issued new Statutory Guidelines for schools: *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf

This means that it is a legal requirement that all schools **must** implement them with immediate effect. Along with the obvious requirement to prevent physical damage, sexual abuse by adults etc, they now contain the legal requirement to prevent and deal with 'peer on peer abuse' and sexual harassment. In fact, all public bodies, the NHS, Police, Armed Services, local and National Government, colleges and universities etc and also commercial employers must, by law, protect their staff and colleagues from sexual harassment and all other abuse by colleagues, so schools are no different to the work places our children will go on to work in.

It is therefore really important that our children learn what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour from an early age, to enable them to develop good habits and healthy instincts for life.

Here are some of the new key definitions:

Peer on peer abuse: Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18. Here are some of the key areas where peer on peer abuse may occur:

- Cyberbullying - that is online bullying, for example, on social media,
- prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying (name calling, for example, or leaving certain children out of activities or teams, because of prejudice);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- 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);

The new law is clear that sexual harassment is much more than physical actions, but includes: ***sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.***

None of us wants our child to suffer this kind of abuse – nor for our child to harm another.

Schools have a duty to deal with every incident that arises – even so called ‘banter’ is not acceptable, nor is the excuse that ‘kids will be kids’: harassment and bullying do not need to be a *normal* part of growing up.

Many of us may have experienced bullying and/or sexual harassment ourselves in the past and know, only too painfully, the lasting and undermining consequences it can have. We want to protect our children – your children – from these painful experiences and so we have implemented the new, legal, zero tolerance policy across our schools.

Our Federation Child Protection Policy reflects these changes. You can find the full text of our policy on each school website or by clicking on this link:

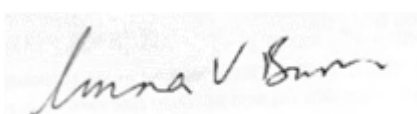
[Child Protection Policy | Chapel Haddlesey CE Primary School \(chapelhaddleseyschool.org.uk\)](http://chapelhaddleseyschool.org.uk)

[Child Protection Policy | Barlow Primary School \(barlowschool.org.uk\)](http://barlowschool.org.uk)

[Child Protection Policy | Burton Salmon Primary School \(burtonsalmonschool.org.uk\)](http://burtonsalmonschool.org.uk)

Thank you for your co-operation with this and all other policies designed to give your children the best and safest environment in which to learn and become happy and resilient individuals.

Best wishes,



Rev. Anna Burr
Co-Chair of Governors



Anne Edwards
Co-Chair of Governor