



# Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

July 2021

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# DOCUMENT CONTROL

## Who is this policy for?

This policy is for:

- Delta Academy staff
- Delta Core staff

This policy explains how we focus on developing the whole person, aiming to ensure that each student leaves our academies ready for the challenges of life at college, work, university and beyond and has a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards others.

We want our students to be well equipped to engage positively with a rapidly changing world, as accomplished problem solvers and innovators, confident in their ability to lead and with a clear appreciation of and respect for the views and potential of others.

## Protective marking

Not protectively marked.

## Review date

This policy will next be reviewed before the end of September 2022

## Revision History

| REVISION | DATE      | DESCRIPTION    | AUTHOR      |
|----------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| 1        | June 2021 | Policy issued. | Zoe Bidmead |
| 2        |           |                |             |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

All cases of peer-on-peer abuse are serious, whether physical, emotional or psychological. Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms and include serious bullying, relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or gender-based violence.

This form of abuse occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse, up skirting, sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. (KCSIE, 2021)

**All staff** should be clear as to the Trust policy and procedures with regards to peer-on-peer abuse

It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim.

The aim of the policy is to prevent peer-on-peer abuse of any sort and to have an educational community which promotes and provides excellence in teaching, learning, relationships and opportunities, through high expectations. Therefore, all members of our Academies have a right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Students should expect to learn in a supportive and caring environment without fear.

It is also to help members of the academy community to deal with peer-on-peer abuse if and when it may occur and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Peer-on-peer abuse is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable, and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of peer-on-peer abuse that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

A safe and secure environment is essential for effective learning and every student has a right to a positive school experience

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1** The responsibility for the implementation of this policy and provision rests with the Principal. On an operational basis, the management, responsibility and evaluation of this policy is undertaken by the Deep Support Team and Lead SLT

**2.2** It is important to note that every member of staff is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented and that in situations not covered by this policy, staff must act in the best interests of the student, as any responsible parent would act.

**2.3** Any concerns should be reported using the appropriate Academy mechanisms and logged onto CPOMS.

## 3. RELATED POLICIES

This policy complies with the Equality Act 2010 and is part of a suite of academy policies which should also be referred to:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Procedures Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Policy and Procedures
- E-Safety Policy

## 4. AIMS

**4.1** The academy is a member of Delta Academies Trust (DELTA). It will work closely with other Delta academies and with members of Delta's Core Team and other personnel to ensure that this policy is fully implemented.

The academy has clear aims for its peer-on-peer abuse policy:

- To create an environment where peer-on-peer abuse is not tolerated, where every student is recognised, welcomed and valued

- To ensure that all students are aware of their rights and responsibilities and know how to seek help if those rights are infringed
- To encourage our students to work collaboratively together, develop positive relationships and offer each other mutual support and respect
- To encourage our students to act respectfully and considerately at all times
- To raise awareness and provide our students with the skills, knowledge and confidence to deal effectively with all instances of peer-on-peer abuse, through a co-ordinated programme involving SMSC, collective worship and assemblies, pastoral support and peer mentoring approaches.
- To use the processes around Restorative Justice
- To review and monitor the effectiveness of our peer-on-peer abuse policy on a termly basis

**4.2** Peer-on-peer abuse, in whatever form, detrimentally affects the ability of our students to achieve and progress to the best of their ability, their well-being and will not be tolerated in any form, or to any degree.

**4.3** This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE guidance Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, (July 2017) This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying> and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (May 2018) This can be found at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719902/Sexual\\_violence\\_and\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_between\\_children\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_colleges.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)

**4.4** We will work hard to ensure that peer-on-peer abuse plays no part in our community by proactively working with all students, their families and our staff to eradicate it and promptly dealing with all reported incidents.

**4.5** This policy will provide clear guidance for staff on dealing with bullying incidents and the process by which the academy will seek to eradicate this issue.

## 5. THE NATURE OF BULLYING

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually **repeated over time**, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

It can be physical, psychological, social, verbal and is repetitive in its nature and causes distress to its victims.

Specific examples of bullying include but the list is not exhaustive:

- Physical violence
- Repeated name calling and teasing
- Malicious rumours, text messages, phone calls, cyber bullying or posting information on social websites e.g. Facebook, text messages, You Tube, snap chat etc. (please refer to the Online safety Policy)
- Physical or verbal threats and intimidation often over a period of time
- Racist, homophobic, sexist language or reference to disability
- Extortion or damaging a person's property
- Exclusion from social groups Any acts of violence, bullying, racial or sexual harassment are seen as extremely serious offences and will be dealt with accordingly.

## 6. RAISING AWARENESS

Students and parents should know that all forms of peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

It is important that there is a consensus within the Academy of what constitutes peer-on-peer abuse and what can be done about it. Raising the awareness of students, parents and staff enables individuals to understand the problem, to discuss their perceptions of it and to make informed decisions on how to deal with it. Our Academies ethos and environment encourages students to speak honestly and in confidence of their experiences and fears. They need to understand that they should never "suffer in silence".

Involving students in awareness raising, consultation and restorative justice increases their understanding of what peer-on-peer abuse is, its causes, effects, and methods of prevention. Procedures are established which enable the Academy to evaluate students' perceptions about peer-on-peer abuse. This includes dealing with students who are not directly involved but who are watching, laughing or encouraging the behaviour.

Students who witness peer-on-peer abuse need to understand the importance of reporting what they have seen and must be made to feel safe in doing so. Opportunities will be provided in the Academy curriculum, e.g. SMSC, assemblies,

role-play, stories or personal writing for positive reinforcement of anti-peer-on-peer abuse behaviour. Appropriate communications are in place to support parent understanding of peer-on-peer abuse what it is and how to prevent it.

All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If the academy feels that a criminal offence may have been committed, they may seek assistance from the police.

Students who over a period of time are not able to change their behaviour will be dealt with in line with the School CSGB Policy.

## 7. WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Students who are subject to peer-on-peer abuse may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse; legal responsibilities are known and community members should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with academy and Trust policy.

### 7.1 How and when does peer-on-peer abuse happen?

- Anytime – it may be a **single isolated incident or over a period of time**
- Anywhere might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

### 7.2 Recognising the signs of peer-on-peer abuse?

Staff will suspect peer-on-peer abuse is occurring if a student:

- Becomes withdrawn and anxious
- Shows deterioration in his/her work
- Starts to attend erratically
- Has a 'fake' illness
- Persistently arrives late
- Prefers to stay with adults

Other Signs may be that the student:

- Does not want to walk to and from the Academy
- Does not want to use public transport or the Academy buses
- Insists that they are driven to and from the Academy



- Changes their normal routine
- Begins to truant for no apparent reason
- Becomes withdrawn or displays a sudden lack of confidence
- Is reluctant to speak to other peers or teachers
- Attempts or threatens to commit suicide
- Runs away from home
- Is upset at night and has displayed a disruptive sleep pattern linked with increasing nightmares
- Is continuously complaining of feeling unwell in the morning and at school
- Displays a downturn in their academic standards
- Possessions and clothes torn or damaged or go missing
- Asks for money or steals money (to pay bully)
- Loses dinner money on a regular basis
- Has a sudden increase in bruises or cuts which the pupil finds difficult or are unwilling to explain
- Comes home hungry (money or lunch has been stolen)
- Stops eating
- Suddenly displays unusual aggressive and disruptive behaviour
- Starts to bully other peers or family siblings
- Is reluctant or unwilling to talk about what is going wrong

Any student who has knowledge of an incident of bullying must tell someone about it. This could be:

- A member of staff
- Academy Family
- The people who the student lives with
- A friend
- A member of the Student Leadership Team
- A peer mentor

## 8. STAFF GUIDELINES

Research shows quite clearly that many children do not report peer-on-peer abuse. It is therefore essential that we do our best to recognise possible victims. The result of peer-on-peer abuse can be that the victim feels isolated, frightened, humiliated and/or physically hurt.

- All Academy staff must be vigilant and proactively responsive to any peer-on-peer abuse behaviour.

- They must take seriously all complaints and respond appropriately, effectively and consistently to all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Report incidents on CPOMS

The Academy will ensure high levels of supervision at all times, but particularly during high-risk periods and in key areas around the Academy.

It is important that we are all aware so that we can ensure the wellbeing of every child.

- All staff should be consistent in their expectations of behaviour
- Students will be made aware of what constitutes peer-on-peer abuse through this policy
- When an incident of peer-on-peer abuse occurs, an appropriate and time limited response should be made
- Students are able to log incidents of peer-on-peer abuse in confidence, Students can also do this in school online when needed.
- The benefits of taking a stand against peer-on-peer abuse needs to be recognised by the student as well as the staff
- Parents, governors and members of the Academy community will be made aware of the Academy's stance on peer-on-peer abuse

## 9. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

### Incident

- All incidents should be reported (victim and perpetrator), using appropriate academy procedures and logged on CPOMS
- However, minor the incident appears to be, staff should intervene and report the incident using appropriate academy procedures and logged on CPOMS
- Follow up actions should be taken in line with the CSGB Policy and parents/carers informed
- Staff should ensure a common approach and reinforce that aggressive, violent or cruel behaviour is unacceptable
- If this is an obvious one-off incident deal with it as such, there and then. Fall outs or occurrences of students being unkind or unpleasant to one another may happen in your classroom – it is your responsibility to draw attention to the fact that it is not appropriate behaviour and it will not be tolerated. Appropriate steps should be taken to address this in line with the Academy procedures and the CSGB Policy.

- The victim should be given protection and support, which may involve mediation between the perpetrator and the victim. Staff should always take what they say seriously.
- The perpetrator should be made aware that his/her behaviour is totally unacceptable
- It is essential to follow-up after an incident to check that the peer-on-peer abuse has not started again. Immediately after intervention the issue is likely to stop but peer-on-peer abuse is often persistent and may re-occur. If students expect follow-up, they are unlikely to start repeating the behaviour again.
- The behaviour characteristics of certain students can contribute to peer-on-peer abuse, for example certain SEND needs, but this in no way justifies it. If the victim is behaving in such a way as to irritate or annoy other students, then the issue should be addressed with them.

Students should be made aware of:

- Places they can go to where they will feel safe
- Who they can contact for support
- How they can make staff aware of their problem even if they are too shy or frightened e.g. sympathetic teacher or friend who will help

Students must accept they have an important role to play in dealing with bullying. They are encouraged to:

- Have the self-confidence to challenge peer-on-peer abuse
- Support victims of peer-on-peer abuse
- Report any incidents of peer-on-peer abuse without guilt or fear

Parents are encouraged to:

- Identify early signs of peer-on-peer abuse noticed at home
- Contact your child's Form Tutor/Learning Manager
- Reassure their child that the Academy will deal with the issue.
- Encourage their Child to report all peer-on-peer abuse issues using appropriate Academy procedures.

Teachers and Academy staff:

1. Never ignore suspected peer-on-peer abuse
2. Don't make premature assumptions about students
3. Listen carefully to all accounts
4. Adopt a problem-solving approach
5. Model Academy and Trust values and zero tolerance of all peer-on-peer abuse

## 9.2 Sanctions

- When an incident is reported the Deep Support Team will determine the appropriate sanction in line with the Academy procedures and the CSGB Policy
- Any incident of peer-on-peer abuse could result in the student being excluded in line with the CSGB Policy. Behaviours and next steps will then be discussed with the parent/carer at the IRP
- Continued incidents of peer-on-peer abuse could result in the student being permanently excluded in line with the CSGB Policy
- Where appropriate outside agencies such as Educational Psychologist, Social Services and Police will be involved

## 10. APPENDIX 1 – LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

10.1 This policy also links to policies on:

- Behaviour
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Health & Safety
- Allegations against staff
- Parental concerns/complaints
- Attendance
- Curriculum
- PSHE
- Teaching and Learning
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Drug Education
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Positive Handling Policy
- E-Safety
- Safer Recruitment

Further advice is available from:

- NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>
- CEOPSThinkuknow: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- [www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com) – a childnet site
- [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) – child exploitation and on-line danger
- [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

- [www.Children'slegalcentre.co.uk](http://www.Children'slegalcentre.co.uk) - Publications and free advice line on legal issues
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges  
[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.pdf](#)
- UKCCIS sexting
- [Preventing and tackling bullying \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

#### Whistleblowing

Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

DFE Working together to safeguard Children

[Working Together to Safeguard Children-2018.pdf](#)

DFE – Keeping Children/pupils Safe in Education

[Keeping children safe in education.pdf](#)

DFE – Prevent Duty June 2015

[prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf](#)

DFE – What to Do if You're worried a Child is being abused March 2015

[What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](#)

## 11. APPENDIX 2 – TYPES OF PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

### **Cyber-Bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Any incidents of cyber bullying will be dealt with in line with the academy CSGB policy

### **Homophobic-Bullying**

Homophobic bullying is behaviour or language that makes a young person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of a perceived or actual sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Delta Academies Trust is a fully inclusive and takes an active approach to tackling all forms of bullying linked to both sexual orientation and gender identity

Homophobic bullying can be hard to identify because it may be going on in secret. Sometimes, students may not want to tell anyone about it because of perceived judgements from others.

Generally, homophobic bullying looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – including spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. Can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.
- 'Being outed' (the threat of being exposed to your friends and family by them being told that you are gay, lesbian or bisexual even if you are not)
- Indirect bullying / social exclusion (being ignored or left out)
- Sexual harassment (inappropriate sexual gestures)

Any incidents of homophobic bullying will be dealt with in line with the academy CSGB Policy, this will be 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'.

Incidents of casual homophobic language will be appropriately challenged by staff, and it is made clear to all members of the school community that this language will not be tolerated.

### **Transphobic-Bullying**

Transphobic bullying is bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, views or beliefs about trans people. Transphobic bullying affects young people who are trans but can also affect those questioning their gender identity as well as students who are not trans but do not conform to gender stereotypes.

Transphobic bullying is not the same as homophobic bullying. Homophobic bullying targets someone's sexuality (whether they are, or are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, heterosexual or other), whereas transphobic bullying targets someone because of their gender identity (whether they identify as male, female or something different, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth) or because they do not 'conform' to traditional gender stereotypes.

Any incidents of transphobic bullying will be dealt with in line with the academy CSGB policy, this will be 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'.

Incidents of casual derogatory or discriminatory language linked to gender will be appropriately challenged by staff, and it is made clear to all members of the academy community that this language will not be tolerated.

### **Xenophobic or racially motivated -Bullying**

**'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.'**

We will ensure that our academies nurture an ethos and environment where all are valued and where views are taken into consideration. All associated with the academy are committed to dealing with incidents involving racism (including prejudice and stereotyping), racial harassment, and racist name calling whenever they occur.



The academy is an anti-racist establishment and is committed to:

- addressing racism;
- ensuring action to support victims of racism;
- ensuring existing academy policies address inappropriate behaviour around racism and other discriminatory practices;
- recording and reporting racist incidents

Any incidents of Xenophobic or racially motivated peer-on-peer abuse will be dealt with in line with the academy CSGB Policy, this will be 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'.

Incidents of casual xenophobic or racially derogatory language will be appropriately challenged by staff, and it is made clear to all members of the school community that this language will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the academy CSGB Policy

## **HATE CRIME**

The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

There is no legal definition of hostility so we use the everyday understanding of the word which includes ill-will, spite, contempt, prejudice, unfriendliness, antagonism, resentment and dislike. These aspects of a person's identity are known as 'protected characteristics'.

A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and bullying, as well as damage to property, but the list is not exhaustive. The perpetrator can also be a friend, carer or acquaintance who exploits their relationship with the victim for financial gain or some other criminal purpose.

Targeting someone because of their protected characteristics is totally unacceptable. All behaviours will be robustly challenged and dealt with in relation to the academy CSGB policy

The police will be important partners where a crime might have been committed. **Where a hate crime may have been committed, the starting principle is that this must be referred on to the police.**

## **PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE OUTSIDE SCHOOL PREMISES**

Head Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any peer-on-peer abuse incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where peer-on-peer abuse outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on in line with our CSGB Policy. The academy will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

### **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between 2 children of any age and any sex or through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children

Sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated or dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys".

All unacceptable behaviours that fall within this category will be robustly challenged and dealt with in relation to the academy CSGB policy. **Where an incident or sexual violence or sexual harassment may have been committed, the starting principle is that this must be referred on to the police.**

For the purpose of this policy, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
- It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos. (UKCCIS sexting advice provides detailed advice for schools and colleges);
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or offline and can also occur simultaneously between the two. Harmful sexual behaviour should be considered in a child protection context. See Child protection Policy and KCSIE.