



Managing Allegations against other Children

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Managing Allegations Against Other Children

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1. Introduction

At Bush Hill Park Primary 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
- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2019
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy

2. Safeguarding allegations

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. One term used for these types of allegations are 'Peer to Peer'.

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 pupil

Any allegation of abuse is taken seriously and will never be passed off as 'banter' or children, 'just having a laugh' and 'part of growing up'. All allegations that are considered safeguarding ones will be recorded, investigated and dealt with following our school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation
- cyber bullying – using the internet to harass, threaten or intimidate someone

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
- inappropriate sexual language

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour
- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate gatherings
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
- sexting (please refer to our online safety policy)

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.

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

On occasion, some pupils 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed.

A factual record should be made of the allegation.

The DSL should contact Children's Services 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 kept on each child's safeguarding file.

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, for whom an allegation has been made, 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. It is important that all children feel supported, both the victim and the perpetrator and each support plan will be dependent on the children's ages and personalised according to pupil's needs.

In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan (see Appendix 1).

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

Appendix 1

- Points to consider:
- What is the age of the children involved?
- How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved?
- Where did the incident take place?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?
- What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?
- Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion?

5. Preventative Strategies

The school has developed a strong PSHE/SMSC/SRE curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour, sexual abuse, online safety and sexual abuse. It gives children an open forum to discuss. Whole school training will continue to focus on creating and maintaining an environment where the workforce feels confident and enabled to develop strategies to prevent peer on peer abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.