HOLYWELL CHURCH OF ENGLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy for Holywell School

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Overview

As a Church of England School, our Child-on-child abuse policy, is underpinned by our Behaviour for Learning Policy and our Anti-Bullying Policy. Both policies are rooted in our distinctively Christian character and our core beliefs which are Gospel inspired and which support the school's Vision.

At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to "Live Life in all its Fullness" (John 10:10).

Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd,

we choose to live our values,

being the best we can be

in community."

Aim

The Child-on-child Abuse Policy, which has been written with the students as the readers, outlines what Holywell will do to prevent and tackle child-on-child abuse and bullying. The policy has been written to promote and protect the rights of the students: The right to feel safe at all times, the right to be respected as an individual and that they all have the right to learn.

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Feeling safe at school

At Holywell School, we want to make sure that you feel looked after and safe when you are in and out of school.

Sometimes we don't know if something bad is happening, so you need to tell us.

This policy looks at child-on-child abuse, and what you can do when you feel you are being abused, or when you notice someone else being abused.

We can help you by:

- Teaching you what child-on-child abuse is.
- Teaching you what to do if you feel like you are being abused, or if someone else is being abused.
- Making sure you know who you can speak to if you are worried.

1. What is child-on-child abuse?

A **child** is someone who might be your friend, a student at school with you, or another young person you may know.

Abuse is something which usually physically or emotionally **hurts** another person by using behaviour that is meant to **scare**, **hurt** or **upset** the victim, or decrease their self-worth.

Child-on-child abuse can happen inside and outside of school – it can happen online, or in-person and it is important to let someone know if you think that you or someone else is being affected by child-on-child abuse.

It is not always easy to identify abuse when it is coming from someone you know such as a friend, or a classmate; but it is **important** to look out for the signs of child-on-child abuse and **report it** so that we can make sure it stops.

2. Bullying

At Holywell School we use the following definition of Bullying:

<u>Bullying</u>
is behaviour which is:
intentional and targeted,
deliberately designed to be hurtful
and repeated systematically over a period of time.

People can be bullied in many different ways:

Emotional bullying is a form of bullying which attempts to make the victim feel bad about themselves, such as how they look, what they wear and what they do. This type of bullying is often manipulative; people sometimes use emotional bullying to take advantage of you to get their own way by making threats or making you feel like you have to do something for them.

Physical bullying can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or purposely hurting someone. Physical bullying is easier to spot than other forms of bullying and is often a consequence of not dealing with non-violent bullying in the first instance.

Verbal bullying can include insulting someone because of how they look or because of their personality, and can often go beyond that. People can also use verbal bullying to be **racist, sexist** or **homophobic**. Verbal bullying usually exercises some form of prejudice which attacks the victim based on their personal attributes, such as their appearance, voice, clothes, disability and so on.

Racist bullying means bullying someone because of their race, skin colour, the country they are from or their religion. Racist bullying is a hate crime in the UK along with threatening behaviour, online abuse, damaging property and abusing someone physically or verbally because of their race or ethnicity.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying involves bullying someone because of their gender or sexuality; calling someone gay or lesbian as an insult or using these words in a derogatory manner would be classed as homophobic bullying. As with racist bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are an illegal hate crimes in the UK. This type of bullying takes place when someone is targeted and abused by another because the victim identifies themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or another protected identity (LGBTQ+). People who do not identify as LGBTQ+, but are perceived to be LGBTQ+, can also be subjected to this kind of bullying.

Sexist bullying is bullying someone because of their gender. Sexism primarily impacts women and girls – abusing someone because they are female is associated with **misogyny** (hatred of women). Sexist behaviour can include **gender stereotyping**, believing one sex is superior to or **more valuable** than another, and **sexually objectifying** an individual's body.

Cyberbullying includes any kind of bullying which takes place online; cyberbullies send insulting messages over the internet and sometimes share sensitive or explicit information and images online. Cyberbullies often hide their identity and remain anonymous so that they can continue to abuse the victim without any consequences, meaning it could be someone you consider to be a friend. If you are being cyberbullied, the best option is to **block the person and report the bullying**.

Bullying is not always done by one person and can often involve a group of people 'ganging up' on someone – if you ever see someone being bullied, **never** join in and **always report it**. The school **does not tolerate** any form of bullying and **all** reports of this form of abuse will be taken **extremely seriously**.

3. Sexting

Sexting is sending **sexually explicit pictures, videos or messages** via social media, text, gaming platforms and streaming sites – they can sometimes be called 'nudes', 'nude pics', or 'dick pics', but can also be sexually explicit messages.

Pressuring someone into sending these pictures, videos and messages is **abuse**.

It is important to know that sharing nude images or videos of or with people under the age of 18 is **illegal** even if **consent** is given. NB. It is also illegal to make, possess and show images of under 18 year olds, ie not just the sharing or possession of such images.



Consent means that someone has given another person permission to do something; if consent has not been given for someone to share nude images or videos to another person, it is both **abusive and illegal.**

Sharing sexually explicit images and videos to someone you have a close relationship with is never a good idea, not only because it is illegal, but because that person may use this against you in the future in the event of an argument or fall-out – this is known as 'revenge porn' and can have serious consequences.

Incidents of sexting can be divided in to two categories:

Aggravated incidents are taken extremely seriously by the school. They occur when there is an abusive element involved in sending and possessing sexually explicit images, for example where:

- **An adult is involved** – Anyone over the age of 18 sending and receiving sexually explicit images and videos or attempting to develop a relationship via online platforms with someone under the age of 18 will be committing a criminal sex offence.
- **There has been an intent to harm** – The sharing of sexually explicit images and videos becomes abusive if they are shared around due to conflict, such as a fall-out or breakup, or if an element of blackmailing and making threats has been involved.
- **Reckless misuse** – If there has been no intent to harm another, but the images have been taken, sent or shared without consent, this will be seen as abusive behaviour as the victim may have been harmed as a result of reckless or thoughtless behaviour.

Experimental incidents, while still illegal, are not seen as abusive as there is no intent to harm anyone and consent has been given by all parties. These incidents will still be taken seriously by the school. An example of experimental sexting is where it has taken place between two young people who are in a close relationship, and the images are not intended to be distributed beyond them.

Even if you are not the person who is sending them, it is **illegal** to have these kinds of pictures or videos of a person if they are under 18 years old.

4. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of abuse which involves **unwanted sexual behaviour** of one person to another which makes the victim feel uncomfortable, intimidated, degraded, objectified or violated.

This can happen **online** and **face-to-face** (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable at any age.

It could be:

- Someone making **sexual comments**, like using inappropriate sexual language towards someone, saying sexual things about someone's appearance or clothes, or requesting sexual favours.
- Calling someone **sexual names**.
- **Sexual jokes** or teasing.

- Being physical, like **touching** which makes someone feel uncomfortable, messing with their clothes, or **showing pictures** or **drawings** which are of a sexual nature.
- Being sexual online, like **sharing sexual pictures** and **videos,** or posting sexual comments on social media.
- **Sexual threats** or pushing someone to do something sexually that they don't want to or aren't ready for.

If you ever feel like you have been or are the victim of sexual harassment, make sure that you tell a responsible adult, and they will listen to what happened and support you with any worries that you have.

5. Relationships

Any relationship you have should be **positive** and make you feel **safe, happy and comfortable**.

A negative relationship might make someone feel **scared**, **confused**, **worried** and even **unsafe**.

It is important that you know the **difference** between a positive relationship and a negative relationship.

Positive relationships

- You are **comfortable** around that person.
- You can be **honest** with that person.
- You can say how you **fee**l, what you are **thinking** and you **listen** to each other.
- You **support** each other and treat each other **well**.
- You feel **safe**.
- You **trust** that person.
- You do **helpful things for each other**.
- You are **never pressured** to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- You feel **looked after**.

Negative relationships

- The person might **push** you, **hit** you or **break** your things.
- The person might **tell you what to do**, what to wear or who you can see.
- You might feel **scared** – they might say they will hurt you if you don't do something.
- They might **make threats** or do harmful things if you do something they did not want you to do.
- The person **calls you names**, makes you feel bad in front of other people and makes you **feel bad about yourself**.
- The person gets **angry easily** and you don't know what will make them angry – it might make you feel **nervous**.
- The person might **pressure** you to do things **you don't want to do** or are not ready for, like having sex or using drugs and alcohol.
- The person **might not take no for answer** when you say you don't want to do something.

6. How do I know if someone is being abused?

It might be hard for you to know if you are being abused and you **might not understand** it is happening. It is important you can **recognise** when behaviour isn't appropriate.
It's also important that you can notice when **someone else** might be being abused.

Some signs might be:

- Not going to school.
- Having injuries, like bruises.
- Feeling sad and down.
- Feeling like they can't cope.
- Feeling withdrawn or shy.
- Getting headaches or stomach aches.
- Feeling nervous.
- Not being able to sleep, sleeping too much or getting nightmares.
- Feeling panicked.
- Changing looks to look much older.
- Being abusive to someone else.

Remember: you can feel all of these things too. Listen to how you feel, pay attention to what you have read here, and know that these signs can mean you are being abused.

7. What do I do if someone else is being abused?

If you think that someone is being abused, it is important that you **help** that person.
You should **never walk away** and ignore the problem if you see someone else being abused, because the person might keep upsetting them.

If you can, and it is **safe** to do so, tell the person abusing them to **stop**, but never get angry or hit them.

Tell a responsible adult, such as a teacher, as soon as you've seen someone being abused.

A responsible adult can **stop the abuse** and give their support to the person who is being abused.

You should **never feel scared** to tell someone about abuse.

Sometimes, you might not **see someone being abused**, but you might be **worried** about them. You might think they are being abused by **someone you don't know**, or someone they have told you about. It's really important that you **tell someone** even if you are worried but haven't **seen** any abuse.

8. What do I do if I am being abused?

The first thing you should do is **tell someone you trust**. This could be a family member, a friend or a teacher.

You can ask the person abusing you to leave you alone; however, it is important to remain safe in such situations and assess whether it would be better to ignore the person and **report it** so that someone can help you.

You should **never**:

- Ignore the abuse without reporting it.
- Respond to abuse with violence.
- Continue to allow people to abuse you.
- Allow the abuse to change who you are.

Always remember that if you are being abused, it is **not your fault,** and you are **never alone**.

9. Who can I talk to?

At Holywell, we are a Protective Behaviours' school and this means that "Everyone has the right to feel safe all of the time" and "We can talk with someone about anything even if it feels awful or small." It is important you **tell someone** as soon as you think that you are being abused, or you think that someone else is being abused.

Speaking to someone like your parent, carer or teacher will mean that we can make sure the **abuse stops** and doesn't happen again.

At Holywell we encourage all students to identify at least 5 adults with whom they would be comfortable speaking. Beyond this network of adults, there are members of staff with whom students can always speak and who are responsible for keeping everyone safe and well. They are:

Mrs Stewart-McAlpine
Mrs Newbury
Miss Collins

10. How can I help stop abuse from happening?

We can all help stop abuse at our school by:

- Making sure we **understand** how we should **treat** others.
- **Helping** others when they are in need.
- Being **kind**, **friendly** and **respectful** to others.
- Thinking about people's **feelings** before we say or do something.
- Looking back at this policy and paying attention to school activities such as assemblies, which talk about child-on-child abuse.
- **Talking to someone** when we are worried.

You should know that abuse is never OK and it is serious. It is not funny, or part of growing up. At Holywell, we will not tolerate abuse and neither should you.

11. What if I am being abused by an adult or if I think someone else is?

Although this guidance is about child-on-child abuse, the advice here is also relevant if you are being abused by an adult or if you think someone else is. The first thing you should do is **tell someone you trust**. This could be a family member, a friend or a teacher.

You can ask the person abusing you to leave you alone; however, it is important to remain safe in such situations and assess whether it would be better to ignore the person and **report it** so that someone can help you.

You should **never**:

- Ignore the abuse without reporting it.
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Always remember that if you are being abused, it is **not your fault,** and you are **never alone**.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025' (KCSIE)

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2024) 'Information sharing'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (overview)'
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- National Police Chief's Council (2020) 'When to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- ICT and e-safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan