

21st June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

In response to the recent information in the news, we would like to share that St Peter's CE Academy takes safeguarding very seriously. In the context of Peer on Peer Abuse, we have provided some information about what this is and how we support our children.

We have also included details of where you can seek further information and advice below.

The definition of Peer on Peer abuse.

Children might abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. 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; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019*)

We are aware that some children will be more vulnerable than others, in particular our children with a special education or mental health need. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads and SENCo closely monitor the children, to ensure they are supported appropriately.

It is important to recognise that all children are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts as they form different relationships in their neighbourhoods, schools and online and these can feature violence and abuse which is often hidden to adults. Peer influence and pressure is a major factor in decisions made by young people to join groups.

St Peter's CE Academy closely support our children and we have a culture of looking out for each other. We are able to offer support to our children and families when they feel that a situation needs addressing or is making someone feel uncomfortable. St Peter's has robust systems and processes already in place to keep the children and young people safe, and we have a number of available options for them to report any incident or anything that is worrying them.

Signs to look out for:

- absence from school or disengagement from school activities
- physical injuries
- mental or emotional health issues
- becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem
- lack of sleep
- alcohol or substance misuse

- changes in behaviour
- inappropriate behaviour for age
- abusive towards others

Ensure young people know the risks

Talk about peer on peer abuse in an age appropriate way. Create opportunities for young people to weigh up risks and recognise that sometimes this means they will take risks we as adults might disagree with. We can support them by influencing the children to be making the healthiest long-term choices and keeping them safe from harm in the short-term

Our approach is part of a wider whole-school (and indeed whole-trust) approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. For example, the curriculum on relationships complements, and is supported by, the school's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying and safeguarding. The curriculum and wider policies are part of a broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally and this is encapsulated within our pastoral care offer.

Our children are aware that they can speak to any adult in school who will deal with any worries, to ensure these are addressed.

- This link shares a '[resource](#)' for parents on on-line safety.
- The National Sexual Violence Resource Centre (NSVRC) has published some [resource in this links](#) for parents, in relation to talking about consent.

NEW NSPCC helpline: The new dedicated, confidential helpline is run by the NSPCC and is available to current or past victims as well as parents, carers or professionals with concerns.

The dedicated NSPCC helpline number is **0800 136 663**

If a worried parent or carer has any concerns they can talk directly to **Mrs Robinson, Mrs Casswell, Mr Innes or Mrs Jones**

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Robinson

Mrs Sarah Robinson
Lead DSL / SENCo