

Appendix 1 : Peer-on-peer abuse

I The College's responsibilities.

"Sometimes the people that you chill with want you to do certain things that you don't want to do, but you have to do it because you're part of that crew, you're part of it"

The Governors, College Leadership Team and all staff and volunteers at Hope Valley College are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse both within and beyond the College.

We believe that in order to protect children we should

- Be aware of the level and nature of risk to which our students are exposed
- Put into place a clear and comprehensive strategy which is tailored to our specific safeguarding context
- Take a contextual whole-school approach to preventing and peer-on-peer abuse
- Take a preventative approach to peer-on-peer abuse
- Recognise national and increasing concern about this issue and wish to implement it to ensure that our students are safe
- Encourage parents to hold us to account on this issue, so that if their child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the College so that we can ensure appropriate and prompt action is taken in response

This policy

- Sets out our strategy for preventing, identifying and appropriately managing peer-on-peer abuse. *It is the product of a comprehensive consultation- which has involved students, staff, parents, and a risk assessment*
- Applies to all of our college community. It is reviewed annually and updated in the interim, as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which our students may be exposed. *The annual review will involve the safeguarding governor, staff and students and will be informed by an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of this policy over the previous year.*
- Is the College's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer abuse. It should be read alongside our child protection policy, Promoting good behaviour policy and it's anti-bullying appendix and online safety policy. It will also reflect our awareness of children missing in education and our exclusion data.

- Does not use the term ‘victim’ and/or perpetrator. This is because Hope Valley College takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in allegations of or concerns about peer-on-peer abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused and those who are alleged to have abused their peers, in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required for the latter. We acknowledge that students who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in this context, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers.
- Uses the terms ‘child’ and ‘children’ which is defined for the purposes of this policy as a person under 18. We have, nonetheless chosen not to restrict our approach to peer-on-peer abuse to children but instead to adopt a wider interpretation of our safeguarding responsibilities so that they apply to all our students, regardless of age.
- Is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in ***Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)***
- Should, if relevant according to the concerns/allegations raised, be read in conjunction with ***Sexual Violence and Sexual Harrassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE Advice- December 2017)***
- Should be read in conjunction with ***Derbyshire Safeguarding Board’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*** and any relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

2. Our understanding of peer-on-peer abuse

“I beat them with words. This is most hurtful” (boy 18)

Initially I thought that when he kept calling to ask where I was and wanting details of who I met and what I was doing wsa ok.....I even liked it, you know.....I thought it was a sign he really cared for me” (girl, 15)

At Hope Valley College we define any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children’s relationships (both intimate and none-intimate) as peer-on-peer abuse.

Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including:

- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying),
- relationship abuse,
- domestic violence,
- child sexual exploitation,
- youth and serious youth violence,
- harmful sexual behaviour
- gender-based violence

We recognise that these types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns. Children’s experiences of

abuse and violence are rarely isolated events and can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and the spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to peer-on-peer abuse therefore needs to consider the range of types of abuse and capture the full context of the child's experiences.

Our aim is to adopt a Contextual Safeguarding approach and ensure that our response to incidents of peer-on-peer abuse takes into account any potential complexity. Our approach should therefore

- recognise children's experiences of significant harm in extra-familial context, and seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities
- recognise that as children enter adolescence they spend increasing amounts of times outside the home in public environments, including the internet, within which they may experience abuse
- consider interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse has occurred. For example, rather than move a child from college, professionals could work with the college leadership team and the student body to challenge harmful, gendered school cultures this improving the pre-existing environment within college

We recognise that peer-on-peer abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse affecting children in the UK. For example, more than four in ten teenage schoolgirls between 13 and 17 in England have experienced sexual coercion (Barter et al 2015). Two thirds of contact sexual abuse experiences by children aged 17 or under was committed by someone who was also aged 17 or under (Radford et al 2011)

We know that all behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately. The NSPCC explains that "children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive" We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour as then are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. We understand the term Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) , defined as "sexual behaviours expressed by children.... That are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child....or adult"

Hackett's Continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children. It relates exclusively to sexual behaviour and is not exhaustive but provides us with a reference point.

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected	Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	Problematic and concerning behaviour	Victimising intent or outcome	Physically violent sexual abuse
Socially acceptable	Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	Includes misuse of power	Highly intrusive
	Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	No overt elements of victimisation	Intrusive	
Consensual, mutual and reciprocal	Generally consensual and reciprocal	Consent issues may be unclear	Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given	Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for the behaviour
				Sadism
Shared decision making	May lack reciprocity or equal power	May include elements of expressive violence		
	May include levels of compulsivity			

Whilst Hackett's continuum relates exclusively to sexual behaviour we can draw on aspects of it to assess where other alleged behaviours which are reported, including emotional and physical abuse, fall on the spectrum.

- Is it socially acceptable?
- Does it involve a single incident or has it occurred over a period of time
- Is it socially acceptable within the peer group
- Is it problematic and concerning
- Does it involve any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination relating to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- Does it involve an element of coercion or pre-planning
- Is there a power imbalance between the children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power
- Does it involve a misuse of power

We recognise that the same behaviour presented by different children may be understood at different points on a spectrum, depending on the particular context. For example, an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery may be inappropriate in the context of an exchange between two children in a consenting relationship but abusive if it has been produced as a result of coercion or shared without consent of the child in the image.

We acknowledge behaviour that is not initially abusive has the potential to become abusive quickly or over time. It is important that we intervene early and address inappropriate behaviour displayed by a child, potentially preventing this behaviour from progressing on a continuum to become problematic, abusive and/or violent.

We recognise our responsibility to intervene early and address any inappropriate behaviour. This may not only apply on an individual basis but does sometimes apply across the student body. We will endeavour to address such issues through our PSHE programme, external agencies, including discussing with the MAT whether anything is happening within the wider community that might be affecting the students behaviour.

How do we identify a child who is being abused by their peers?

All staff at Hope Valley College are alert to the well-being of our students and to the signs of abuse. Staff recognise that the manner in which students will disclose or present with behaviours as a result of their experiences will differ. They are aware that signs a child may be suffering from peer-on-peer abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse (Please see section 2 of the child protection policy for indicators of abuse) and can include:

- a. Failing to attend college, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out college related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected
- b. Physical injuries
- c. Experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional well being
- d. Becoming withdrawn; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares, lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- e. Broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse
- f. Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not age appropriate
- g. Abusive behaviour towards others

The list is by no means exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse. Abuse affects children very differently. Our staff are trained to be alert to behaviour that may cause concerns, to think about what the behaviour might signify, to encourage children to share with them any underlying reasons for their behaviour and,

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where appropriate, to engage with their parents/carers so that the cause(s) of their behaviour can be investigated.

The power dynamic that can exist between children is also very important when identifying and responding to their behaviour: in all cases of peer-on-peer abuse, a power imbalance will exist within the relationship. This inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the child responsible for the abuse and the child being abused. It may, for example, be the result of their relative social or economic status. Equally, while children who abuse may have power over those who they are abusing, they may be simultaneously powerless to others.

Are some children more vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

At Hope Valley College we recognise that during adolescence all students are vulnerable due to the increasing influence of their peers. Individual and situational factors increase this vulnerability as do peer group dynamics. All staff are aware that peer on peer abuse is likely to affect boys and girls differently. Barriers to disclosure will also be different.

Our whole college approach

The College actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- Educating all Governors, CMT, staff, volunteers and parents about this issue. This includes training all on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse alongside how to prevent, identify and respond to it. Everyone will look at Contextual Safeguarding, identification and classification of specific behaviours and the importance of taking all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, no matter how low level they may appear and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay, banter or teasing
- Educating all students about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse through the curriculum. Students are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse. We promote a telling ethos throughout college and have a zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying.
- Engaging parents by talking to them about the issues, asking them what they perceive to be the risks facing their children and encouraging them to hold the college to account on this issue.
- Ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding team so that any concerning trends can be identified early and additional support be provided to those students who may be at more risk. These issues will form part of the weekly Senior Pastoral teams agenda.
- Challenging attitudes that underlie such abuse both in and outside the classroom

- Working with the college community to address equality issues, promote positive values and encourage a culture of tolerance and respect.
- Create conditions in which our students can aspire to and realise safe and healthy
- Create and promote a culture in which our students feel able to share their concerns openly in a none judgemental environment and feel listened to
- Respond to cases of peer-on-peer abuse swiftly and appropriately

Multi-agency working

Engaging with external agencies is an essential part of our approach in relation to peer-on-peer abuse. We work closely with the MAT team, Derbyshire safeguarding Board and children's social care to identify current concerns. The relationships built with these agencies are essential in helping us be able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of peer-on-peer abuse.

The relationship Hope Valley College has built with these partners enables us to

- a) develop a good awareness and understanding of different referral pathways that operate within our local area
- b) signpost us to preventative and support services which exist
- c) ensure that our students are able to access the range of services and support they need quickly
- d) support and help inform our local community's response to peer-on-peer abuse
- e) increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in order that we can take preventative action to minimise the risk of these being experienced by our students.

Hope Valley College actively refers concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse where necessary through a Starting Point referral to the MAT and children's social care. We think this is particularly important because we recognise that peer-on-peer abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. Effective partnership working is essential.

Responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse

We believe that it is essential that all concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly as our response will have a significant impact upon our College environment.

Our response will

- include a thorough investigation of the concerns/allegations and the wider context in which they may have occurred
- treat all young people involved as being at potential risk- while the young person allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to others they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. A safeguarding response will therefore be applied to all involved.
- take into account that the abuse may be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns for any of the young people involved and consider the effect of wider socio-cultural contexts both in and out of college (Peer group, family, college environment, experience of crime and victimisation, online presence) We will consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address need and mitigate risk
- consider the potential complexity of peer-on-peer abuse taking into account the young persons experiences and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent
- ensure that the views of all the young people are heard. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will, unless a referral needs to be made immediately, discuss the proposed action with the young people involved and their parents to ensure consent has been obtained before a referral is made. The college will manage the young persons expectations about information sharing and keep them and their parents informed of developments where appropriate and safe to do so.

If a student is in immediate danger, or risk of serious harm a referral through starting point will be made and/or the police will be notified. Anyone can make a referral but if it is not completed by one of the DSLs then they should be notified that a referral has been made as soon as possible.

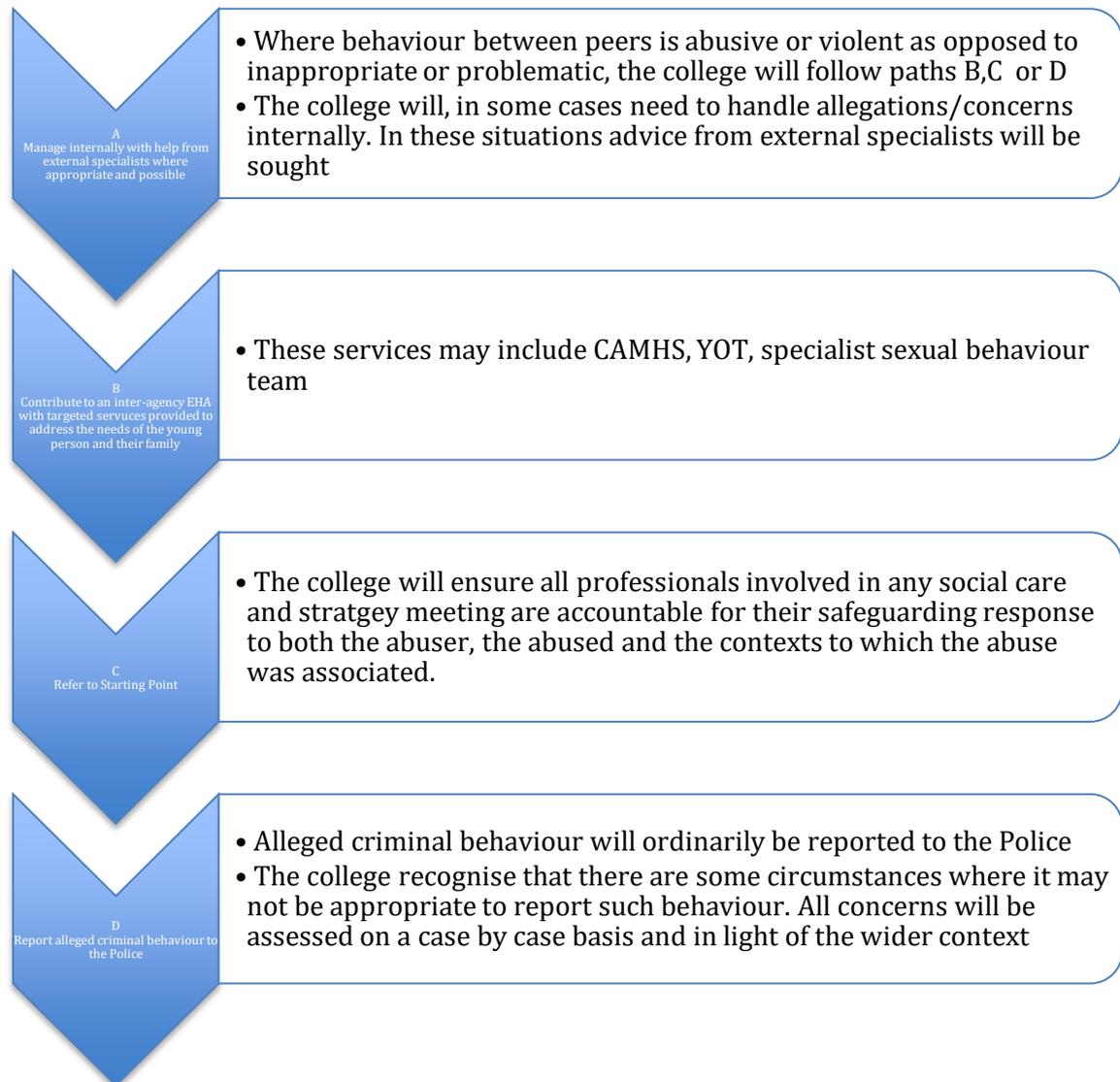
If a member of staff thinks that a student may be at risk of experiencing abuse from their peers or that a student may be at risk of abusing their peers they should discuss their concerns with the DSL without delay so that a course of action can be agreed.

If a student speaks to a member of staff about peer-on-peer abuse that they have witnessed or experienced, the member of staff should listen to the student and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement.

The DSL will discuss any concerns or allegations with the person who has reported them and where necessary take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of all the students affected.

The DSLs will decide whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be dealt with internally and if so whether any external specialist support is required. In some case the DSL may phone the Starting Point help line for

advice on a no-names basis to determine the most appropriate response. Where the DSLs consider or suspect that the behaviour may be abusive or violent, as opposed to inappropriate or problematic, in most case a referral to Starting Point will be made. Alternatively it may be appropriate to contact Derbyshire Safeguarding Board to agree on a course of action, which may include:



Individual Risk and Needs Assessment

Where there is an incident of peer-on-peer abuse the college will carry out a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each young person affected by the abuse. These assessments will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed
- engage the young persons parents and draw upon local agencies to ensure the young persons needs are met in the long term. Consider

whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying behaviour

- be reviewed at regular intervals in light of the young person's needs to ensure that real progress is being made which benefits the young person

If at any stage the young person's needs escalate, the DSL will contact the MAT, social care or Derbyshire safeguarding Board, as appropriate, for advice.

Disciplinary Action

Hope Valley College will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for anyone involved. This will only happen if any such action should address the abuse, the causes of it and the attitudes underlying it. Disciplinary Action may sometimes be appropriate

- to ensure the young person involved takes responsibility for and realises the seriousness of the action
- demonstrate to the student and other that peer-on-peer abuse can never be tolerated
- ensure the safety and well being of other students

This must, however, be balanced against the abusers own unmet needs and any safeguarding concerns relating to them. Before deciding on appropriate action the College will always consider its duty to safeguard all young people from harm; the underlying reasons for a young person's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the young person themselves, the risk the young person may pose to other peers, the severity of the abuse and the causes of it.

The College will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if it is deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. Exclusion will only be seen as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of other young people within the College. The College recognises that disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of peer-on-peer abuse, and the College will always consider the wider actions that might need to be taken.

On-going proactive work to a contextual whole-college approach

The College is committed to taking a contextual whole-college approach to peer-on-peer abuse by embedding best practice as part of on-going proactive

work. Our response will become part of our wider prevention work. This response will involve considering the context in which incidents of peer-on-peer abuse take place, the local community on which the College is based and the wider physical and on-line environment. We will consider questions such as

- a) What protective factors and influences exist within the college and how can we bolster these?
- b) How does the College's physical environment contribute to the abuse and how can we address this going forward?
- c) Do wider gender norms, equality issues and/or societal attitudes contribute to the abuse?
- d) What was the relationship between the abuse and the cultural norms between staff and students, and how can these be addressed going forwards?
- e) Does the abuse indicate a need for staff training on, for example, underlying attitudes, a particular issues or the handling of particular abuse?
- f) How have similar cases been managed in the past and what effect has this had ?
- g) Does the case or any identified trends highlight areas for development in the way in which the College works with young people to raise their awareness of and/or prevent peer-on-peer abuse, including by way of the College's PSHE curriculum and lessons that address attitudes or behaviour such as gender and equalities work?
- h) Are there any lessons to be learnt about the way in which the College engages with parents to address peer-on-peer abuse issues?
- i) Are there any underlying issues that affect other schools on the area and is there a need for a multi-agency response?
- j) Does this case highlight a need to work with certain young people to build their confidence and teach them how to identify and manage abusive behaviour?
- k) Were there opportunities to intervene earlier or differently to address common themes amongst the behaviour of others within the College?

