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Dear Parent,

[Keeping Children in Safe in Education](#) is a Department for Education document that outlines how, as a school, we can keep children safe from abuse and how we should respond to safeguarding concerns. It is statutory guidance that by law, all schools need to follow.

Each year it is updated to acknowledge the current safeguarding issues, so for example, in the most recent updates, there is significant guidance around online safety.

One of the most important changes in the past few years has been in relation to Child on Child Abuse - sometimes know as Peer on Peer Abuse. Whereas once people may have been inclined to think that abuse was something that is adult led, we now have a clearer understanding that abuse can also happen between children.

It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that staff, parents and children understand what Child on Child Abuse is. Obviously, this will grow as a child ages, for example, a Year 6 will have a more advanced understanding than a Reception child. At a primary school age, we would predominantly be looking out for behaviours that in the long term, could turn into more extreme abusive behaviours. The guidance (and some of the things I refer to below) may not seem relevant for primary school aged children, so please be reassured that we would reflect this in our approach.

As parents, it is important to understand what we class as Child on Child Abuse, how we proactively act to ensure it doesn't happen in school and how we would react if it did.

On the attached sheet I have written a short guide that summarises our approach to safeguarding our children in this particular respect.

Please take the time to read this as it is extremely important. Thank you for reading and as always, if you have any comments or queries please let me know.

Best Wishes,

Mrs J Gingell

Child on Child Abuse

Background

Keeping children safe from harm is a school's main responsibility. Over the past few years, the UK has seen many high-profile examples of retrospective disclosures of abuse within educational settings. A significant element of this focus has been on incidences of Child on Child (or Peer on Peer) abuse.

At Luckington Community School we keep our children safe by responding to (and preventing) Child on Child abuse in a similar manner to which we would respond to any other form of abuse.

At all times we should be on the lookout for Child on Child abuse. **At a primary school age, we will particularly be alert to the initial behaviours, that if left unaddressed, could lead to more serious behaviours later on.** Examples of this can be found below.

Abuse - General

Defining Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child.

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Abuse can take place in person or online.

It can take place within a family, institution or a community. Occasionally it can be facilitated by others - outside of these settings.

Children are at risk of face to face abuse AND online abuse.

Children with SEND are 3 more times likely to be abused. Girls are more likely to be sexually abused than boys and it is more likely that the perpetrators will be boys.

Forms of Abuse

Physical abuse causing physical harm to a child. This includes fabricated illness.

Emotional persistent emotional maltreatment that would have an adverse affect on a child's emotional or mental development. This may involve bullying, which could include racial bullying.

Sexual forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. These can include contact or non-contact activities.

Neglect the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Child on Child Abuse

All staff, parents and children should understand the importance of reporting and challenging inappropriate behaviours by children.

Certain behaviours should not be downplayed as 'part of growing up', 'messing around' or 'boys being boys'.

These behaviours should not be normalised and part of the culture - the children should know what to speak up about and it should be challenged.

As a primary school, behaviours may not initially seem as 'extreme' as described below. Please note that the behaviours below may have more relevance for secondary school children, however, we are actively looking out for behaviours that could, long term, lead on to these serious behaviours.

Forms of Child on Child Abuse

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

Relationship abuse abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)

Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

Sexual activity Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

Sharing of nude/semi-nude images Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

Upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm

Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

How do we respond to an incident/disclosure of Child on Child abuse?

The first thing we would do is listen to the child. The reporting adult would then have a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about whether they feel that the event can be categorised as Child on Child abuse. The DSL may have to carry out further investigations. There may be contextual reasons why we would choose to categorise it as this, for example, there may have been a history of the child acting inappropriately or there may have been safeguarding concerns in the past.

Either way, we would record it as Child on Child in our online system. We would record a summary of the concern alongside the risk assessment we have put in place to prevent it from happening again. If we felt that the actions of a child did constitute Child on Child abuse, we would treat this as a safeguarding issue, following the normal procedures for dealing with a safeguarding concern. Please see our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

We would ensure that a risk assessment was in place, which would be designed to protect the other children. In addition, support may need to be put in place for both the perpetrator and the victim; for example, if a child had been slapping other children on the bottom, it may be necessary to do some work with them on the importance of personal space.

It is also likely that we would talk to the parents of the children involved - this would definitely be true if we did log this as a case of Child on Child abuse.

How does our school keep children safe from Child on Child abuse?

1. We have a robust, comprehensive RSE/PSHE curriculum that regularly covers topics such as consent and positive relationships. These themes run through the curriculum from Reception to Year 6.
2. During each teacher/support staff meeting, an agenda point is set aside to have a professional discussion around incidents that may or may not be classed as Child on Child abuse. By doing this, we keep it as part of everyday conversation.
3. Each teacher/support staff meeting begins with a 'safeguarding question of the week' or a mini presentation on particular safeguarding topics.
4. Each class has a worry box - the children complete a worry form every week during the PSHE lesson, whether they have a worry or not. Sometimes these worries can be addressed as a whole class, on other occasions we speak to the child or parents directly. Either way, it allows us to support the children with their worries on a regular basis.
5. We challenge prejudice. For example, sexist or racist behaviours are not allowed to go unchallenged.
6. We regularly enrich our PSHE/RSE curriculum with visits from (amongst others) the Stay Safe Initiative and the NSPCC. An important message of these visits is to 'speak out and stay safe'.
7. We have a clear behaviour policy that is partly designed to stop negative behaviours becoming habitual. For example, bullying is not allowed to happen because we deal with any initial concerns in a robust way.
8. We respond to incidents/disclosures of Child on Child abuse in the manner described above.

What can I do to help as a parent?

1. Talk to your child about personal space and about the importance of 'privates being private'.
2. Have a continual discussion about what a positive relationship between two people looks like.
3. Ensure that they know who to tell if something upsets them and as a parent, do not hesitate to come to us if you have a concern.
4. Our children are young, but do not allow comments that could be deemed as being sexist, racist, homophobic etc. pass by unchallenged. Remember, this will be very different for a Reception, Year 6 or Year 11 child, as their understanding of the world grows.
5. Please note that if we do speak to you about something your child has said or done in this respect, it does not reflect you as a family or your ability to parent. Our aim is often to nip things in the bud before they have the chance to develop negatively.