



Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Statement of Intent

At Wallace Road Nursery School, we are committed to safeguarding all children in our care. We follow the principles of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*, which states:

“Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with.”

We place a strong emphasis on listening to the voice of the child and ensuring their wishes and feelings are central to any action taken or services provided. Children are encouraged to express their views through age-appropriate systems, and these are treated with respect and sensitivity.

Purpose and Aims

Children may harm one another in ways that constitute abuse. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define peer-on-peer abuse and the various forms it may take.
 - Ensure a consistent, supportive, and immediate response to incidents.
 - Promote awareness and preventative strategies among staff, children, and parents.
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Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
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Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by:

- *Children Act 1989* – The child’s welfare is paramount.
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2024)* – Emphasizes the importance of the child’s voice in assessment.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* – Outlines expectations for preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse.



Definition and Types of Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Abuse between children should never be dismissed as “just banter” or “part of growing up.” Forms of peer-on-peer abuse may include:

- **Physical Abuse** – e.g. hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling.
- **Sexually Harmful Behaviour** – e.g. inappropriate touching, language, or sexual assault.
- **Prejudice-Based Abuse** – Linked to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or social class.
- **Bullying or Repeated Harmful Behaviour** – Including exclusion, intimidation, or manipulation.

Staff Response and Expectations

All staff must:

- Respond **immediately and sensitively**.
- Use **open-ended, non-leading questions** to gather facts.
- Record observations and evidence (on CPOMS).
- Conduct **risk assessments** and consider intent behind behaviour.
- Avoid judgmental or dismissive attitudes.
- Be trained and confident in responding appropriately to these incidents.

Investigating Incidents: Key Steps

1. Gather the Facts:

- Speak to involved staff and children (as appropriate to age and understanding).
- Ask open questions: *What happened? Who was there? When and where?*

2. Review Evidence:

- Use observations, reports from all witnesses.

3. Consider Intent and Context:

- Was the behaviour deliberate or reactive?



- Are there known triggers?
- Are consistent behaviour strategies in place?

4. Safeguarding Decision:

- If there is **significant harm or risk**, refer immediately to **Children's Social Care** (and police, if appropriate).
 - If criteria for referral are not met, consider early help or internal resolution.
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Informing Parents

- Parents should be informed **face-to-face** whenever possible.
 - Share facts without judgment and reassure that appropriate support will be offered.
 - Inform both sets of parents (of the child harmed and the child causing harm) sensitively.
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Factors to Consider

- **Age and Understanding** – Are the children developmentally capable of understanding their actions?
 - **Location of Incident** – Was the behaviour visible or hidden? Are there supervision concerns?
 - **Child's Understanding** – Do they understand boundaries, consent, and personal space?
 - **Repetition** – Is this a repeated behaviour? Has it been addressed previously?
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Post-Incident Actions

For the Child Displaying Harmful Behaviour:

- Understand the **underlying cause**.
- Seek **external support** (e.g., GP, Early Help, Strengthening Families).
- Apply consequences (e.g., restorative conversations, additional supervision).
- Develop an **individual risk assessment** if the behaviour poses ongoing risk.

For the Child Who Was Harmed:



- Provide ongoing emotional support.
 - Monitor for any delayed trauma or emotional effects.
 - Work closely with the family and outside agencies as needed.
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Aftercare and Monitoring

Both children involved should receive support **after the incident**. Emotional responses such as remorse or distress may appear later. All children must feel safe, heard, and supported throughout the process.

Preventative Strategies

We aim to prevent peer-on-peer abuse through:

- Age-appropriate education on feelings, personal space, and respect.
 - High-quality staff training.
 - Strong supervision and staff ratios.
 - Positive behaviour management strategies.
 - A clear culture of **safeguarding-first** throughout the setting.
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