

# **Thomas Telford School**



## **Peer on Peer Abuse Policy**

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**2020/2021**

**Review date: September 2021**



## **Peer on Peer Abuse at Thomas Telford School- Guidance**

### **Peer on peer/ child on child abuse**

Children can 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): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

#### **Context**

Violence and harassment of this nature can occur between two children of any age and gender. It can also occur through a group of children assaulting or harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of this sort of violence and harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Violence and harassment between children exists on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

#### **Staff should be aware of the importance of:**

- Making clear that violence and harassment of this nature is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- Not tolerating or dismissing violence or harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

**See Sexual Offences Act 2003 available at [Legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)**

#### **What is consent?**

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of activity but not another. In each UK nation, the age of consent (the legal age when people can engage in sexual activity) is 16-years-old. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

#### **Sexual harassment**

When referring to harassment of this nature we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference harassment, we do so in the context of child on child harassment. Harassment of this nature is also likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

### **Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:**

- Inappropriate comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making insensitive remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- Inappropriate “jokes” or taunting;
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of this nature; and
- Online harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of harassment and/or sexual violence.

### **It may include:**

- Non-consensual sharing of images and videos;
- Sexualised online bullying;
- Unwanted comments and messages, including, on social media;
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
- Up skirting.

### **Up skirting**

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Up skirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Up skirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

### **Thomas Telford School’s response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment**

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If **staff** have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the School referral process. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead- Phil Nicholls- [pnicholls@ttsonline.net](mailto:pnicholls@ttsonline.net).

If **parents/students** have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them they should contact the school immediately 01952 200 000 and ask to speak to one of the Safeguarding Lead teachers:

Mr Nicholls: [Pnicholls@ttsonline.net](mailto:Pnicholls@ttsonline.net) Mrs Cash: [Bcash@ttsonline.net](mailto:Bcash@ttsonline.net)

**Alternatively a referral can be made using the online referral form that is available on the safeguarding page on the school website.**

The School will take any allegation of this nature seriously and a full investigation will take place including reassurance that the victim will have the opportunity to share their experience and concerns both verbally and within a written statement.

Any actions taken will follow the School's behaviour policy.

### **Toolkits and Guidance**

#### ***Peer on Peer abuse Toolkit***

[Peer on peer abuse toolkit](#)

### **NSPCC ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

*The dedicated NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663*

*This helpline is to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Run by the NSPCC it aims to provide advice and support to both children and adults who are victims of abuse in school. It will also include how to contact the police to report crimes.*

*The advice line is also available to support professionals and parents.*