




MANCHESTER
HEALTH ACADEMY

MANCHESTER HEALTH ACADEMY

PEER ON PEER ABUSE POLICY

2020-2021

PEER ON PEER ABUSE POLICY

Date approved:	Sept 2020 May 2021
Approved by:	Kevin Green, Principal
Signed:	
Review date:	Sept 2021

1. Aims

The aim of the Manchester Health Academy peer on peer abuse policy is to prevent abuse of any sort and to complement the Child Protection and Safeguarding policies to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

All members of the community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what peer on peer abuse is and be familiar with the school policy on peer on peer abuse; therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Peer on peer abuse is an anti-social behaviour, which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

Regular staff training and updates will be provided via CPD sessions and staff briefings to ensure all staff are clear of the procedures in place to effectively investigate and resolve any concerns surround peer on peer abuse whilst ensuring both the victim and perpetrator are effectively supported.

2. Definition

Definition of peer on peer abuse Peer on peer abuse may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time which intentionally hurts another student or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and is often motivated by prejudice. All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying - use of photos, messaging, email, chat rooms or social networking sites Facebook/Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Up-skirting - which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials that promote a bond between them)

Peer on peer abuse may be overt and intimidating but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or that which has a focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair, colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability.

All children are vulnerable to and potential victims and perpetrators of peer on peer abuse however, as the research suggests, specific groups of students are more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse. SEND students are three times more likely to be victims of peer on peer abuse than none-SEND students are. The views and opinions of SEND students are monitored through SEND specific student voice to ensure any peer on peer abuse is fully investigated.

3. Actions

All children are vulnerable to and potential victims and perpetrators of peer on peer abuse however, as the research suggests, specific groups of students are more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse. SEND students are three times more likely to be victims of peer on peer abuse than non-SEND students are. The views and opinions of SEND students are monitored through SEND specific student voice to ensure any peer on peer abuse is fully investigated.

Some students may be more likely to experience peer on peer abuse because of certain individual characteristics such as ethnicity, race, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. As the research suggests, boys find it more difficult to communicate concerns surrounding peer on peer abuse. Confidential student voice boxes are places strategically around school to allow students to discreetly report any concerns they have, including any peer on peer abuse concerns.

Weekly review meetings take place to analyse CPOMS data to highlight and intervene with repeat offenders or victims to ensure effective intervention and support is put in place as soon as possible.

To ensure all staff and students have a strong understanding of what constitutes peer on peer abuse and the impact of peer or peer abuse, leaders at Manchester Health Academy proactively work with both the staff and students to ensure peer on peer abuse incidents are minimal. Regular assemblies, tutor time activities and Global Citizenship activities are delivered to ensure students fully understand and appreciate the implications and impact of peer on peer abuse and what they should do should they have concerns surrounding a peer being abused.

Peer on peer abuse outside school premises

The Principal has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Principal the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any peer on peer abuse incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in the town centre.

Where peer abuse outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Academy will always consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or community support officers. Manchester Health Academy will act in conjunction with external agencies. If external agencies are involved it will be Manchester Health Academy's duty of care to be guided by their advice and it should be understood that timescales will be given by them.

What should you do if peer on peer abuse is taking place?

If you are receiving peer on peer abuse or you know of someone else being abused – TELL SOMEONE. Do not blame yourself for what has happened.

Remember:

- Tell your parents and in school tell the Safeguarding Team, Form Tutor or Director of Standards as soon as possible
- If it is urgent, TELL the nearest adult. If they do not listen, TELL SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT GIVE UP. IF YOU DON'T TELL, THINGS COULD GET WORSE
- Walk away from any dangerous situation and GET HELP
- As well as telling a member of staff, you can help stop peer on peer abuse by:
- Being friendly towards people you know are being treated badly, excluded from peer groups or bullied, including them in your discussions, break-times and lunchtimes
- Not laughing when someone is being abused
- Saying out loud that you don't like what is going on
- Not joining in or letting an adult know if you see someone else being bullied

For parents

Things to look out for in victims of peer on peer abuse:

- Regularly feeling sick or unwell in the morning
- Reluctance to make the journey to and from school
- Money or possessions going missing or clothes or school bag torn
- Wanting extra pocket money for no particular reason
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Taking different routes to school
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. moody, bad tempered, tearful
- Unhappiness
- Nightmares
- Not wanting to leave the house
- Reluctance to talk openly about school friends and playtimes

If you are concerned your son/daughter is the victim of peer on peer abuse, you should contact the school as soon as possible to report the issues through the appropriate channels. Sometimes children have not reported the issues to anyone in school.

What you should do if you think your child is a victim of peer on peer abuse

- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience
- Make a note of what your child says – particularly who was said to be involved; how often the abuse has occurred, where it happened and what has happened
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing in telling you about the abuse and that there is nothing wrong with him/her
- Encourage your child to report any incidents of peer abuse to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's Director of Standards even if your child is reluctant that you do so
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing
- Do not encourage your child to hit back/retaliate aggressively. It will only make matters worse. Such behaviour could be contrary to your child's nature.

Peer on peer abuse procedures

All students are encouraged to feel it is right to tell someone if they are being abused or if someone they know is. Incidents of peer on peer abuse will be referred to the Safeguarding Team and Directors of Standards and dealt with appropriately.

Whilst it is the responsibility of all staff within the school to reinforce the peer on peer abuse strategy and support the victims, it is recognised that not all staff have the capacity (due to the commitments of their job) to carry out a swift and thorough investigation. Therefore incidents of peer on peer abuse should be referred to the appropriate Welfare Coordinator as quickly as possible as a non-teaching member of staff; if the Welfare Coordinator cannot be found, a Director of Standards or senior member of staff should be informed. Following an investigation, any victim of peer on peer abuse will be supported and monitored through a four to six week monitoring support plan with their allocated Welfare Coordinator.

Staff suspecting an incident of peer on peer abuse should:

- Reassure the young person that their concerns are being taken seriously and will be investigated
- Contact the relevant Welfare Coordinator as soon as possible with details of the incident
- Record the incident details on the school's electronic recording system as an 'Incident'. Year group pastoral teams will investigate all reported incidents of peer on peer abuse using the following procedure:

- Appropriate students will be interviewed by the relevant Welfare Coordinator and statements taken
- If the investigation confirms a peer on peer abuse incident has taken place the Welfare Coordinator will enter the incident on CPOMS where the Safeguarding Team will be alerted.
- Where Peer on Peer abuse is being investigated the Academy will implement a support plan for both students. The aim of this is to allow both students to access education as soon as possible to ensure there are no gaps in learning. If pupils are not able to attend the academy in the first instance home learning materials will be provided.
- Appropriate sanctions will be used for the perpetrator/s
- Parents of the victim and perpetrator will be notified immediately and support will be given by the Pastoral Team. The incident will be reviewed regularly with regular contact with the victim and parents (timing appropriate to individual situations)

Managing a Peer on Peer abuse case:

Following an investigation the school will opt for one of four options when managing a Peer on Peer abuse case based on the facts recovered during the investigation:

- Manage the case internally: Parents contacted, sanctions issued and restorative work completed
- Early Help: The school will lead on an early help assessment and escalate if necessary ensuring a 6 week review is completed to determine next actions and support mechanisms
- Refer to Social Care - Report to the police
- Record Keeping for Peer on Peer abuse Cases or Investigations:

If any student or member of staff shares concerns relating to peer on peer abuse, a pastoral member of staff or member of the senior leadership team will carry out an initial investigation using the 'Investigating Incidents' pro-forma. This information will then be centrally stored on the relevant student's school file.

Any follow up support for victims of Peer on Peer abuse will be documented on CPOMS. Any sanctions issued because of an investigation into a peer on peer abuse concern will be centrally logged on CPOMS (If an exclusion is issued this will also be logged using the relevant documentation with Manchester City Council).

Any initial concerns and regular updates during a Peer on Peer abuse reported concern would be logged centrally on CPOMS which will be regularly review by members of the Senior Leadership Team.

If either pupil was to move educational settings then prior contact will be made with the Safeguarding Team to share relevant information. Once the pupil is on roll then all safeguarding files relating to the pupil would be securely sent to the appropriate links.

Linked policies at Manchester Health Academy:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Special Needs Policy

