



Anti-Bullying and Managing Allegations of Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Version No.	Date	Approved by	Review Frequency	Review Date
1	April 2024	Board of Trustees	+1 Year	April 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hebe Foundation are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of the children and young people that access our services. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated; it has a profound affect both on the victim and the perpetrator and is detrimental to their spiritual, moral, social and moral development). If bullying does occur, all children and young people should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

This policy has been written to:

- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, children and young people and parents/carers have an understanding of the definitions of bullying and child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, know what The Hebe Foundation policy is on bullying and child-on-child abuse, and follow it when there is a report of bullying or child-on-child abuse.
- Ensure that all children and young people and parents/carers know what The Hebe Foundation policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Ensure that the school follows all statutory guidance and advice relating to child-on-child abuse.
- Provide staff, volunteers, children and young people and parents/carers with information about how The Hebe Foundation works to prevent bullying and child-on-child abuse.
- Provide staff, volunteers, children and young people and parents/carers with information about how we respond to concerns, disclosures and/or allegations relating to bullying and child-on-child abuse.
- Provide staff, volunteers, children and young people and parents/carers with information about how we continue to support victims of bullying and child-on-child abuse following the conclusion of an investigation.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING AND PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

There is no legal definition of bullying, however at The Hebe Foundation our definition of bullying is:

Repetitive intentional hurting of one person or a group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or on social media and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion or sex sexual orientation. It might be motivated by actual differences between children and young people, or perceived differences.

The following are protected characteristics and our role at the Hebe Foundation is to ensure that all children and young people are protected from discrimination in relation to these both in person and online. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (transphobia)

- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership

Bullying can be, but not limited to:

- Hurting someone's body (e.g. punching, kicking)
- Hurting someone's feelings (e.g. excluding, sending unkind or malicious text messages)
- Forcing someone to do something that they do not want to do
- And occurs when these things happen repeatedly and deliberately by an individual or group

Hurting someone's body includes:

- Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Any form of unwanted physical contact

Hurting someone's feelings includes:

- Being unfriendly, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing or tormenting
- Excluding
- Racial abuse, graffiti or gestures
- Sexually abusive comments, graffiti or gestures
- Comments made because of, or focusing on, the issues of gender or sexuality
- Abuse of the internet to hurt others, such as misuse of email, internet chat rooms and social networking sites.
- Mobile threats by text messaging or calls, and misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video phone facilities

At the Hebe Foundation we believe child-on-child abuse to:

Refer to any scenario where a child under the age of 18 abuses another child under the age of 18. It can take place online or offline. The children and young people involved do not have to be the same age and the perpetrator may be older or younger than the victim. Child-on-child abuse could include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying (including cyber bullying).
- 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 stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Upskirting, 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.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships and/or teenage relationship abuse.

4. PROCEDURES TO PREVENT AND/OR MINIMISE BULLYING AND CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

Bullying can occur in any setting. At The Hebe Foundation we believe that establishing and maintaining an ethos where children and young people feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to is vital for the prevention of bullying and child-on-child abuse. This means ensuring that they know that there are adults in our settings they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. Knowing where and when bullying is most likely to occur is a vital first step towards dealing effectively with the problem. We know from experience that at The Hebe Foundation bullying is most likely to occur when there is less adult supervision.

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure we minimise opportunities for bullying and child-on-child abuse. We do this by:

- Creating a culture of inclusion, integrity, and respect in line with our values.
- Members of staff and volunteers are trained to be alert to signs of bullying and child-on-child abuse and act firmly and promptly against it in line with the guidance appended to this policy.
- All staff and volunteers exhibiting positive behaviours and are positive role models to children and young people.
- Treating others with respect at all times.
- Doing nothing that could be construed as bullying.
- Doing nothing that could be construed as supporting bullying. This includes relaying distressing messages, relaying threats, laughing at bullying, being a bystander.
- We build community cohesion by respect for different cultures, difference, and diversity and by making links with and engaging the wider school community in this agenda.
- The children and young people that access our services are told that their voice matters, and they will be heard. They are encouraged to talk to staff if they feel worried or frightened about anything. It is expected that all staff will take time to listen to children and young peoples fears and take them seriously.
- Parents are advised that they should inform The Hebe Foundation as soon as they become aware, if they believe their child or young person is a victim of bullying or child-on-child abuse.

We recognise that some children and young people may be more vulnerable to bullying and child-on-child abuse than others. For example, children and young people who have already experienced abuse, those that have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), children and young people living in care and children and young people who are LGBTQ+ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We work to protect children and young people with additional vulnerabilities by:

- Providing children and young people with speech and language needs alternative ways to communicate what has happened to them.
- Staff and volunteers will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the children and young people's SEND and will always explore indicators further.

The Hebe Foundations response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children and young people of the opposite sex.

4. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF BULLYING AND CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

We take bullying and child-on-child abuse seriously and will respond to all concerns or disclosures of bullying and peer-on-peer abuse immediately. In conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy we will follow the procedures set out below when dealing with bullying and child-on-child abuse:

If you have any concerns about a child or young persons welfare, act on them immediately – don't wait for a disclosure.

DO:

- Ask the child or young person if they have been harmed and what the nature of the harm was.
- Listen and reassure them that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Reflect back, using their language.
- Be mindful that some children and young people may face additional barriers to disclosure because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- Remember that this may be the first incident the child or young person had reported.

Be aware that trauma can impact memory, so that the child or young person may not be able to recall the details or the timeline of the abuse.

- Make a record as soon as possible, stating only the facts.
- Tell the Children's Advocate or Director urgently.
- Where appropriate, take action yourself:

If the child or young person is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the Children's Advocate will make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team.

If an offence has been committed, report it to the police (even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10). You can confiscate devices as evidence for the police if the concern includes an online element.

Find out whether the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) share areas of the premises or transport and consider how to keep them a reasonable distance apart while on the premises.

DO NOT:

- Dismiss the incident as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- Ask leading questions.
- Promise total confidentiality – explain who you will tell and why.
- View photos or videos of a sexual nature – if you do so by accident or think you might need to, to deal with the issue effectively, talk to our Children's Advocate.
- Take notes while the child or young person is talking, if possible.
- Tell anyone about the disclosure unless they need to know to progress it.

Upon receiving a concern, report or disclosure of bullying, the Children's Advocate or Director will decide what further action is necessary. This will vary depending on the type of child-on-child abuse and the severity of the incident/s disclosed. The Children's Advocate will take contextual factors into account when managing the report.

The Children's Advocate will always consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. The victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: the level of coercion or threat, whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Both the chronological and developmental ages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children, including consideration of the age of children and whether children have special educational needs or disabilities.
- The impact on the victim.
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or staff.

FOUR LIKELY SCENARIOS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

1. **Manage internally**, where this is considered appropriate in the circumstances and Early Help, or statutory interventions are required.
2. **Referral to children's social care / MASH team**, where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger. The Children's Advocate will lead on this referral.
3. **Work in partnership with parents**, consulting with parents of steps and actions taken and keeping them informed.
4. **Report to the police** (usually in conjunction with a referral to the MASH team), where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made. Police will consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm, which could include the use of police or court bail. The Children's Advocate will lead on this.

Where the scenario involves working with children's social care, we should not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children, the Children's Advocate will work closely with children's social care to make sure that our actions do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. There should be immediate consideration for safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and all other children and young people.

Where a report is going to be made to children's social care and/or the police, we will speak to the relevant agency to discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed.

SUPPORTING THE VICTIM

- We recognise that bullying and child-on-child abuse has a significant impact on children and young people and victims are likely to need ongoing support.
- Appropriate support will be put in place for victims of bullying and child-on-child abuse whilst investigation is taking place and following the initial response. Support will continue for as long as it is needed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the victim is receiving appropriate care.
- The Hebe Foundation will do everything we can to maintain the victim's normal routine.
- The Hebe Foundation will do everything we can to protect the victim from further bullying and harassment because of their disclosure.

SUPPORTING THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

- We recognise that children and young people who perpetrate bullying or child-on-child abuse may be being abused themselves. The Hebe Foundation will continue to safeguard the alleged

perpetrator and provide them with support.

- A plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator will be put in place as part of the risk assessment made following the alleged abuse.
- The Children's Advocate will take advice from children's social care, specialist services and the police as necessary.
- The Hebe Foundation may choose to impose a sanction or punishment on the alleged perpetrator following an incident of bullying or child-on-child abuse.
- Where a child or young person is cautioned or receives a conviction related to an incident of child-on-child abuse, The Hebe Foundation may ask the child or young person not to return.

RECORD KEEPING

In line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, any incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse will be recorded on The Hebe Foundations incident/Suspected Abuse Form.

PARENTS AND CARERS

We believe it is important to work with parents/carers to support them to understand our approach with regard to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the victim or perpetrator. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek support if a problem is not resolved.

Parents and carers will be informed of incidents unless sharing information puts a child or young person at greater risk of harm.

Children and young people will always be encouraged to speak to parents/carers about bullying and child-on-child abuse.

UNSUBSTANTIATED, UNFOUNDED, FALSE OR MALICIOUS REPORTS

The Children's advocate will consider whether the child or young person who made the allegation needs help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. If this is the case, it may be appropriate to make a referral to children's social care.

5. SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS AND GUIDANCE

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Bullying Online www.bullying.org
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Childline: www.childline.org
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Contextual Safeguarding Network: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk>
- Children's Legal Centre Tel: 020 7713 0089
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk
- Kidscape Parents Helpline Tel: 020 7730 3300
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are

- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-right
- Parentline Plus Tel: 0808 802 5544
- Youth Access Tel: 020 8348 5947

Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBTQ+

- EACH: www.eachnation.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Racism and Hate

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report It: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org