



EMMANUEL
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Child on Child Abuse Policy



Policy Statement

The aim of the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy is to ensure that all students within Emmanuel Schools Foundation (the “Trust”) can learn and work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of harassment and where everyone has the right to be treated with respect. All forms of child-on-child abuse are behaviour that are not tolerated in any of our schools. Specific forms of abusive behaviour, such as bullying and racism, can take place within student groups, between students and staff, and between staff. When this does occur, all schools aim for it to be dealt with promptly and effectively. The Trust encourages openness and honesty; anyone who suspects that abusive behaviour has occurred is expected to share this concern.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse from happening.
- to make sure this behaviour is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen, and that those involved receive the support they need.
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.

School Principals have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect, and self-discipline, and to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents, and students. Schools also have a legal responsibility to record incidents of specific forms of child-on-child abuse such as bullying and racism. This policy outlines these procedures.

Prevention

The Trust promotes a culture of safety, welcome and opportunity. The Student Code of Conduct is designed to promote tolerance of all others and kindness to all others. Our aspiration for all students is that they:

- Make good choices and take responsibility
- Be kind and respectful of all
- Be confident in who they are, communicate well and push themselves to take on challenge

We believe that all students are made in the image of God and therefore infinitely precious, gifted for a purpose and morally responsible and therefore we expect all students to stand up for what is right and report any incidents of abusive behaviour.

Each school will within the curriculum, raise awareness of the nature of child-on-child abuse through a range of personal development activities and in subject areas. The personal development curriculum includes specific sessions on British Values, Citizenship, our Core Virtues and on how to manage and maintain positive relationships. Specific sessions on bullying and racism will be incorporated into this programme and on the protected characteristics and the Equality Act 2010.

At the end of lessons, staff supervise the movement of students in the vicinity of their classroom, in stairwells, and the movement of students into and out of the classroom. During break and lunch times, students are supervised by a duty team to ensure that they are safe.

We seek to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse from occurring by the ensuring that:

- Relationships are at the heart of everything we do and positive interactions are modelled consistently and professionally to all young people

- Our Student Code of Conduct is understood by all students, parents, and staff through publication on the school and Trust website and in the Student Study File/Planner. It is also a part of the visual culture of our school buildings.
- We make clear our zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse by displaying key visual aids in all school buildings.
- Providing training for staff on how to deal with child-on-child incidents.
- Ensuring our response, if this occurs, takes into account the needs of the victim, the needs of the person displaying this behaviour, others who may be affected, and the school as a whole.
- We have a broad and balanced personal development curriculum that encourages us to respect each other's differences, to have self-control and to be able to identify child-on-child abuse.

Types of child-on-child abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. It can happen both inside and outside of school as well as online.¹ It is most likely to include but may not be limited to:

- *Cyberbullying*: An incident involving the use of technology. It may take the form of intimidation; harassment; defamation; exclusion; impersonation; or involve the unauthorized publication or manipulation of private information or images.
- *Verbal/emotional bullying*: An incident where words are deliberately used to threaten/frighten/insult another. It can also involve gossip or spreading unkind rumours or revealing confidences. Emotional bullying involves non-verbal actions, such as deliberate exclusion from a group.
- *Physical bullying*: Any form of physical aggression, assault, or theft. It also includes the extortion of money/possessions under threat of violence. It also includes the deliberate destruction/spoiling of another individual's possessions.
- *Sexual abuse or harassment*: Any incident with a sexual dimension. This can range from inappropriate comments to sexual assault and any harmful sexual behaviour.
- *A significant single incident*: bullying of a particularly threatening, hurtful, or malicious nature whereby the impact on a student, member of staff or their family is significant.
- *Racial/discriminatory*: An incident which involves deliberately hurtful behaviour linked to a victim's religion or ethnicity. Discriminatory bullying is a wider definition that includes any bullying as a result of gender, ethnicity, sexual identity or orientation, or physical characteristics, such as a disability. Racist/discriminatory behaviour will be dealt with in the same way as bullying and will not be tolerated in our school.
- *Sharing of semi-nude or nude photos*: the sharing of semi-nude or nude photo/s of a child is abusive but, in some circumstances, can also be a crime.
- *Abuse in intimate relationships*: children who are in a relationship with another child may experience abuse behaviour within this relationship.

There are various signs and symptoms that could alert a parent or member of staff to child-on-child abuse. These include:

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181962/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_-_part_one.pdf

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Not wishing to go on the school/public bus.
- Arriving at school very early and/or a fear of leaving school on time.
- A reluctance to leave the classroom at break or lunch time.
- An unwillingness to go to school – school phobia or truancy.
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Attempts or threatens suicide, or runs away.
- Deterioration in quality of schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions or dinner monies that go ‘missing’.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.

Any of these signs and behaviours could indicate a range of other sensitive issues. It is important to remember that an incident or concern should always be reported regardless of how trivial it may appear.

Reporting a concern about a child-on-child incident

If an incident between peers is suspected to have occurred it is important that we record this and respond quickly, making it clear that this type of behaviour is not acceptable and never tolerated. Anyone can report an incident or concern including students, staff, parents/carers/family, or members of the community by:

- (a) Visiting the school’s website and clicking on the Report a child-on-child incident tab from the main menu.
- (b) Select the ‘report child-on-child incident’ tab.
- (c) Complete the form with as much detail as possible and click ‘send’.

A student or parent can also report an incident by speaking directly to a member of staff such as a Tutor or Pastoral member of staff. In this instance, the member of staff will complete the reporting form to ensure that all reported concerns are logged and recorded appropriately.

Any student who does not report instances of child-on-child abuse honestly when directly asked by a member of staff may be sanctioned. Students should understand that this kind of behaviour helps to perpetuate child-on-child abuse.

If you are concerned that the incident is a safeguarding concern, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school. If it is an allegation of a safeguarding nature involving a member of staff, then a parent should immediately contact the Principal of the school.

How will we respond to a report of an incident?

1. Investigation and communication

All incidents that are reported to a school are logged using the reporting form even if it has been reported by a member of staff or directly to a member of staff by a student/parent, etc. This ensures that all suspected incidents are recorded effectively.

Every reported incident will always be:

- Responded to and investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported by the appropriate pastoral team where necessary. The DSL will review all evidence relating to the incident before making a

decision regarding the outcome. The investigation summary and any supporting evidence will be stored on CPOMS (which is the Trust's safeguarding records system)

- Any allegations that are substantiated will be reviewed by the Principal/Head of School and the perpetrator will be sanctioned in accordance with the Trust Behaviour Policy. A suspension for bullying may be issued but staff will take into consideration all additional and contextual factors when deciding on the appropriate sanction. A formal warning may be issued at this stage if deemed appropriate by the school.
- The DSL will respond to the person who has reported the incident to ensure they know that their concern is being dealt with. This may be via email, by phone or in person.
- The alleged perpetrators' parents will be contacted as soon as possible to inform them of the allegation, ideally within 24 hours after an incident has taken place or been reported to us.
- A record is kept of the outcome of the investigation.

2. Possible outcomes of an investigation into child-on-child abuse.

Once an investigation is concluded the DSL will record the outcome on the school's child-on-child abuse log. One of the following outcomes will be recorded:

Outcome	Disciplinary consequences
Substantiated There is sufficient evidence to support the allegation of child-on-child abuse.	The student will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. A suspension under the category of bullying may be appropriate. If the behaviour has another relevant category e.g. racist abuse, this will also be logged. The perpetrator will be given a child-on-child abuse warning at the discretion of the principal/vice principal as appropriate. The most serious incidents of child-on-child abuse or breach of a final warning will lead to permanent exclusion. Additional support measures of interventions to address abusive behaviours will be agreed and put in place as appropriate.
Unsubstantiated There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The behaviours exhibited may not be abusive but may have been unintentionally unkind.	No disciplinary action is taken against the alleged perpetrator, however further reported incidents will be monitored and a pattern of repeated reports may lead to a warning being issued. Additional support measures of interventions to address abusive behaviours will be agreed and put in place as appropriate.
Unfounded There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.	No disciplinary action is taken against the alleged perpetrator.
Malicious There is sufficient evidence to prove that there has been a deliberate act to cause harm to	If a student has reported an allegation that is found to be malicious then that student may be suspended from school under the category of bullying.

the alleged perpetrator by reporting a false allegation.	A child-on-child abuse warning may be issued as this is also a form of abusive behaviour.
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3. Child-on-child abuse: Action Taken

Child-on-child abuse is never tolerated within any ESF school. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Where an allegation is substantiated, the perpetrator will be sanctioned in accordance with the Trust Behaviour Policy. The school will also try and support positive behaviour change and restoration where appropriate. We want our students to be reflective and learn from their mistakes; opportunity may be created for the perpetrator to meet with the victim in a supervised and safe context to try and resolve the incident. There must be engagement from all parties before a restorative meeting can take place.

The table below includes examples of possible sanctions and support issued for child-on-child abuse. Schools will always seek to educate and support students to change their behaviour following an incident. This list is not exhaustive and the Principal reserves the right to permanently exclude where an incident is serious or there is evidence of a repeated pattern of behaviour. All SEND and contextual factors will be taken into account by school staff at every stage of the process.

Behaviour	Possible sanctions	Supportive and preventative steps:
Child on child abuse (First instance)	Loss of social time Detention Internal Exclusion Suspension from school	- Meeting with parent/carer to discuss the incident and investigation - Discuss the incident with the perpetrator and seek to understand their actions so as to prevent repetition - Internal targeted education offered - Risk assessment where appropriate (See appendix 1) A FIRST FORMAL WARNING FOR CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE MAY BE ISSUED AT THIS STAGE.
Child on child abuse (Second instance)	Internal Exclusion Suspension from school	- Meeting with parent/carer to discuss the incident and investigation - Compulsory internal targeted education - Referral for external support may be completed where appropriate - Risk assessment where appropriate A SECOND FORMAL WARNING FOR CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE MAY BE ISSUED AT THIS STAGE.
Child on child abuse (Third instance)	Suspension from school	- Meeting with parent/carer to discuss the incident and investigation - Possibility of time spent in a different school/site - Review of all other measures and supportive steps already in place - Risk assessment where appropriate A FINAL WARNING FOR CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE IS LIKELY TO BE ISSUED AT THIS STAGE. THIS WILL BE CONFIRMED IN WRITING.

Breach of a final warning	PERMANENT EXCLUSION IS LIKELY AT THIS STAGE	In instances where a single incident or repeated incidents are extremely serious, the Principal will issue a PERMANENT EXCLUSION .
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4. Reporting incidents to external agencies.

Whilst we do not seek to criminalise young people, there are some incidents which schools will be required to report the allegation to the police or other agencies. If an incident is being investigated by another external agency such as the police, the school may be required to suspend their own investigation to allow an external investigation to take place first. Examples of this may include:

- Physical assault: allegations of physical assault will be reported to the police.
- Hate crime: Any incident which may be a hate crime will also be reported to the police.
- Racism: Incidents of racist behaviour will be reported to the local authority.
- Sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviors: any allegation of sexual assault or harassment will be reported to the police. Allegations of harmful sexual behaviour may lead to a referral to children's services

To be read in conjunction with:

- ESF Behaviour Policy
- ESF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix 1 – Risk Assessments

Where a student has demonstrated behaviour that poses a potential risk of harm to themselves or to others, the school should put a risk assessment in place to mitigate that risk. Below is an example of a risk assessment which may be used by school staff.

Risk assessments should be treated as live documents and updated and reviewed regularly by relevant staff and in light of any new information or incidents.

ESF Risk Assessment and Management Plan	Date:	Person completing RA:
Context/reason for RA:		
Potential problem	Risk	Measures to reduce the risk
<i>Student A may cause physical harm to himself</i>	Student A could cause serious injury to himself and related impact on other students and members of staff.	- Student A will be provided with a space in Supported Curriculum. - If Student A absconds from a lesson, First Response will be alerted. - Contact will be made with home when Student A is dysregulated, so that support can be provided. - Staff will be provided with an updated Individual Support Plan so be able to identify when Student A is going into "Red zone". - Student A will be provided with a sensory space to support dysregulation. - If Student A puts himself at risk of harm, Grandma will be contacted to collect Student A from school.
<i>Date for review:</i>		
<i>Student:</i>	<i>Parent/Carer:</i>	<i>School Staff:</i>