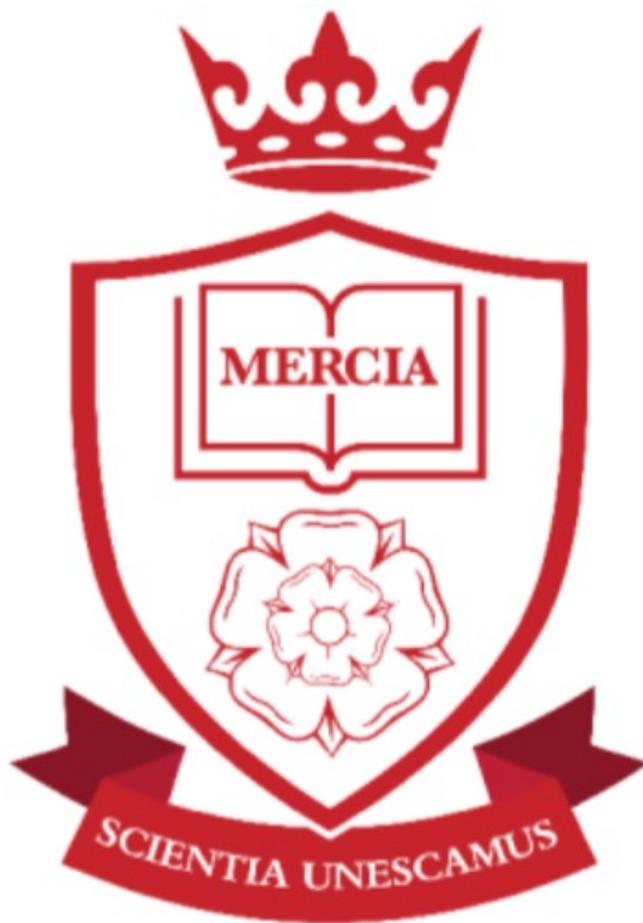


# Mercia School

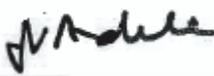
## *Child on Child Abuse Policy*

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***Author:***

Ruth Hollingsworth  
*Deputy Headteacher*

This policy has been approved by the Local Governing Body and has been signed by the Chair of Governors	
Approval date	September 2023
Date of Review	September 2024



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#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. 2



# Mercia School

## Child on Child Abuse Policy

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### 1. The Mercia Commitment:

At Mercia School, we believe that pupil safety is of paramount importance. Our commitment to the knowledge and understanding of pupils extends to a thorough education in all aspects of safety and well-being. Pupils at Mercia School are held to high standards and expectations. Likewise, pupils are held accountable for any actions that may upset, harm or interfere with others. We take any issues of safeguarding extremely seriously and pupils are aware of procedures and expectations- as directed through our curriculum in Mastery Time, high presence and expectations at break and lunchtime and through our extensive SRE curriculum. Any form of abuse or harassment will not be tolerated.

### 2. The Core Principle:

Mercia School follows DfE Guidance, which states that all children should be safe at school, taught explicitly about abuse and harassment, with a sense of understanding about what constitutes abuse and harassment. Furthermore, as directed, any accusations and allegations will be dealt with sensitively and swiftly, mindful of the care and implications for all pupils. Any issues presented to staff will be logged effectively, managed by the safeguarding team, recorded and where necessary authorities would be alerted. Staff are Safeguarding trained in this area and know to refer instances on to the Safeguarding team. Staff are committed to maintaining the highest standards and will not dismiss abusive behaviours as 'banter' or 'joking'. High standards will be demonstrated and maintained for the protection of all.

### 3. Mercia definition of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-Child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse and coercive control exercised between young people and within young people's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate). Everyone directly involved in Child on child abuse is under the age of 18. This may include:

- Sexual violence, harassment, on/offline
- Sexual comments, remarks, jokes,
- 'Up-skirting' – taking picture under persons clothing, without them knowing, intending to view genitals or buttocks, for sexual gratification and/or to cause humiliation, distress, alarm
- Sexting – youth produced sexual imagery
- 'Hazing' - activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation to initiate a young person into a gang or group between any age, any sex, individual or group victims and perpetrators

#### Possible reasons for such abuse:

- Influence of Domestic Violence
- Mental Health issues
- Immature relationships
- Lack of understanding about relationships, interactions, age appropriate behaviours
- Peer Pressure/ Gang related behaviours
- Drugs
- Inappropriate sexual comments- classed as 'banter'
- Coercion/ coercive behaviours/ tendencies



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### **4. Curriculum Expectations:**

As a knowledge based school, pupils at Mercia School will be taught explicitly through our Mastery Curriculum and also the SRE Curriculum. Key areas covered, to develop an understanding of the issues will include:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- what respectful behaviour looks like
- consent
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- prejudiced behaviour
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment
- Making all pupils aware of how to raise concerns & how this will be handled

### **5. The importance of Understanding**

Teachers at Mercia School understand the complexities of such issues and are acutely aware that the myriad of feelings around shame, guilt, responsibility etc may vary and be complex. The first commitment is always to the victim. Management of the victim and perpetrator (should they be in the same school) will be separate, to ensure just treatment. The management of parents will be left to the Safeguarding Team and parents are encouraged to come forward and report any issues of concern.

### **Dealing with Allegations**

Mercia Staff will always take complaints seriously:

- Discretion will be used to offer the victim protection
- Staff will never asking a student for a written statement, as it can interfere with a criminal investigation
- Safeguarding Team will assess the needs of victim and perpetrator using a Risk Assessment
- Where appropriate, Safeguarding Team will consider referral to the Police or Social Care
- The Safeguarding Team will contribute to multi-agency assessments
- The Safeguarding Team may convene a risk management meeting- and inform of appropriate steps
- All staff will record all incidents and all action taken
- The Safeguarding Team will regularly review & update the risk assessment with assessments from other professionals
- Liaise with the social workers/ police officers or other involved practitioners as required
- Follow Police/ Social Care advice about the investigation e.g. if alleged perpetrator is 'released under investigation', 'no further action' is taken, they are given bail, cautioned, or convicted

### **6. The Legal Obligation of the School and Contact Details:**

All staff must be aware of their responsibility to report and record any issues of abuse. In instances of FGM or Sexual Abuse, staff can contact the police directly. Relevant contact details are:

The Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, tel.: 0114 2734855

Sheffield Child Exploitation Service: co-located, multi-agency service for children & young people who are victims of child exploitation, human trafficking & modern slavery, ring 0114 2930937

Green Light Project:

Young people at risk of exploitation, gang activity, drugs, crime – assess via FCAF, EHCP, Myplan, EH Assessment Part 1 or via Hub referral

For awareness/training sessions contact:

ema.peebles@sheffield.gov.uk or

tracy.brazier@sheffield.gov.uk



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### **7. The Role of Governors:**

Governors must oversee the policy and its application. Governors must study and records and statistical data collected by the school to hold all to account. In serious cases, the Safeguarding Governor should oversee all agreed actions and maintain accountability for the agreed actions with the Safeguarding Team. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

### **8. Expectations for All**

All staff must be aware of the signs of abuse and the appropriate actions to take. Safeguarding training is delivered frequently and staff have contact details on their lanyards for reference. All staff have high presence at break time and lunchtime and are alert to behaviours of concern. Reporting and recording is covered extensively in staff CPD sessions.

### **9. Key issues to be aware of- Standards**

All staff must discuss all concerns (even if no complaint) with their DSL/D, who will then assess each case and challenge all inappropriate behaviours and not downplay behaviours as ‘banter’, ‘having a laugh’, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”.

Child on child abuse can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and young people and at worst, a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. This would be totally unacceptable at Mercia School.

### **10. Linked Policies/Documents for reference**

Mercia School Safeguarding Policy  
Mercia School Demanding Excellent Behaviour

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/search/bullying%20at%20school>

<https://sheffieldscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719902/Sexual\\_violence\\_and\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_between\\_children\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_colleges.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)

<https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/sscb>

