

**Mission Statement**  
A Caring Christian Family Where We Grow Together



## Dignity and Respect Procedure

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**Review Date:** March 2024 Annual

Review Date	Signed Head Teacher	Signed Director RCSAT
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Persons Responsible for Policy:	Executive Headteacher RCSAT
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Signed:	Director RCSAT
Signed:	Executive Headteacher RCSAT

**UN Article 2: The convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.**

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This procedure applies to every pupil without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
- 1.2. RCSAT is an exciting place to be, where schools know, nurture and inspire their community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith and a rich set of opportunities that support and challenge their learners, so they are equipped to succeed.
- 1.3. RCSAT schools believe that people are made in the image of God and are unconditionally loved by God. Everyone is equal and treated with dignity and respect. RCSAT promotes tolerance, cooperation and an understanding that a school community will have diversity amongst all its members. An RCSAT school is a place where everyone should be able to flourish in a loving and hospitable community.
- 1.4. 'Valuing all God's Children' 2019 states: *"A Church of England school have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually."*
- 1.5. RCSAT's aim is that all may flourish and have an abundant life. Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a pupil's fulfilment. We want all pupils to willingly engage in learning in a safe and welcoming environment
- 1.6. As Unicef Rights Respecting Schools, RCSAT believes that: *"Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. Article 12. Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law."*

**UN Article 31: All children have a right to relax and play and to join in with a wide range of activities.**

### 2. Aims

- 2.1. The aim of this procedure is to produce an environment which is free from the fear and to outline how instances of peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying, are challenged, victims supported and abusers reported. RCSAT schools are committed to removing any factor that might represent a hindrance to a pupil's fulfilment:
  - 2.1.1. To ensure a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment, discrimination or any type of peer-on-peer abuse;
  - 2.1.2. To create an environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect and where all members of the school community understand that peer-on-peer abuse is not acceptable;
  - 2.1.3. To ensure a consistent approach to, challenging, supporting and reporting all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse;
  - 2.1.4. To inform students and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership which helps to maintain a happy, safe and inclusive environment for all to flourish.
- 2.2. This procedure has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to:
  - Education and Inspections act 2006
  - Equality act 2010
  - Protection from harassment act 1997
  - Malicious communication act 1988
  - Public order act 1986

- Communications act 2003
  - Human rights act 1998
  - Crime and Disorder act 1998
  - Education act 2011
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.
- 2.3. This procedure has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:
- DFE 2017 'Preventing and tackling Bullying
  - DFE 2018 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in schools and colleges
  - DFE 2018 'Mental Health and Well-being Provision in Schools'
  - The Church of England (Autumn 2019) 'Valuing all God's Children' - Guidance for Church of England Schools on Challenging Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying
  - The Church of England (March 2018) 'Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach'.
- 2.4. This procedure operates in conjunction with these RCSAT policies and procedures:
- Behaviour for Learning
  - E Safety
  - Safeguarding
  - IT acceptable use
  - Staff Code of Conduct
  - Data Protection under GDPR.

***Un Article 19: All children and staff have the right to feel safe***

**3. Responsibilities**

- 3.1. The RCSAT Board of Directors (BoT) and the Local Governing Committees (LGC) are committed to:
- 3.1.1. Evaluating and reviewing this procedure to ensure that it is not discriminatory,
  - 3.1.2. The overall implementation of this procedure,
  - 3.1.3. Ensuring that RCSAT schools adopt a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference,
  - 3.1.4. Ensuring each school is inclusive,
  - 3.1.5. Analysing safeguarding reports to establish patterns and reviewing this procedure in light of these.
- 3.2. The Executive Headteacher, Principals and Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for:
- 3.2.1. Reviewing and amending this procedure, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with peer-on-peer abuse in previous years to improve procedures,
  - 3.2.2. Ensuring that there are effective systems for reporting, recording and analysing peer-on-peer abuse,
  - 3.2.3. Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of peer-on-peer abuse has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected,
  - 3.2.4. Analysing the data from CPOMS at termly intervals to identify trends, so that the appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented,
  - 3.2.5. Arranging appropriate training for staff members.
- 3.3. The Pastoral Lead is responsible for:
- 3.3.1. Ensuring reported incidents are investigated, recorded and monitored appropriately,
  - 3.3.2. Ensuring that all reported incidents are recorded on CPOMS under the appropriate category,
  - 3.3.3. Corresponding and meeting with relevant staff, students and parents where necessary.
- 3.4. Class teachers are responsible for:
- 3.4.1. Being alert to social dynamics in their class,

- 3.4.2. Being available to support students who wish to report peer-on-peer abuse,
  - 3.4.3. Providing follow-up support after incidents through KIVA, No Outsiders, Circle Time etc,
  - 3.4.4. Being alert to possible peer-on-peer abuse situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups,
  - 3.4.5. Refraining from stereotyping and being aware of unconscious bias,
  - 3.4.6. Understanding the composition of pupil groups
- 3.5. Children are responsible for:
- 3.5.1 RCSAT is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. If bullying behaviours do occur, all children should be able to tell an adult and trust that incidents be dealt with promptly and effectively.
  - 3.5.2 We are TELLING school. That means that anyone who knows that bullying behaviour is happening is expected to tell staff.

#### 4. Implementation

- 4.1. RCSAT BoT has delegated the responsibility for the implementation of this policy through this written procedure to the Executive Headteacher and named staff.

#### 5. Definitions of Peer-on-Peer Abuse

- 5.1. Children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, know how to identify it and respond to reports.
- 5.2. Peer-on-Peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
  - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice – based and discriminatory bullying);
  - Physical abuse which can include 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;
  - Non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and or videos;
  - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
  - Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
  - Initiation/hazing/child exploitation in gangs and groups can involve different types of violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.

#### 6. Definition of Bullying

- 6.1. There is no legal definition of bullying. For the purpose of this procedure “bullying” is defined as *“behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.”*
- 6.2. Bullying is generally characterised by:
  - **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time;
  - **Intent:** The perpetrator (s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm. It is not accidental;
  - **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group;
  - **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

- 6.3. If bullying is allowed it harms the perpetrator, the target and the whole school community and its secure and happy environment.
- 6.4. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums, including:
- Physical ( e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing or inappropriate/unwanted physical contact,
  - Verbal (e.g name calling, ridicule, comments),
  - Online (cyber) e.g. messaging, social media, email,
  - Emotional/indirect/segregation e.g. excluding someone, spreading rumours,
  - Visual/written, e.g. graffiti, gestures, wearing racist insignia,
  - Damage to personal property,
  - Exploitation,
  - Threat,
  - Theft or extortion,
  - Persistence or persecution.

## 7. Types of Bullying

- 7.1. **Cyberbullying:** involves sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails or instant messages, posting malicious material online ( e.g. on social networking websites) or sending posting offensive or degrading images and videos. Cyber bullying may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or travelling. It can draw bystanders into being accessories and includes:
- Threats and intimidation,
  - Harassment or ‘cyber stalking’,
  - Vilification/ defamation,
  - Exclusion or peer rejection,
  - Impersonation,
  - Unauthorised publication of private messages or images,
  - Manipulation.
- 7.1.1. Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways including:
- Threatening, intimidating, or upsetting text messages,
  - Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras,
  - Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victims’ phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible,
  - Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name,
  - Intimidating or hurtful messages to someone in a chat room,
  - Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging,
  - Unpleasant or untrue information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites.
- 7.2. **Racist and religious bullying:** A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status.
- 7.3. **Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying:** includes any behaviour, whether physical or nonphysical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or girls.
- 7.4. **Homophobic Bullying:** targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation).
- 7.5. **Disablist Bullying:** targets a young person solely based on their disability, this can include manipulative bullying where a perpetrator forces the victim to act in a certain way or exploiting a certain aspect of the victim’s disability.
- 7.6. **Prejudice based incidents:** A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected

characteristic or minority group. It doesn't have to be persistent to be taken seriously as it could be an indicator of peer on peer abuse. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying interventions.

## 8. Recognising Bullies or a Victim of Bullying

8.1. All staff shall be aware that:

- 8.1.1. no-one can afford to have preconceptions of identifying bullying behaviour or being a victim,
- 8.1.2. stereotyping the victim as weak, shy or small must be avoided,
- 8.1.3. victims can be any child from any background,
- 8.1.4. victims are in some way vulnerable and may be:
  - 8.1.4.1. new to the class or school,
  - 8.1.4.2. different in appearance, speech or background from the majority,
  - 8.1.4.3. quick to react, (often out of proportion,) to everyday incidents, e.g. through loss of temper, sulking or tantrums,
  - 8.1.4.4. children who display an above average amount of nervousness or anxiety,
  - 8.1.4.5. children who display a reluctance to attend school,
  - 8.1.4.6. any pupil whose behaviour shows signs of change,
  - 8.1.4.7. any pupil who shows vulnerability or is socially isolated.

## 9. Responding to Bullying

9.1. All staff shall:

- 9.1.1. take all incidents, suspected incidents and reports of bullying seriously,
- 9.1.2. report all incidents to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or KiVA Team,
- 9.1.3. deal immediately with all reported incidents,
- 9.1.4. listen to all sides of the story before reaching a conclusion and taking action,
- 9.1.5. investigate thoroughly all aspects of the incident witnessed or reported,
- 9.1.6. seek to learn from all incidents to aid future prevention.

9.2. The school shall:

- 9.2.1. record all instances of proven bullying for possible future reference using CPOMs,
- 9.2.2. notify the parents/carers of victims and bullies and involve them in any future action,
- 9.2.3. keep records of all letters sent to parents/carers and any subsequent meetings,
- 9.2.4. report to governors termly through the Principals.

## 10. Prevention of Bullying

10.1. All staff shall:

- 10.1.1. encourage the children to explore bullying and its consequences as part of the KiVA/R.S.H.E/ and No Outsiders programme,
- 10.1.2. encourage the children to explore bullying and the different roles involved in a bullying situation,
- 10.1.3. explore bullying and its consequences as part of the moral education of the children through assemblies, etc.,
- 10.1.4. be fully aware of the school policy and be prepared to implement it,
- 10.1.5. take into consideration the opinions of pupils and parents,
- 10.1.6. let pupils and parents/carers know that bullying will **not** be tolerated,
- 10.1.7. give active support to victims (using the KiVA guidelines, where applied),
- 10.1.8. seek to change the attitude of the bully.

## 11. Procedure for the Investigation of Reported Bullying

11.1. Staff shall, using the KiVA procedure for investigation, where applied:

- 11.1.1. take all reported incidents seriously,
- 11.1.2. let everyone involved in the incident/s know how seriously bullying is regarded,
- 11.1.3. talk to all children involved and any independent witnesses,
- 11.1.4. pass on all reported incidents to the SLT,
- 11.1.5. discuss and agree what form of punishment would be appropriate.

11.2. The Senior Leadership Team shall:

- 11.2.1. support and complete the initial investigation,
- 11.2.2. ensure the parents/carers of victims and perpetrators are informed and consulted as appropriate,
- 11.2.3. do everything possible to ensure that specific incidents are not repeated and that bullying does not become a major problem within school,
- 11.2.4. ensure pertinent information is filed for future reference.

## 12. Resources available to Staff

- 12.1. Annual anti-bullying week.
- 12.2. Whole school RSHE programme, KiVA (where applied).
- 12.3. KiVa materials – see pack in school.
- 12.4. Teaching 'Online safety' resources

## 13. Physical abuse

13.1. Physical abuse can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. This can be a one-off incident and doesn't need to be repeated for it to be considered as an example of peer-on-peer abuse.

## 14. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

- 14.1. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
- 14.2. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.
- 14.3. Staff should be aware of the importance of:
  - Challenging inappropriate behaviours
  - Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up,
  - Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys",
  - Challenging physical behaviours such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- 14.4. Sexual harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment is referenced in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment.
- 14.5. Sexual harassment is 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.
- 14.6. Sexual harassment can include:
  - **Sexual comments:** such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names,

- **Sexual “jokes” or taunting,**
- **Physical behaviour:** such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes, displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature,
- **Online sexual harassment:** which may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos.

## 15. Upskirting

15.1. The Voyeurism (offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing 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 sex, can be a victim.

## 16. Responding to reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment

16.1. The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. At RCSAT all alleged sexual violence and sexual harassment will be taken seriously. We understand that how we respond can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

16.2. Those who report sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Pupils will never be given the impressions that they are creating problem by reporting sexual violence or harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. All members of our school communities are encouraged to challenge and report all forms of peer on peer abuse and support those affected by it.

16.3. All reports of peer-on-peer abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required.

16.4. The immediate response to a report shall be:

16.4.1. The school will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.

16.4.2. Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care) staff will however only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.

16.4.3. A written report will be made as soon after the interview as possible recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.

16.4.4. Where the report includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.

16.4.5. The DSL will be informed as soon as possible.

## 17. Risk Assessment

17.1. When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs’ assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

17.2. The risk and needs’ assessment shall consider:

17.2.1. The victim, especially their protection and support;

17.2.2. The alleged perpetrator; and



17.2.3. All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

17.3. Risk assessments will be recorded electronically and recorded on CPOMS and be kept under review.

## 18. Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

18.1. Following an incident, schools shall consider:

18.1.1. The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment;

18.1.2. The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour;

18.1.3. The ages of the children involved;

18.1.4. The developmental stages of the children involved;

18.1.5. Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?

18.1.6. If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;

18.1.7. Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children or school or staff; and other related issues and wider context?

## 19. Follow up Actions: Children sharing a classroom

19.1. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

19.1.1. The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim;

19.1.2. Schools shall consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart in school.

19.1.3. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

## 20. Options to manage the Report

20.1. Manage internally. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, schools may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions will be recorded and stored by the EHT on CPOMS.

20.2. In line with Manage Internally above, schools may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

20.3. Local Safeguarding Team. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we will make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Team following locally agreed protocols. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

20.4. Reporting to the Police. Any report to the police will generally be made through the Local Safeguarding Team as above. The designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is

this will be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach. Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police will be sought to help us.

## **21. Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault**

- 21.1. Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies.
- 21.2. Schools shall support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but, if they are unable to do so, schools shall enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family. If they are moved, schools shall ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they may need. The DSL will support this move.
- 21.3. Where there is a criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and schools shall also consider how best to keep them a reasonable distance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings.
- 21.4. Schools shall work closely with the police. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, schools may take suitable action, if they have not already done so.
- 21.5. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).
- 21.6. Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, if we have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact within school.
- 21.7. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.
- 21.8. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied.
- 21.9. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis.
- 21.10. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required).
- 21.11. Any arrangements shall be kept under review.

## **22. Initiation/Hazing/Child Exploitation in Gangs and Groups**



- 22.1. A child or young person can be exploited (sexually and / or physically) by a gang, but this is not necessarily the reason why gangs are formed. The office of the Children’s Commissioner has defined Child Exploitation in gangs and groups as:
- 22.1.1. **Gangs:** mainly comprising men and boys aged 13-25 years old, who take part in many forms of criminal activity who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers, for example a territory, a name or sometimes clothing.
- 22.1.2. **Groups:** involves people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, co-ordinating and/ or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way.
- 22.2. Where abuse takes place in a gang environment, female members may perceive the abuse as normal, as well as accepting it as a way of achieving a respected status/title within the gang.
- 22.3. Most youths who want to be gang members must first endure a test or ritual of initiation. Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers regardless of a person’s willingness to participate.

### 23. Peer-on-Peer abuse outside of school

- 23.1. Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, children’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that children form in their neighbourhood, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.
- 23.2. Peer on peer abuse impacts pupils’ wellbeing beyond the school day. Staff, parents, carers and pupils must be vigilant to occurrences and incidents outside of school and respond according to their responsibilities outlined in this procedure.
- 23.3. Where Peer to Peer abuse outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on.

### 24. Vulnerable groups

- 24.1. RCSAT schools recognise that all children can be at risk, but acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include:
- 24.1.1. experience of abuse within their family;
- 24.1.2. living with domestic violence;
- 24.1.3. young people in care;
- 24.1.4. children who go missing;
- 24.1.5. children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities);
- 24.1.6. children who identify or are perceived as LGBT and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 24.2. Whilst research identifies that girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers and that girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools, this is not limited to girls.
- 24.3. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour.
- 24.4. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs.
- 24.5. Schools recognise that both boys and girls experience peer on peer abuse, but they do so in gendered ways.
- 24.6. All staff shall be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:
- 24.6.1. increased absence from school,
- 24.6.2. a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups,
- 24.6.3. a significant decline in performance,

24.6.4. signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or

24.6.5. signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

24.7. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## 25. Physical Abuse

25.1. While a clear focus of peer-on-peer abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and, if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police. The principles from our approach to anti-bullying will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

25.2. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum (Appendix 1) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

25.2.1. is socially acceptable,

25.2.2. involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time,

25.2.3. is socially acceptable within the peer group,

25.2.4. is problematic and concerning,

25.2.5. involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability,

25.2.6. involves an element of coercion or pre-planning,

25.2.7. involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour,

25.2.8. involves a misuse of power.

## 26. Prevention in RCSAT Schools

26.1. The Rural Church Schools Academy Trust (RCSAT) actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by:

26.1.1. Educating all Directors, Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils, and parents about this issue. This will include training all Directors, Governors, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. This shall include:

- Contextual Safeguarding;
- The identification and classification of specific behaviours;
- The importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of peer-on-peer abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing

26.1.2. Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum by ensuring that:

- Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.
- They are regularly informed about the School's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.

26.1.3. Engaging parents on this issue by:

- Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the School address those risks;

- Involving parents in the review of School policies and lesson plans; and
  - Encouraging parents to hold the School to account on this issue.
- 26.1.4. Ensuring that all peer-on-peer abuse issues are fed back to the School's safeguarding lead so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support.
- 26.1.5. Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom).
- 26.1.6. Working with Directors, Governors, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community.
- 26.1.7. Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships.
- 26.1.8. Creating a culture in which pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to.
- 26.1.9. Responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse promptly and appropriately.

## Appendix 1

Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected	• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	• Problematic and concerning behaviours	• Victimising intent or outcome	• Physically violent sexual abuse
Socially acceptable	• Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	• Includes misuse of power	• Highly intrusive
Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	• Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	• No overt elements of victimisation	• Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance	• Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
Shared decision making	• Generally consensual and reciprocal	• Consent issues may be unclear	• Intrusive	• Sadism
		• May lack reciprocity or equal power	• Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim	
		• May include levels of compulsivity	• May include elements of expressive violence	

