Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

Audience	STUDENT
Requirement	HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Policy Owner	DoSE
1st Delegation	TSCQ
Last Delegation	CORP
Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review	May 20
Due for Review	May 21

Scope:

This policy sets out to address the Colleges commitment to safeguarding students and sets out to specifically address the Colleges response to peer on peer abuse.
The policy takes into consideration the following statutory and advisory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (DfE, 2018)
- Hampshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Model Child Protection Policy (HSCB, 2019).

Types of abuse:

All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- **Bullying (including online bullying)**

Bullying (including cyber-bullying) can be involved in any type of abuse and is often motivated by prejudice or ignorance due to actual or perceived differences between people or groups or people. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), those from minority ethnic groups, or those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can be more vulnerable to this form of abuse and the College takes its duty to protect more vulnerable learners very seriously.

- **Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm**

- **Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)**

- **Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.**

- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two students of any age and gender. It can also occur through a group of students sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single student or group of students. Peer on peer abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they abuse to defend themselves. This imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or social (e.g. isolating or excluding someone). It could also include issues such as revenge porn or what are often gender issues (e.g. girls being touched or boys being involved in initiation activities).

Students who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Disclosures of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure

their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other students and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Fareham College believes in the following principles:

- All students have a right to attend college and learn in a safe environment. Students should be free from harm whether the perpetrator be an adult or a child.
- Recognising that young people are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under overarching guidance of Fareham Colleges safeguarding policy and in line with KCSiE (2019)
- Being clear that all forms of peer on peer abuse are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

Fareham College will minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse by:

1. **Prevention:**

   - Taking a whole college approach to safeguarding & child protection
   - Providing training to staff
   - Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the college's behaviour management policies
   - Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

2. **Responding to disclosures of peer on peer abuse:**

   - Students making a disclosure will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.
   - Staff taking the disclosure will contact the DSL or member of the safeguarding team
   - Staff taking a disclosure will never promise confidentiality.
   - Where the student is under 18 parents or parents/guardians/carers will normally be informed (unless this would put the student at greater risk) by the DSL or safeguarding team.
   - If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or Police
   - A thorough investigation will then be conducted
   - Consider referrals to other external appropriate agencies (as appropriate)

3. **Risk Assessment:**

Following a disclosure, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The Risk assessment will consider:

   - The victim, especially their protection and support.
   - The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.
   - All other students at the school.
   - The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the College's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

Action: The DSL will consider:

- The wishes of the victim.
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
- Ages of the children involved.
- Developmental stages of the children.
- Any power imbalance between the students.
- Any previous incidents.
- Ongoing risks.
- Other related issues or wider context.

The DSL will manage the report with the following options:

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Refer to Children's Social Care
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care)

Ongoing Response:

- The DSL will manage each disclosure on a case by case basis and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a peer on peer abuse case, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. Where this is not possible, ie only one class for a particular course, other options should be considered, dependent on circumstances, that will enable both parties to continue in their studies.
- The DSL and relevant managers of curriculum will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on college premises and on transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a peer on peer abuse case leads to a conviction or caution, the College will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the peer on peer abuse case is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the College would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other students).
- Where a criminal investigation into a peer on peer abuse case leads to a conviction or caution, the College will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of the Student behaviour management policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the College, 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 on college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution

and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (children & adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis.
- The College recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.