



Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists

“Learning & Growing in the Light of the Gospel”

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work

‘ Encouraging Big Ideas’

Ratcliffe’s unique educational offering based on our College motto, “Legis Plenitudo Charitas”, Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College’s inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, “Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel”, serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.

Ratcliffe College

Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy

Author: Mr J.P. Reddin	Receiver: All staff
Review Date: August 2021	Date of Next Review: September 2023

There is no place for bullying or Peer-on-Peer abuse at Ratcliffe College. The College takes a 'zero-tolerance' approach to peer-on-peer abuse. The Governors, Senior Leadership Team, and all staff (which term shall apply to all volunteer staff members) at Ratcliffe College are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the School.

The phenomenon revealed in Spring 2021 by *Everyone's Invited* is not new. Surveys and research have been highlighting the problem since 2012.

- The 2017 Girlguiding Survey of girls aged 13–21 found that 64 per cent had experienced sexual harassment at school.
- A 2017 report by the NEU, in collaboration with UK Feminista, found that over a quarter of girls at mixed schools had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature at school.
- In a June 2020 report from the University of Bedfordshire entitled *Beyond Referrals*, their research found that 73 per cent of students surveyed indicated that sexual/sexist name calling occurred in school; 55 per cent that rumours circulated about student sexual activity; 36 per cent that sexual harassment took place; 30 per cent that sexual images of students were shared without consent; and 22 per cent that unwanted sexual touching occurred.

This is the School's overarching policy for any issue that could constitute peer-on-peer abuse. It relates to, and should be read alongside, the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and any other relevant policies including, but not limited to, Antibullying (including cyber-bullying), Mobile and Electronic Devices Policy, Relationship and Sex Education Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Records Management Policy and the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. This policy is compliant with the statutory guidance on peer-on-peer abuse as set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2021) and the updated Sexual Violence and Harassment guidance from September 2021.

What is Peer-on-Peer abuse?

Relationships and friendships within school can be the cause of unhappiness and upset to a pupil when they go wrong. For these purposes, peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships and wider peer associations.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- 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.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes' images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- Upskirting, which is a criminal offence. This 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 type 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).

Sexting

"Sexting" is the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or another digital device. These messages, photos, and images are then often being further disseminated through email and internet-based social networking websites well beyond their original intended recipients.

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (December 2020) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis>

In the case of reported sexting, staff will not search the contents of a pupil's mobile phone where there is a suspicion of indecent images. (See the dfe guidance on "[Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)"). Where there is a suspicion of indecent images on a pupil's mobile phone or electronic device, Ratcliffe College will report it to the police immediately. Confiscated materials and devices are stored under lock and key in the Deputy Head Pastoral's office to await removal by the Police, where necessary. Both storage and removal are logged. The College takes note of advice on sexting from the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (CEOP). <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Sending or receiving a sexually suggestive image or text under the age of 18 is a crime and is considered child pornography and can result in criminal charges.

- Sexting is not acceptable under any circumstances. The exchange of information of a sexual nature, text, or images, that is sent as a form of 'Banter' between pupils or between adults is also unacceptable.
- Pupils who are found to have engaged in sexting must expect to receive a serious school sanction, the severity of which will depend upon the specific nature of the incident. Parents will be informed, and a meeting convened to discuss the incident and strategies put in place to help change their behaviour.
- Those who have been the victim of sexting will be given appropriate support following discussions with their parent/guardian and, where appropriate, relevant external organisations.

For further clarity on what is meant by this terminology, "from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent," designated safeguarding leads (or deputies) can refer to Hackett's useful '**Continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviours**' which can be found by clicking [here](#).

Prevention

Culture is key with prevention. Our Mission Statement is key to creating a safe space. "

"Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel"

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

We are a Roman Catholic school, welcoming and valuing all children because of their innate dignity.

This is created through several methods, including leadership from the SLT team, pastoral team, staff training, assemblies, PSHCE programme, as well as regular training for all, including prefects and mentors. This will include case studies and reflective behaviour. Staff are trained to recognise that abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up' but take a 'zero-tolerance' approach.

Staff are aware that 'it could happen here' and that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, with it being on every Department's agenda.

- Members of the teaching staff will attend INSET training courses to make sure they are up-to-date and aware of the support that can be offered.
- Students must feel that there is a safe space for them to make referrals or disclosures. Referrals can be made through Tutor, Teacher, HoY, SLT or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- A range of support staff, including the nursing or counselling team, are also available.

- The School regularly tackles the subject of peer-on-peer abuse in assemblies and PSHCE lessons, as well as inviting external speakers to address year groups on this issue.

It is important that appropriate personal safety lessons are taught to ensure that students know:

- how to: determine whether children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe...and how to seek help or advice.
- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- that some types of behaviours within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- the impact of viewing harmful content.
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties, including jail.
- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming,
- coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

N.B. This is not a complete list of required content but are those aspects of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) most pertinent to this risk assessment document.

What the School will do if a concern is raised

The School promotes an “always tell” ethos amongst its students, parents and staff. All incidents are investigated thoroughly, and every effort is made to protect any pupil connected to the allegation from becoming a victim of peer-on-peer abuse themselves.

- In the event of an observed or reported instance of peer-on-peer abuse, the facts will be ascertained from the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and witness(es).
- A record will be made of who was involved, what happened, when and where. This will be passed to the relevant HoY (or Form Teacher at the Preparatory School), who will liaise with the DSL or DDSL.
- Staff will not use the term ‘victim’ and/or ‘perpetrator’ when speaking with pupils. This is because our School takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in concerns or allegations about peer-on-peer abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused, and those who are alleged to have abused their peers, in addition to any sanctioning work that may also be required for the latter. Research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer-on-peer abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers.

- The School will endeavour to keep parents of those students involved informed if, and when, it may be dealing with a peer-on-peer abuse situation.
- Parents are asked to let the School know directly (in the first instance, normally the Form Teacher for Preparatory School students, Tutor or the HoY for Senior School students) if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about incidents involving others.
- The School will handle information discreetly and, while it will usually inform all interested parties of the situation, it will not do so without careful consultation first.
- This policy uses the terms 'child' and 'children', as a person aged under 18. We have nonetheless chosen not to restrict our approach to peer-on-peer abuse under this policy to children but instead to adopt a wider interpretation of our safeguarding responsibilities so that they apply to all students, regardless of age.
- If necessary, a risk assessment will be used to manage the students' routines in school.

The School's response to incidents involving the exchange of youth-involved sexual imagery will need to differ depending on the age of the students involved.

- Once investigated, depending on the severity, every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, which will seek to support the children and change the behaviour of peer-on-peer abuse.
- We will assess the concern raised through the Brook Traffic Light Tool Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool, which can be found [here](#), as well as the Leicestershire County Council Risk assessment, which the DSL has copies of.
- If behaviour is sexually inappropriate, it may be appropriate to involve Early Help, Children's Social Care and/or the Sexual Behaviour Service.
- If it is decided that the behaviour is sexually harmful, sexually abusive or sexually violent, advice and support should be requested from other agencies. These could include Children's Social Care and the Police.
- If a child has been harmed, or is at risk of significant harm, a referral will need to be made to Children's Social Care in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and procedures. This includes when there is a risk of a child or young person abusing someone else. Depending on the nature of the concerns, a report to the Police may also be necessary in parallel with the referral to Children's Social Care.

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

- KCSIE 2021 Part 5 and the separate guidance 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' 2021 sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. 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.
- All staff at Ratcliffe College are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
- Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood,

adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.

- Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.
- Victim reassurance. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- If necessary, a risk assessment will be used to manage the students' routines in school.

The Governing Body are aware of the DfE detailed advice to support schools and colleges. The advice – [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (September 2021) includes what sexual violence and harassment looks like, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for schools and colleges and advice on a whole school approach to preventing child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Reports of **child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment** should be reported to the DSL immediately or where necessary, the deputy DSL via CPOMS or in writing, signed and dated.

Following a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL (or deputy) will make an immediate risk assessment in line with the advice from [KCSIE 2021, Section 5 \(Page 99\)](#) considering:

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- All other children (and if appropriate adult pupils and staff)

The DSL will then liaise with the appropriate external agency (social services/First Response, police or other specialist services, as necessary to seek further advice).

The following will be considered by the DSL (or deputy) following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- the nature of the alleged incident
- the ages of the children involved
- the development stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children
- is the incident a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school or college staff?
- contextual safeguarding issues

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated at Ratcliffe College. Staff should always act in the best interest of the child and report their concerns to the

DSL (or deputy) immediately. Ratcliffe College takes a 'zero-tolerance' approach to such behaviour.

For all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, there are various supports that can be considered depending on the children. The NSPCC have launched a new dedicated, confidential helpline – Report Abuse in Education - which is available to current or past victims as well as parents, carers or professionals with concerns. The helpline number is 0800 136 663. It is free and anonymous and will be open Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm and Saturday to Sunday 9am – 6pm.

Depending on the risk identified, advice should be sought from one or more of the following agencies:

First Response Children's Duty Team: Tel: 0116 305 0005 (24-hour phone line)

Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit – www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse

UK Safer Internet Centre Tel: 0344 3814772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

Other useful Points of Reference:

- ➤ Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding children Partnership – <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>
- ➤ Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre - <http://www.ceop.gov.uk>
- ➤ Childnet International – Internet Safety Website – <https://www.childnet.com>
- ➤ Internet Watch Foundation - www.iwf.org.uk
- ➤ Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk
- ➤ NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk - also for children and young people
www.childline.org.uk and
www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk
- ➤ UKCCIS Sexting Advice- www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safetyukccis
- ➤ Stop it Now! – Child Sexual Abuse - www.stopitnow.org.uk
- ➤ Think U Know – Internet, mobile phone and technology safety for children –
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- ➤ Young Minds - <http://www.youngminds.org.uk>

This policy applies in respect of all dealings between members of the School (not just on site or during school hours) which, in the opinion of the School, impact or may impact upon their conduct at school or upon the reputation of the School.

Ratcliffe College recognises the national and increasing concern about this issue and wish to implement this policy in order to mitigate harmful attitudes and peer-on-peer abuse in the school setting. We encourage parents to communicate openly on this issue so that if their child is feeling unsafe as a result of the behaviour of any of their peers, they should inform the School to ensure that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response.

This policy sets out our strategy for improving prevention and identifying, and appropriately managing, peer-on-peer abuse. It is reviewed annually, and updated in the interim as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which students are, or may be, exposed.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed by the Headmaster and Deputy Head, Pastoral, September 2023.