Child on Child Abuse Policy

Applebee Wood Community Specialist School

Our Vision

To offer a safe place for children with special needs to thrive, their needs are at the heart of everything we do. The whole Applebee Wood team works together to meet the needs of the child and families with support from SEN experts and outside agencies.

Our Values

Respect

Belonging

Trust

Resilience

Aspiration

School Beliefs

It is important to create a happy, safe and secure leaning environment where all pupils' needs are met, where progress achievements and success are recognised and praised.

It is important to help students acquire knowledge, skills, and confidence, which enables them to lead a full, interesting and independent life.

It is important to listen and respect the pupils voice and their contributions.

It is important to develop pupil's personal responsibility and encourage decision making and choice, communicating through whatever means appropriate.

It is important to offer opportunities of working cooperatively alongside others, developing friendship and respect for others.

It is important to promote the pupil's spiritual, physical and emotional well-being so that they are secure, confident and well-motivated.

It is important that all statutory guidance is delivered to the pupils.

It is important that all staff are provided with training and development opportunities to enable effective practice.

School Aims

Every child is unique we aim to create a special place where children feel happy, safe and loved.

We believe that successful learning thrives in a fun, creative and stimulating environment.

We strive for excellence and enjoyment in everything we do.

We believe that that the individual matters. We are committed to breaking down barriers and providing equal opportunities for everyone.

We value effective partnerships with our families and friends and firmly believe that together we can help every child reach their dreams.

Philosophy of the school

Applebee Wood School believes that all students have the right to be taught in a safe environment to enable them to optimise their learning and achievement. We expect all students to develop self-discipline and respect

for others and to feel valued and supported. The school promotes the values of honesty, tolerance and fairness within a caring and nurturing environment.

Students at the school have a variety of complex needs and the school provides a high level of pastoral care for all students in order to encourage appropriate and cooperative behaviour. As a result of this ongoing support, students are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour but as a staff group we understand that we need to utilise numerous strategies to achieve this.
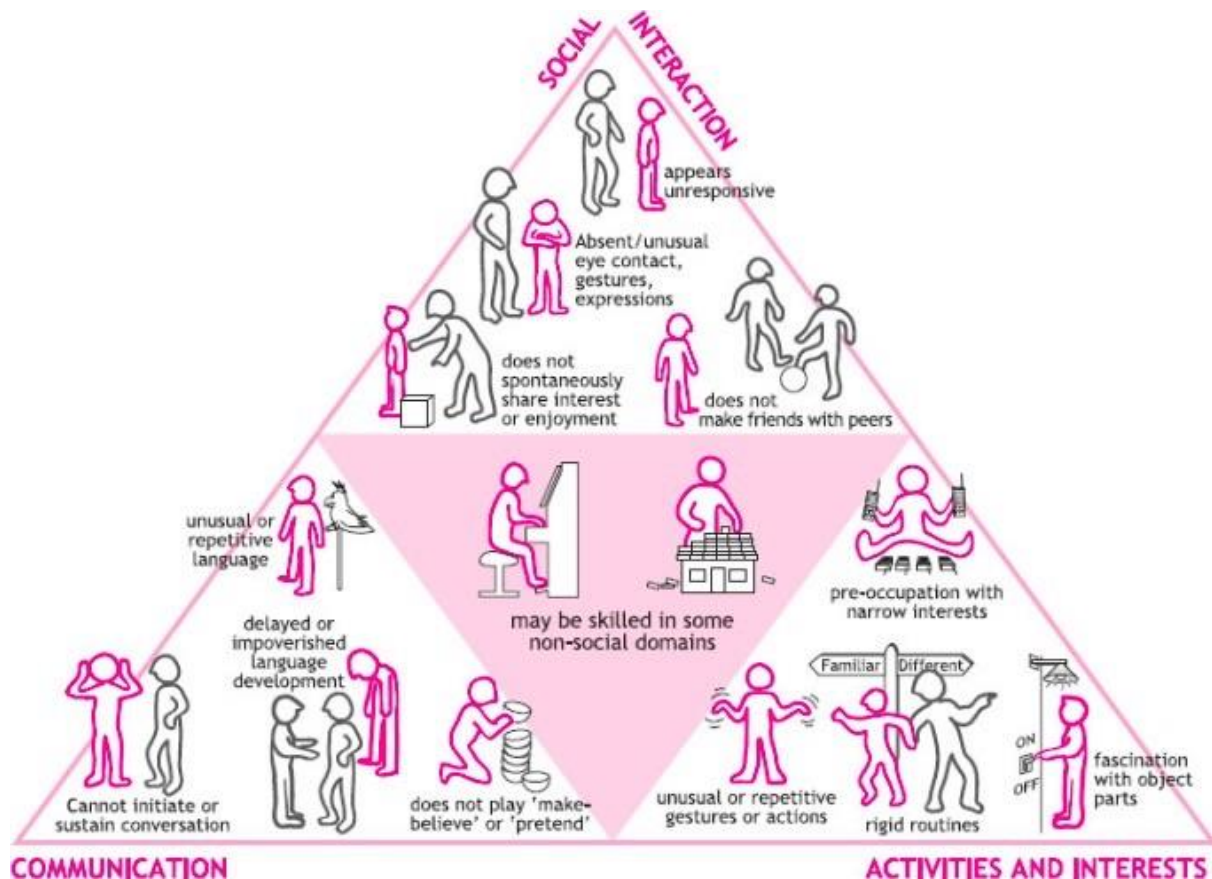
The triad of impairment (Figure 1, above, originally devised in 1979 by Lorna Wing and Judy Gould) is a useful tool to refer to when educating pupils with complex needs (especially those with an ASD diagnosis). It is important to identify behaviours that may be perceived as "rude" but are actually a symptom of a pupils diagnosed difficulties. Moor Hey School aims to work with pupils to modify undesirable behaviour through therapeutic intervention and staff recognise that behaviour associated with ASD/ADHD/ODD take time to change.

Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Huitt (2007)
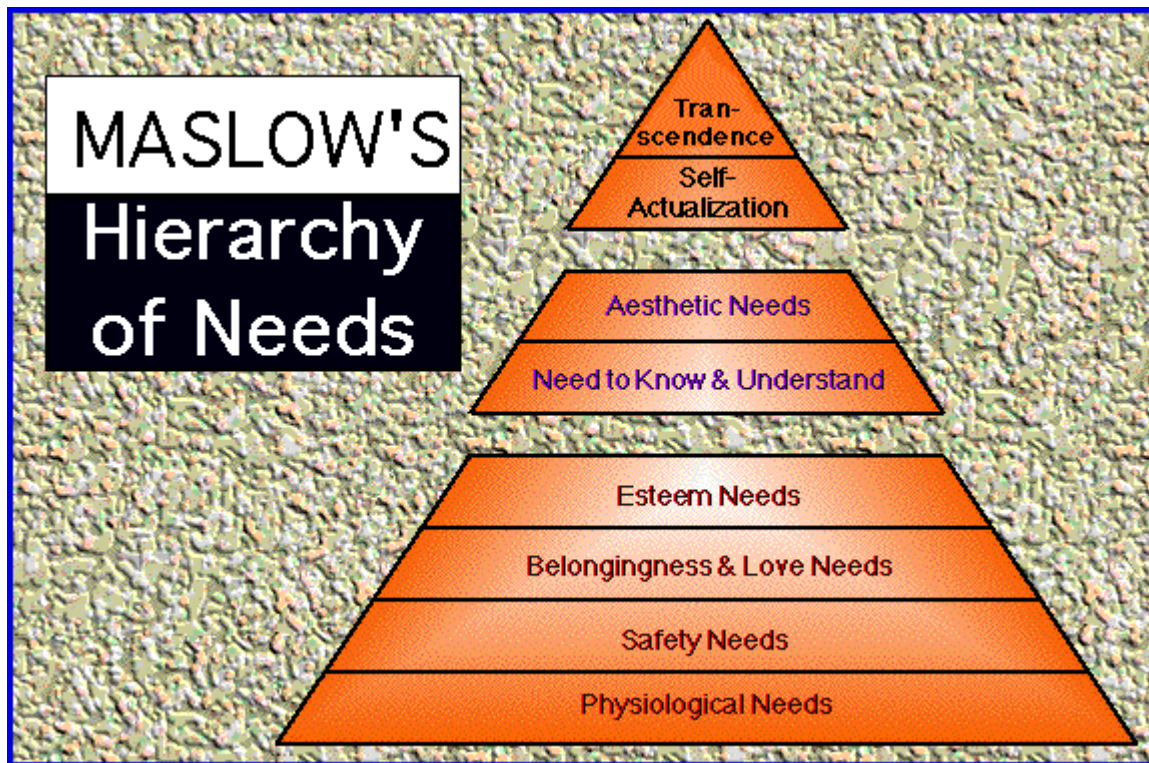
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is another useful tool for educators. Many of the pupils at Moor Hey have a diagnosis of complex, co-occurring difficulties. Often behaviours displayed by our pupils are consistent with their individual diagnosis and make achieving learning difficult. For example, one of the common behaviours displayed by a pupil with ADHD is impulsivity. This behaviour could lead to a pupil not feeling safe in a classroom and therefore mean he is not able to access the learning of the lesson. In addition to this, pupils with difficulties in the classroom are well documented to struggle with "fitting in" and identifying with others, these are important factors to remember when a pupil exhibits undesired behaviour.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022 states:

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns

regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

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.

Child-on-child 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 children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

• 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,6 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)

• 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, and

• 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).

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

At Applebee Wood School, we continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the child or young person, with full consideration to the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Definition

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as child on child abuse and incidents that would be considered as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc. Staff should use their professional judgement in these matters. However, we would consider a child or young person's behaviour as being abusive if:

- there is a large difference in power between the young people concerned (e.g. age, size, ability, development); or

- the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or

- there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse which may occur. Staff need to be aware of the following;

- Physical abuse which causes physical harm to another person.

- Sexual abuse/sexually harmful behaviour which includes inappropriate sexual language and touching.

- Bullying, including aggressive verbal and physical behaviour which is repetitive and where there is an imbalance of power.

- Cyber bullying which is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter to threaten or intimidate.

- Sexting which is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. Making, possessing and distributing sexual imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. This includes imagery of the young person themselves if they are under 18.

- Teenage relationship abuse which is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. The perpetrator uses a pattern of violent and coercive behaviour in order to gain power and maintain control over the victim.

- Prejudiced behaviour, which refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical, emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. This particularly refers to prejudices due to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life and sexual identity.

Expectations of staff

- Staff recognise that peer on peer abuse can occur despite the robust policies and procedures put in place by the School.

- Staff understand that it is important to deal with a situation of peer on peer abuse immediately and sensitively.

- Staff are trained in dealing with incidents of peer on peer abuse and have an understanding of what constitutes, for example, cyber bullying, sexting and physical and verbal abuse.

- Staff understand that all allegations of child on child abuse are treated as safeguarding concerns and that outside agencies may need to be involved.

- Staff understand the School's procedures on reporting safeguarding concerns .

- Staff acknowledge that they should not be prejudiced, judgemental or dismissive when dealing with such sensitive issues, but should offer immediate support in a calm and consistent manner.

- Staff are aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have themselves been abused and the risk that they may respond to this by abusing their peers, particularly those who are weaker or younger.

Preventative Strategies

- The School has an open environment where pupils feel safe. The school conducts regular pupil surveys to ensure that this is the case.

- All pupils have an identified listening ear in order to discuss concerns and worries.

- The School has a dedicated Pastoral care team, including a manager who is also the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Back-up Safeguarding Lead and a Student Support Worker.

- The School's Therapy team including the CAMHS worker are in-house and support pupils on a regular basis.

- The School has separate weekly PSHE and Social Skills lessons which give pupils a forum to talk openly about any difficulties they may have and discuss issues which may affect them.

- 1:1 bespoke sessions when a particular need is identified are available from the school nursing team.

- There is a clear behaviour management system in the school to support pupils, which includes rewards and sanctions.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Child on Child Abuse

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another, members of staff should treat it as a safeguarding concern. As such, it should be recorded on the appropriate safeguarding concern sheet or CPOMS and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Back-up Safeguarding Lead should be informed.

It is important that staff do not attempt to investigate the circumstances at this stage.

- The DSL should gather information from the young person making the allegation and consider whether they are at risk of significant harm.

- The DSL will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to seek advice. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral to Children's Social Care if the young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, the DSL will inform the police.

- Once advice has been taken from the LADO and/or Children's Social Care and/or the police, the school will begin its investigation. The DSL will speak separately to the young people involved to gain a statement of facts from them, using consistent language and open questions for each account.

- Any written evidence or images will be gathered.

- If the allegation regards sexting, devices containing images should be confiscated, turned off and placed under lock and key until they can be handed over to the police.

- Parents, of both the alleged perpetrator and the alleged victim, will be informed at an early stage and kept updated on the progress of the referral . If the police/social care are involved we will wait for their agreement before informing parents.

- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a secure copy on the pupils' safeguarding files.

- If the allegation highlights a potential risk to the school and the pupil, the school will follow the school's behaviour policy and procedures and take appropriate action.

- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment will be completed, together with a support plan. (this could involve the use of the Brooke Traffic light model)

- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up review with everyone concerned.

- In some cases the school may find it necessary to call an urgent review with the local authority to plan a way forward.

- If there is a criminal investigation ongoing, the school may consider that the young person is unable to be educated on site until the investigation is concluded. The young person will then be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Support for the child or young person who has been harmed

The support the young person requires will depend on the individual but the school can offer support to the young person in a number of ways:

- A support plan in the form of an anxiety management plan will be put in place for the child or young person, naming someone who they can talk to and listing support strategies for managing issues.

- The child or young person can speak to his/her trusted adult in school.

- The child or young person may require support from the School's in-house therapy team, to improve peer relationships if the incident was of a bullying nature.

- The child or young person may require counselling.

- Support is available from the School's pastoral care team.

- The School may consider a referral to outside agencies including CAMHS.

- The child or young person may be supported by his/her peer mentor.

- Parents may also need support from the school's pastoral support team.

<u>Support for the child or young person who has displayed harmful behaviour</u>

It is important to find out why the child or young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that they may have been harmed themselves in a similar way or may be experiencing their own difficulties. The School acknowledges its responsibility to offer support and will consider the following:

- A risk assessment and support plan will be put into place.

- The child or young person can speak to his/her trusted adult.

- The School will identify whether the young person needs support from the pastoral team in school.

- The School may complete a referral to children's social care to ensure that outside services are made available to the child or young person.

- A referral to outside agencies, including CAMHS or the Child Sexual Exploitation Team may be a requirement in the case of sexually harmful behaviour.

- In cases of bullying, the School will ensure that there is a consequence for this behaviour, including restorative justice, if appropriate.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including: Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Anti-bullying.

Policy written: September 2023

Policy to be Update: September 2024