

Bishop Challoner Catholic College



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Inappropriate and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Guidance

Inappropriate and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Guidance For Parents/Carers and Students

Introduction

This guidance has been written in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

At Bishop Challoner Catholic College we seek:

- To develop the desire in each pupil to progress academically, spiritually, morally, culturally, mentally and physically.
- To provide a caring and secure atmosphere based on mutual respect within the entire School community.

(Taken from the Aims of the School)

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour.

Staff will never downplay “certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up”” KCSiE 23

Parents/carers have a vital role to play in educating young people about healthy relationships that are age-appropriate and respectful.

The age of consent in England and Wales is 16. This is the age when young people of any sex, gender or sexual orientation can legally consent to taking part in sexual activity.

The making and/or distributing indecent images of children under the age of 18 is always unlawful, even if it is done with the subject’s ‘consent’.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing;
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images
- sharing sexual images of a person;
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.

Young people can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online.

Children and young people

We use Relationships, Sex and Health Education to teach, in an age-appropriate way, what harmful sexual behaviour is, including child on child abuse. Students learn how to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We also teach them about the importance of making sensible decisions in order to be safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a young person is abused, it is never their fault.

Our students learn:

- that harmful sexual behaviour is never acceptable;
- that they must tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable and that they have a duty to tell a trusted adult if they witness such behaviour towards others;
- who the DSL team is and its role in safeguarding in our school community

Parents and carers

We work in partnership with parents/carers to support our students. It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by inappropriate/harmful sexual behaviour, and that key messages are reinforced at home. Parents/carers have a duty to make age-appropriate decisions about:

- Monitoring phones
- Monitoring what is viewed online (including parental control settings)
- Sexualised language;

Parents and carers are reminded, through the fortnightly school newsletters and other communication throughout the year, how to raise concerns with the DSL.

Further information to support parents and carers in relation to harmful sexual behaviour is available online:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/healthy-relationships/>

Staff

Our staff undertake annual safeguarding training where the different types of abuse and neglect are discussed; this includes information about harmful sexual behaviour and our expectations for staff vigilance about this and other potential types of abuse.

Our response to an incident / allegation

The safety and well-being of our students is always central to our response to an allegation or incident of inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour. Any young person reporting a concern will be treated respectfully. We will reassure them that they are being taken seriously and

that they will be supported and kept safe. We will explain next steps to the young person, so they understand what will happen, including who will be informed.

Our staff will never promise confidentiality to the young persons, as the concern will need to be shared further. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to be informed as soon as possible of any incident and the details may also need to be shared with Children's Social Care / the police and other specialist agencies. We have in place effective working relationships with our safeguarding partners, which are essential to ensuring that concerns are appropriately managed. Unless we are advised otherwise, we will always inform parents/carers of the allegation/incident.

Where the young person already has Social Care involvement, such as a Looked After Child, a Child In Need or a student with a Child Protection Plan, we will inform their Social Worker and work in partnership with them, as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for speaking to those concerned and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate, for example, Children's Social Care and the Police. They will also be the main point of contact for parents and carers.

In general, we will discuss any incidents or allegations with parents/carers unless we consider that doing so would expose the child or other persons to risk of harm.

Before approaching other schools or agencies we will consider if it is appropriate to seek parents'/carers' consent

Appropriate staff will approach parents/carers and other schools/agencies after consultation with the DSL.

There may be occasions when the school will contact another school or agency before or without informing parents/carers because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm.

When information is received from another school regarding an incident or allegation, this must be shared with the DSL. Similar consideration must be given and concerns will be shared with parents/carers unless we consider that doing so would expose the child or other persons to risk of harm.

Where necessary, we will seek advice and guidance from the Birmingham's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team.

Reporting and Recording

It is essential that information relating to allegations about harmful sexual behaviour are recorded securely, as with any other safe-guarding concern, in line with our Safeguarding Child Protection Policy. The record may form part of a statutory assessment by Children's Social Care or by another agency.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this, will report it and record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen. The information will be recorded as the young person presents it.

The record will then be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Risk Assessment

We will consider the need for a risk assessment following a report of inappropriate/harmful sexual behaviour, considering all young people involved in an incident. We will also consider all other students at our school and any actions that may be appropriate to protect them. Risk assessments will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Where appropriate, the young people concerned and their parents and carers will be invited to contribute to the completion and review of the risk assessment.

Guiding principles

We will use a proportionate approach, basing our actions on the principle that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns will be considered carefully and on a case by case basis. Our actions will not be judgemental and will always be taken in the interests of all young people concerned.

Our approach will help us to ensure that all students are protected and supported appropriately. The following principles will guide us:

- advice given by specialist outside agencies or services;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed;
- the ages and developmental stages of all young people involved;
- consideration of any power imbalance between the young people – for example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature, or more confident / does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty;
- consideration of whether the alleged incident is isolated or a pattern of alleged abuse;
- consideration of any risks to the young people involved, other students and/or staff;

Supporting the young person who has allegedly experienced harmful sexual behaviour

We will work to support a young person and their wider support network will be central to this work. As appropriate, we will work with other partners, in discussion with parents / carers and taking into consideration the young person's wishes. We will consider what steps are necessary to protect the young person from unwanted attention from their peers.

Supporting the young person who has allegedly displayed harmful sexual behaviour

We have a duty of care to all students and we will protect and support young people who have displayed abusive or harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering the

needs of the young person, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family.

Some young people may not realise they have behaved inappropriately and/or abusively. We will avoid using language that may make them feel judged.

We will consider appropriate sanctions, using our behaviour policy, and work with the young person and their support network to consider measures that may help to address the young person's behaviour.

Conclusion

Issues of this kind are fortunately exceedingly rare. All staff work to provide a safe and caring environment in which students can thrive, learn and have the best outcomes.

As with any safeguarding concern, we will consider what further support the young persons involved may need, for example, pastoral support, counselling services, and ensuring that there is a trusted adult for those affected to speak with if they wish. We will also consider whether any intervention or support is required as part of a whole setting approach or with the wider school community.