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Dear Parent/Carer

RE: KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE – PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER
A PARENTAL INFORMATION GUIDE ON DEALING WITH CHILD AND CHILD ABUSE

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. Welcome to our Parent Safeguarding Newsletter, with this edition we will be exploring how to deal with child on child abuse. Our Safeguarding Newsletters are designed to support parents in deepening their understanding of topical safeguarding issues that may affect their child, themselves or members of their local community.

Please take the time to read the 'Parental Information Guide on child on child abuse' written by Services for Education.

Topics covered in the Information Guide include:

- What is child on child abuse?
- Spotting the signs
- Having the conversation
- What to do when it happens to you
- Resources and Signposts

What is Child on Child abuse?

Child-on-child abuse is defined as any form of abuse committed by one child against another. This includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Child on child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school or social settings and can also take place online. There are different types of abuse:

- Physical abuse: Which is where one child aims to cause physical pain or injury to their victim, this could include hitting, kicking, biting, etc.
- Verbal abuse: This is the use of words to upset, intimidate or hurt a victim's feelings. This can include name calling, threats, emotional abuse and victimisation.
- Sexual abuse: This is any unwanted sexual contact, including touching, exposure, or sexual activity. This can and does happen in primary aged children.
- Cyberbullying: The use of technology to harass, threaten, or embarrass someone. This can include sending hurtful messages, spreading rumours, or posting embarrassing photos online.

Spotting the signs

It is important to remember that every child is different and therefore will react to child on child abuse in a totally different way. But you are the expert on your child, you know their normal and their personality- so here are some things to look out for which might be out of the ordinary…

- Emotional changes: changes in mood, low self esteem, loss of interest in activities, difficulty sleeping, changes in earing habits, unexplained physical symptoms
- Physical changes: unexplained marks or bruises, avoiding situations, lost or damaged items.
- Behavioural changes: changes in social behaviour, self destructive behaviour.

Having the conversation

No one wants to see their child hurt or upset, but it is essential that children are given time to talk and know that you are on their side.

Here are some top tips for talking to your child:

- Choose the right time and place: Give your child your undivided attention and make sure they feel comfortable to talk.
- Use open-ended questions: Using general questions such as, "Describe one great and one not so great thing in your day?" can help a child to open-up and get talking.
- Listen actively: Pay full attention to your child when they speak and use active listening techniques.
- Be patient: It may take time for your child to open-up about their experiences.
- Validate their feelings: Let your child know that their feelings are valid.
- Reassure them: Let your child know that you believe them and that you're there to support them.

If your child is displaying abusive behaviour towards another child, it is important to address it quickly and take it seriously. Talk openly with your child about your concerns and offer support while making it clear that child-on-child abuse is unacceptable. Try to understand any underlying causes, such as difficulties with friendships, stress, or experiences of being harmed themselves. Help your child develop empathy, positive relationships, and appropriate ways to manage conflict. Work closely with the school's pastoral team to monitor progress and provide support. If the behaviour continues, consider seeking additional help from a counsellor or other professional.

What to do if it happens?

If you think that your child is the victim or perpetrator of child-on-child abuse, your first port of call should be the school or lead adult where the abuse is taking place. Calmly highlight the issue and explain how your child is feeling. Refer to the anti-bullying or safeguarding policies where appropriate, these are on our school website. Please contact your child's Head of Year to report any concerns or worries you have.

There are also external charities and organisations who offer guidance, support and advice. These can be useful to look at with your child as they often have resources or information which can support both victim and perpetrator.

- Anti-bullying Alliance – Information, guidance and support
- Kidscape – Help with Bullying
- Young Minds – Mental Health Support
- Family Lives – Advice and support for parents

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact a member of your child's Year Team or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Yours Sincerely,

MRS J COLBOURNE
Associate Assistant Principal – Operational Safeguarding Lead