Djanogly Sherwood Academy

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Statement

At Djanogly Learning Trust we will:

- Make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys".
- Challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Understand that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the academy, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language.
- Ensure that the culture of our academies fosters healthy and respectful relationships, supported by our Relationship, Sex and Health Education Curriculum.
- Provide clear channels of communication and opportunities for children to raise concerns and make disclosures.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex and is commonly referred to as peer on peer abuse. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. It can include sexual comments, sexualised jokes or remarks about a person's clothes or appearance. Deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with someone's clothes can also be a form of sexual harassment. Such behaviour can normalise inappropriate behaviours if it is not consistently challenged. Harassment can take place online with non-consensual sharing of images, unwanted comments or coercion and threats via social media.

Children 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. 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.

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. Children with SEND and LGBT children are also likely to be at greater risk.

All types of harmful sexual behaviour are considered in a child protection context, they are reported and responded to in line with safeguarding and children protection policy and process. We recognise that some children displaying harmful, inappropriate sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma and will be offered support.

Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

At Djanogly we take seriously our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children. We work closely with the children themselves, their families and the wider community to educate and support, challenging views and behaviours that have a negative impact on safety and wellbeing.

Parents will be informed of incidents and included in the decision making process, unless it would put the child at further risk of harm. We will meet with both the victim and the perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to address the situation and safeguard the children involved.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex, requiring difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. We will respond in a calm, considered and appropriate manner in line with safeguarding policy and practice. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will take the lead, recording all details on My Concern and engaging with outside agencies/social services as appropriate.

The police will be important partners where a crime might have been committed. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that this should be referred on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases. In this situation we would work closely with the police but not wait for the outcome of such an investigation before protecting those children involved.

The NSPCC professional helpline will also be considered as a useful source of advice and guidance. They also provide a useful source of support for both victim and perpetrator.

The initial response to a report from a child is important. 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, their wishes will always be considered in terms of how they want to proceed. We will consider how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, as well as any other children involved/impacted. A risk assessment will be undertaken as to how to ensure that the children involved are not in shared classes/areas, particularly while the investigation is underway.

Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies. However, as a matter of effective safeguarding practice, we will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

Throughout this process the needs and wishes of the victim will be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably practical. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority will be to make the victim's daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school is a safe space for them.

It is important to remember that a child abusing another child may be a sign that they have been abused themselves. We will also work with the alleged perpetrator(s) to provide them with support in order to understand reasons for their behaviour and help protect them and other children by limiting the likelihood of them repeating this type of harmful behaviour.

The academy policies for safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying are all key in addressing any behaviours which cause harm to other children. Processes laid out in these policies will inform practice in any incident/report of sexual violence or harassment.

Practice will be kept under constant review and effectiveness monitored. Each incident will be considered in terms of lessons learnt and improvements made where identified for future practice.

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