

Peer-on-peer safeguarding policy.

RATIONALE

At the Canadian International School, all staff, including volunteers are committed to the prevention, early identification, and appropriate management of peer on peer abuse both within and beyond the school. Abuse should never be tolerated or minimized as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Peer-on-peer abuse is defined as any form of physical, sexual, coercive, emotional or financial abuse exercised between children and young persons, and within a child and young person's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships and wider peer associations.

All staff should recognize that children and young persons can be capable of harming their peers. As such, all staff should be aware of peer safeguarding issues including, but not limited to:

- bullying (cyberbullying and emotional / psychological)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- relationship abuse
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- child exploitation
- prejudice or gender-based violence

This abuse may:

- be motivated by perceived differences (e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences).
- result in significant, long-lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim.

There may be many reasons why a child / young person harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour. Adults should recognize that children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs such as:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement

Stopping abuse or harmful behaviour and ensuring immediate safety is the first priority, and all staff should strive 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 / young person, with full consideration of the impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

If abuse has taken place an assessment of an incident between peers will be completed and may take the following, and/or any other relevant details, into consideration:

- Chronological age and developmental stages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, social status, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability

- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident, and whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual motivation
- The degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

DEFINITIONS

Physical abuse may include, but is not limited to hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another child.

Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to inappropriate exposure, sexual language, touching, sexual threats / assault, penetrative and non-penetrative sex. (adapted NSPCC, 2018, UK)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among children and young persons that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying may include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally for a particular reason, e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, or excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat, social media or networking sites to harass, coerce, threaten or intimidate someone.

It is important to note that cyberbullying can easily fall into the category of criminal behaviour. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school may involve the police to investigate these situations.

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video.

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony that involves humiliation, and intimidation which may be used for induction or power and control.

Prejudiced Behaviour refers to a range of hurtful behaviour which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society (e.g. disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, socio-economic status and sexual orientation and identity.)

Peer relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened coercive acts perpetrated by a child/young person against a current or former partner, and uses this pattern of behaviour in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

Child or young person is defined as anyone receiving educational services at CIS, or a visiting child or young person under the age of 18 present on campus at CIS.