1. Introduction

While it is recommended that harassment and bullying are part of the Safeguarding Policy, due to the sensitive nature and specific issues involved with peer-on-peer abuse we have decided to separate it from the main Safeguarding Policy.

At MetaGedu Apprenticeships, 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 learner, with full consideration to the impact on that individual learner's emotional and mental health and well-being.

2. Purpose and Aim

Children, young people and vulnerable adults may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer-on-peer abuse. The purpose of this policy is to explore the many forms of peer-on-peer abuse and include a planned and supportive response to the issues.

3. Introduction to abuse and harmful behaviour

Abusive behaviour can happen to learners and employers, and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

4. Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

4.1 Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)
Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a learner harms another and it is important to understand why a learner has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action to be undertaken.

4.2 Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)
Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

4.3 Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both those who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

To be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:
4.3.1 An Imbalance of Power: People who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

4.3.2 Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

4.4 Cyber bullying
Cyberbullying is the use of devices, electronic messaging, social networking sites etc to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour

4.5 Sexting
Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pictures', 'rude pictures' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere.

4.6 Initiation/Hazing
Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation for example a sports team. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

4.7 Prejudiced Behaviour
The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or 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 – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for

example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

5. Expected action taken by all staff

If you suspect abuse or it is disclosed to you, you must follow the Safeguarding procedure and inform the DSO.

The centre operates a 'Pre' Safeguarding register which records signs or vulnerabilities to peer-on-peer abuse. This is managed by the Head of Operations and recorded for escalation if needed.

6. Preventative Strategies

At MetaGedu Apprenticeships, we have developed appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of peer-on-peer abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.

Firstly, and most importantly for us is recognition that peer on peer abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting children to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

This is supported by ensuring that we have an open environment where learners feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. This is strengthened through a strong and positive wellbeing/safeguarding element to delivery that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives learners an open forum to talk things through.

To enable such an open and honest environment it is necessary to ensure the whole workforce feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of learners including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another.

In order to create such an environment, it is necessary for whole staff training and CPD around abusive behaviours and talking to learners in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice. It is incredibly important that staff do not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. It is necessary that staff consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action. If staff minimise the concerns raised, it may result in a learner seeking no further help or advice.

It is important that signposting is available to learners in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer.

7. Time for Policy Review

This Policy is to be reviewed annually.

7.1 Dissemination
The Policy is available for current and potential clients and apprentices to view

7.2 Disclaimer

MetaGedu reserve the right to amend this plagiarism policy at any time to comply with new legislation and guidance.

8. Change History

Version	Changes made to previous version	Approved By	Date
v1	Initial release	Eric Sykes	04/04/2023
v2	Font Changes	Eric Sykes	12/06/2023