



Marple Hall School

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### Statement regarding peer on peer Harmful Sexual Behaviours

June 2021

At Marple Hall School students are encouraged to have healthy attitudes towards relationships. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught as a central part of the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum (PSHE). RSE covers a range of areas such as attitudes and values, personal and social skills, respect for self and others, family, stable loving relationships, feelings, gender roles and decision-making. It is about the physical, emotional, social, moral and legal dimensions of human sexuality as well as factual teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health. The aim of our regular RSE provision is to promote student self-esteem and emotional well-being and give young people the tools to understand and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.

The Governors and staff at Marple Hall School believe that every member of our community has the right to feel safe, secure and supported; whether on the grounds of Marple Hall, on the way to or the way home from school. We celebrate the differences between individuals and believe that no-one should be subject to negative behaviours due to their gender, race, age, sexuality, religious beliefs, disability or pregnancy. In addition, we will always work with appropriate external agencies in order to best ensure that students are safe in the evenings, weekends and holidays no matter where they are.

In early 2021 the national media highlighted cases of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and abuse taking place in schools and colleges in London. This led to a nationwide focus on the issue of what is best termed 'Harmful Sexual Behaviours' (HSB), defined by the Department for Education as:

*Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or abusive towards another child, young person or adult.*

Perpetrators and victims of HSB can be of any gender.

Following the initial news reports, Ofsted investigated the issue and published a review on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The review paper can be seen [here](#).

Marple Hall School Governors, leaders and staff members take their responsibility to prevent HSB amongst the school community very seriously. Prior to the actions of Ofsted, school leaders conducted an audit of internal safeguarding records over the past four years to consider the problem from an MHS perspective. The audit shows that the relatively small number of reported issues, although unacceptable, were of a more minor nature and were dealt with promptly and effectively.

To further safeguard against HSB in our community MHS staff have implemented an action plan that includes actions such as:

## Our Community — Our Future

**A place of excellence where learners are proud of their school and confident of success**

Headteacher  
Mr J. E. Barker

Telephone: 0161 427 7966  
Fax: 0161 484 6023

Hill Top Drive, Marple,  
Stockport, SK6 6LB

headteacher@  
marplehall.stockport.sch.uk



The Marple Hall  
Spirit



The Marple Hall Spirit

- Continuing to teach healthy attitudes towards relationships and sex as part of the timetabled PSHE sessions.
- Continuing to create an environment where staff model respectful and appropriate behaviour, where students are clear about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and where they are confident to ask for support and help where they need it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff of how to spot signs of HSB.
- Ensuring appropriate training for Governors so they can provide the right level of support and challenge for school leaders.
- Educating students via assemblies, form time and the RSE curriculum during designated tutor period time, giving clear advice about what happens when an issue is reported and reassurance that all reports are taken seriously.
- Closely collaborating with the Local Safeguarding Partners including children's social care, the police, health services and the Local Authority to strengthen systems both in school and across Stockport.
- Recording and analysing any instances of HSB in order to assess the current situation and identify any issues and patterns.
- Giving a relentless and clear message to all members of the community that HSB will not be tolerated along with appropriate sanctions and interventions to tackle poor behaviour and providing support to those in need.

Mr Paul Cavanagh  
*Chair of Governors*

Mr J Barker  
*Headteacher*

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