

Child-on-Child Abuse

It is important to recognise that abuse isn't always perpetrated by adults; children can abuse other children and it can happen both inside and outside of educational settings and online. This is referred to as 'child-on-child abuse' (formally known as peer on peer abuse) and can include:

- bullying, including [cyberbullying](#), prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- consensual and non-consensual [sharing of nude and semi nude](#) images and or videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery')
- 'Upskirting' which involves taking a picture under someone's clothing without them knowing; this is usually with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence and anyone of any gender, can be a victim
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be able to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports in line with their child protection policy. Even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse, it should be recognised by schools and settings that this does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

Staff in schools and settings should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Bullying

Bullying is a type of behaviour, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group. If left unaddressed, bullying at school can have a serious impact on a young person's mental health, self-esteem and ability to thrive in education.

Bullying can/may:

- Be physical abuse, such as: hitting, kicking, shaking, biting
- Be emotional abuse, such as: name calling, spreading rumours or social inclusion
- Involve intimidation or threats of violence
- Involve racial, sexual or homophobic abuse
- Be perpetrated by an individual or a group
- Take place online or via technology (aka [cyberbullying](#))
- Be motivated by real or perceived differences
- Involve an imbalance of power
- Disproportionately impact children with SEN and disabilities

The [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) and Section 89 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) both require schools and education settings to prevent bullying amongst pupils through the implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on "*to such an extent as is reasonable*", in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy; this includes cases of [cyberbullying](#).

Guidance and Resources

- DfE:
 - [Preventing and tackling bullying advice](#)
 - [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) guidance
 - [Behaviour in schools](#)
 - [Use of reasonable force](#)
 - [Behaviour and discipline in schools- guidance for headteachers and staff](#)
 - [Behaviour and discipline in schools- guidance for governing bodies](#)
- [Improving behaviour in schools- guidance report](#)
- [Creating a culture- Independent review of behaviour in schools](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- [The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign](#)
- [Childline- bullying](#)
- [Kidscape](#)
- [The use of seclusion, isolation and time out](#)

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children

Sexual violence refers to crimes under the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) and includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; whilst sexual harassment incorporates a wider range of 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature', such as: sexual comments or lewd "jokes", sexualised bullying, non-consensual taking or sharing of sexual images/videos (such as upskirting), or physical behaviour such as: deliberately brushing against someone or 'pinging' bra straps.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can/may:

- Occur between two children of any age and sex
- Be physical and/or verbal
- Occur online and/or offline
- Be perpetrated by individuals or groups, against individuals or groups
- Be a standalone incident, or part of a wider pattern of sexualised behaviour
- Be perpetrated against some children more than others, such as: girls, children with SEND or LGBT children.

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 and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same setting.

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.

More in depth information and advice on how to respond to concerns can be found in [part five of KCSIE](#) .

Guidance and Resources

- DfE:
 - [Sex and Relationship Education guidance](#)
- [PSHE Association: teaching about consent](#)
- Anti-bullying Alliance: [Sexual bullying](#)
- PHE: [Mental Wellbeing](#)
- [Brook](#)
- Lucy Faithfull: [Parents Protect](#) (toolkits , guidance and traffic light tools)
- Childnet - Online Sexual Harassment/Bullying Resources:
 - [Project De-Shame: young people's experiences of online sexual harassment](#)
 - [Step Up Speak Up - Online Sexual Harassment Resources](#) (11-18)
 - ['Just a joke?' - Online Sexual Harassment Resources](#) (9-12)
 - [Online Sexual Bullying/Harassment Advice for Parents/Carers](#) (9-18)
 - [STAR SEND Toolkit](#) (11-18)
- NSPCC Childline: [Sex and relationships](#)
- [Disrespect Nobody](#)
- Women's Aid: [The Expect Respect Healthy Relationships Toolkit](#) (4-18)
- Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse ([CSA Centre](#))
 - [Safety Planning in Education](#)
 - [Supporting Parents and Carers Guide](#)
 - [Communicating with Children Guide](#)
 - [Signs & Indicators Template](#)
 - [Sibling Sexual Abuse](#)
 - [Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour](#)

Support Organisations

- [Rape Crisis](#)

- [The Survivors Trust](#)
- Lucy Faithfull: [Stop it now](#)
- [Victim Support](#)

Helplines

- NSPCC '[Report Abuse in Education](#)' helpline
 - Thee DfE have commissioned the NSPCC to run a bespoke helpline to provide appropriate support and advice to victims of sexual abuse in education and concerned adults.
 - The helpline can be contacted via [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or email help@nspcc.org.uk
- [Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service](#)
 - [SWGfL](#) and [The Marie Collins Foundation](#) has created a support service for professionals working with children and young people in tackling harmful sexual behaviours, funded by the Home Office and in collaboration with the Department for Education.
 - The support service is available 8am - 8pm Monday - Friday via 0344 2250623 or email hsbsupport@swgfl.org.uk