



Little muddy me

Child on Child Abuse

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Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse or peer-on-peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It is when children under the age of 18 sexually, physically, and emotionally abuse another young person. It can happen both inside and outside of preschool. All staff can recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to):

- bullying (including online bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse within intimate partner relationships;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. In areas where gangs are prevalent, older children may attempt to recruit younger children using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence. We do not tolerate any form of abuse and will not allow any such behaviour to be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a child, some of the following features will be found.

What to do:

- When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed.

- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL should contact children's services to discuss the case. It is possible that children's services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a children's services referral where appropriate.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both children's' files.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the child being complained about and the alleged victim).
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough preschool investigation should take place into the matter using the setting's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the preschool considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.