

# Safeguarding Newsletter

February 2023



## 'The Definition of Child on Child Abuse:

"This form of abuse is when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children/young people both on and offline."

## What is Child on Child abuse motivated by?

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

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, educational under-achievement, or being involved in crime.

Child on child abuse is harmful to both the perpetrator and the victim. All our staff are trained and understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children/young people.

## The Danger of Downplaying

Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"; or not recognising that emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously.

Downplaying 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/young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Stopping harm and ensuring immediate safety is an education setting's first priority.

## Safeguarding in context and power dynamics:

All school staff have to read the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document, which highlights the importance of awareness of social factors and the dynamics at play.

Understanding the power dynamic can help to identify and respond to child on child abuse – there will be a power imbalance due to age or status – social or economic – and the child/young person who has harmed in one situation may be the one being harmed in another so it is essential to try to understand what is driving their behaviour before giving sanctions.

The child/young person who has been harmed should be made to feel safe and actions are taken to ensure that the abuse is not allowed to continue and the interplay between power, choice and consent are explored.

## Signs to look out for:

absence from school or disengagement from school activities, physical injuries, mental or emotional health issues, becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem, lack of sleep, alcohol or substance misuse, changes in behaviour, inappropriate behaviour for age, harmful towards others