

## Responding to Child on Child Sexual Abuse

If a child experiences child-on-child sexual abuse or there are concerns a child might be displaying harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), you need to take child protection action.

### Reporting

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns with the school. Please see contacts below.

Please contact our DSL (Mrs Natalie Nicholson) or one of our DDSLs (Mrs Wells, Mrs Brookes, Miss Mills, Miss Porta-Rios or Miss Wheeler) on 01276 709007. They will follow our child protection and safeguarding policies, which can be found on our website.

Alternatively, parents should report to the police as appropriate (for example, if an allegation of rape, sexual assault or sexual offence is made). This should happen alongside making a referral to children's social care.

Contact Surrey Children's Services:

Phone: 0300 470 9100

Email: [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk)

Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Their trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.

## Helping Children Speak Out

Children might not feel able to talk to adults about child-on-child sexual abuse, but there are things we can do to make it easier.

Children may feel more confident speaking out if they have a positive relationship with a trusted adult. This can be done by encouraging them to share their thoughts and opinions, responding to their concerns, and respecting and listening to them.

If children can see a culture where home and school work together to challenge inappropriate behaviour, they may feel more confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.

### Policies and Procedures

Our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures include information about child-on-child sexual abuse. Copies of these can be found on our school website.

At Ravenscote Junior School, we help our students to understand what child-on-child abuse is through assemblies and within our PSHE curriculum. We also cover a wide range of topics including healthy relationships as part of Relationships & Sex Education (RSE & Health Education).

We help children and young people understand that any incidents of child-on-child abuse, sexual or otherwise, will be taken seriously and responded to effectively.



# Child on Child Abuse

## Parent Information

### Our Values



**Introduction** Child-on-child sexual abuse is abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children, and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE)). It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.

Although rarer than in secondary schools, primary schools still need to be open to the fact that child-on-child abuse can happen to all ages and adopt an 'It could happen here' approach.

Children can experience peer-on-peer sexual abuse in a wide range of settings, including:

- \* at school
- \* at home or in someone else's home
- \* in public spaces
- \* online

It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised.

### **Recognising Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse**

It can be difficult to work out if a child is displaying appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexual behaviour.

Examples of sexually abusive behaviour may include:

- \* inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- \* pressurising, forcing or coercing others to perform or take part in sexual acts
- \* pressuring, forcing or coercing someone to share nude images
- \* sharing sexual images of a person without their consent.

- \* taking a picture under a person's clothing, without their consent ('upskirting')
- \* sexual harassment
- \* sexual or sexist name calling.

### **Signs that a Child has Experienced Child on Child Sexual Abuse**

Indicators that a child has experienced sexual abuse from a peer may be physical or behavioural. A child or young person may appear withdrawn, frightened or begin to act differently from usual.

### **Barriers to Disclosure**

Children do not always feel able to speak out about their experiences of sexual abuse from a peer. They may be afraid of:

- \* being considered a 'snitch'
- \* getting in trouble themselves
- \* how they will be perceived by others
- \* teachers or other adults not being discrete
- \* their parents being informed

If a child is unsure about whether or not they have been sexually abused, they might be worried about causing a fuss or getting someone else in trouble for 'no reason'.

### **Children's Understanding of Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse**

Children may not always understand that they have experienced or carried out child-on-child sexual abuse.

This might be because:

- \* they don't understand what constitutes appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexualised behaviour
- \* they have experienced sexual abuse themselves and don't realise that what happened to them was wrong
- \* they don't know whether consent was given
- \* the abuse happened between friends
- \* the abuse took place online.
- \* they blame themselves for the abuse they received.
- \* younger children lack knowledge of sex and sexuality as they are less likely to have received relationships and sex education

We help children and young people understand that any incidents of child-on-child abuse, sexual or otherwise, will be taken seriously and responded to effectively.

We make children aware of how to report anything upsetting that may happen and encourage them to speak out if they are worried about their own or someone else's behaviour.

