

# Peer on Peer Abuse

## Information for Parents & Carers

### Definition (from KCSIE 2019)

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

Peer on peer abuse can take various forms and include serious bullying, relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or gender based violence.

This form of abuse occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. It includes bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence, harassment and sexting.

It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim. Behaviour may be intimate or non-intimate.

### Spotting the Signs and Symptoms

- 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- Becoming withdrawn – lack of self esteem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
- Abusive towards others

### Vulnerable Groups

- Those aged 10 and upwards (although victims as young as 8 identified)
- Girls and young women are more likely to be victims and boys and young men more likely to be abusers
- Black and minority ethnic children often under identified as victims and over-identified as perpetrators
- Young people with intra-familial abuse in their histories or those living with domestic abuse are more likely to be vulnerable
- Young people in care and those who have experienced loss of a parent, sibling or friend through bereavement
- Young people who have been abused or have abused their peers.

**Abusers can be younger than their victims.**