

Updates from KCSIE 2021

Peer on Peer Abuse

What constitutes peer on peer abuse?

- Bullying
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling
- or otherwise causing physical harm, including with weapons
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment, including up-skirting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Online peer on peer abuse can include;

- Abusive, threatening, harassing or misogynistic messages on social media or when gaming
- Sharing nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
- Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content

Sexual Violence and Harassment in Schools

- 'Everyone's invited' website was founded June 2020.
- Provided a space for people to share personal experiences of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Many testimonies relate to incidents that happened in schools, colleges and universities.
- Massive increase in traffic since March 2021 following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard, which sparked huge media interest in respect of violence against women.
- There are now more than 51,000 testimonies published.
- More than 3,000 schools are named as places where abuse took place (of which 400+ are primary schools). Five Rochdale schools have been named to date (two are primaries).

OFSTED view

"Even where school and college leaders do not have specific information that indicates sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are problems for their children and young people, they should act on the assumption that they are."

Schools will now need to provide data on peer on peer sexual abuse prior to the day of Ofsted inspection.

Previously:

- 48% had no data
- 46% provided a nil return
- 6% provided evidence

This wasn't always followed up/ scrutinised. Safe to say, it will be now – the spotlight is on.

DfE Report and Findings

DfE commissioned Ofsted to undertake a report, aimed at establishing reality of sexual violence and harassment in schools. This was completed and published last term;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

Key Findings

- Inspectors concluded that both online and offline, peer on peer sexual violence and harassment is much more prevalent than many adults realised
- Children and young people, especially girls, often do not want to talk about sexual violence or harassment, even where their school encourages them to. So it is massively under-reported.
- They worry about how adults will react...they think they will not be believed, or that they will be victim blamed eg – you shouldn't have been on Snapchat anyway at your age.

Children and young people felt the risk of being ostracised by their peers, or getting peers into trouble is not considered worth it...for something they perceived to be commonplace.

Reported by girls as things that happen a lot or sometimes between peers?

Non-contact forms, but face-to-face:

- sexist name-calling (92%)
- rumours about their sexual activity (81%)
- unwanted or inappropriate comments of a sexual nature (80%)

Non-contact forms, online or on social media:

- being sent pictures or videos they did not want to see (88%)
- being put under pressure to provide sexual images of themselves (80%)
- having pictures or videos that they sent being shared more widely without their knowledge or consent (73%)
- being photographed or videoed without their knowledge or consent (59%)
- having pictures or videos of themselves that they did not know about being circulated (51%)

Contact forms:

- sexual assault of any kind (79%)
- feeling pressured to do sexual things that they did not want to (68%)
- unwanted touching (64%)

Girls reported boys giving girls marks out of 10 based on their appearance and making 'rape jokes'.

Some girls felt uncomfortable when boys walked behind them or in stairwells at school and said that they had been 'touched up' in crowded corridors.

Different perspectives between genders

Boys and girls had very different perspectives.

- In one school, girls told Ofsted that sexual harassment was 'a big deal' but boys did not recognise this or identify it as abuse.
- Girls described routine name-calling, sexual comments and objectification. Boys described the same behavior as jokes, banter and compliments.
- Girls spoke about sharing of nudes being widespread and that 'body shaming' and 'slut shaming' were also common.

So what do we need to do?

We need to ensure that peer on peer abuse is recognised and responded to as a safeguarding issue.

All staff should;

- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
- Act on any concerns. Children don't always directly disclose peer on peer abuse. We might overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's behaviour may be an indicator
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Children mustn't be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed/ blamed
- Be vigilant to interactions between peers and 'corridor culture'. Do not tolerate or minimise inappropriate behaviors or language as this normalises it.