



06.5 Allegations of abuse against other children/Peer on Peer abuse/ Sexual Violence and Harassment

Children are vulnerable to physical, sexual, and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse will be taken seriously by this early years and childcare setting and we will aim to eradicate any behaviours seen as this.

We recognise that some children abuse other children or their peers; the reasons for this are complex and are often multi-faceted.

Peer on peer abuse applies when there is an allegation or suspicion that a child has abused or is at risk of abusing another child or adult, including:

- Within their household (for example sibling abuse or violence towards parents/carers).
- Outside of the child's immediate household.
- Within an education or community settings
- On-line/off-line or both

Peer on peer abuse can take various forms and includes: serious bullying / cyber-bullying, relationship abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, 'sexting' / youth produced sexual imagery, youth and serious youth violence, gang related activity, harmful sexual behaviour, and / or sexual violence / harassment.

We recognise that peer on peer abuse is often gender based. It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators. However, both can experience peer on peer abuse but are likely to experience it differently.

Openwoodgate Pre-school understands we need to equip all staff about identifying and handling disclosures, including third party disclosures from other peers.

We understand that we need as an Early Years setting to have clear mechanisms and procedures in place to identify and report incidents or concerns.

All suspicions or incidents of peer on peer abuse will be treated seriously as a safeguarding concern and responded to. In all cases this will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider a referral into the police and children's services.



We also understand that peer on peer incidents can affect the local community, and in the context of wider safeguarding of those children in our local community.

We will ensure that we support both the alleged abuser/s and victim/s and will use a range of strategies tools and templates available to us, for example:

[https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-persons-sexual-behaviour/ how-to-tell-if-a-childs-sexual-behaviour-is-age-appropriate/](https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-persons-sexual-behaviour/how-to-tell-if-a-childs-sexual-behaviour-is-age-appropriate/)

We will work with partners for example, the police, health, children's services, and youth offending to help keep the child safe and feel protected. We will seek advice for the child and signpost them to services.

We will listen to and consult with the child and work with the parents. All staff will receive an awareness and understanding of peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment in their training and we will work together to reduce this behaviour and any related incidents.

Any peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment will be dealt with via the setting's positive behaviour policy or the broader child protection procedure, as appropriate. We will also ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will also be considered along-side those who have been abused.