

# Child-on-child sexual abuse: what to do if a child makes a disclosure

Make sure you understand our child protection policy and procedures for dealing with peer-on-peer abuse, and follow these.

## DO:

- ✓ Listen and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe
- ✓ Make a written record as soon as possible, stating only the facts
- ✓ Tell our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) urgently -
- ✓ Where appropriate, take action yourself:
  - If the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, make a referral to children's social care
  - If an offence has been committed, report it to the police (even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10 - the age of criminal responsibility)
  - Find out whether the victim and alleged perpetrator share classes, premises or transport, and consider how best to deal with this

## DO NOT:

- ✗ Dismiss the incident as 'banter', 'part of growing up' or 'having a laugh'
- ✗ Ask leading questions
- ✗ Promise total confidentiality - explain who you will need to tell and why
- ✗ View photos or videos of a sexual nature  
If you do so by accident or think you might need to in order to deal with the issue effectively, talk to our DSL
- ✗ Take notes while the child is talking, if at all possible
- ✗ Tell anyone about the disclosure unless they need to know in order to progress it

## Key definitions

**Child-on-child sexual abuse:** when a child (anyone under the age of 18) commits an act of sexual violence or harassment against another child

**Sexual violence:** rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching)

**Sexual harassment:** unwanted conduct of a sexual nature - such as sexual comments, sexual jokes or taunting, physical behaviour like interfering with clothes, or online harassment such as sexting

**Sexual activity is an offence if:**

- Person B (the victim) does not consent
- Person A (the perpetrator) does not reasonably believe that Person B consents

**Someone consents if they:**

- Agree by choice
- Have the freedom and capacity to choose



Guidance and practical resources for school leaders - [www.thekeysupport.com/sl](http://www.thekeysupport.com/sl)

Safeguarding training and support for DSLs - [www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding](http://www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding)