

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

If Emotional Abuse of a child is suspected by a member of staff, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL, who if they are concerned they should follow the school's and their Local Authorities procedures for reporting child protection concerns

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Young people can often be unaware that they are being groomed and the person grooming them may not always be a stranger. Grooming can take place on line or in real life and the groomer can be male or female and any age or from any occupation including family, friends or people with a professional background.

Groomers may use a range of ploys to entice a young person, gifts, friendship, a position of trust eg. a teacher or sports coach. Once the child has been enticed then the groomer will seek to isolate them from their family and peers and so make them dependent on the groomer. They will use any means of power or control to make a child believe they have no choice but to do what they want. Sometimes they will blackmail the child, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse. Groomers can use social media sites, instant messaging apps including teen dating apps, online gaming platforms to connect with a young person or child.

They can spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profiles and then use this knowledge to help them build up a relationship. It's easy for groomers to hide their identity online - they may pretend to be a child and then chat and become 'friends' with children they are targeting.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages. (4).

Young people should be made aware that it is illegal to share explicit pictures although police are more likely to take a lenient view if it is clearly between friends. However, the Internet Watch Foundation have dealt with many cases where what started as images being shared amongst friends have ended up on porn or paedophile sites and they are extremely difficult to erase.

Sexting is an issue which should be dealt with as part of the PSHE curriculum.