



Peter's Patch
Forest School - Day Care - After School Club

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Seven Year Strategy (2016) defines domestic and sexual violence and abuse as follows:

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) incited on anyone irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability by a current or former intimate partner or family member'.

Sexual Violence and Abuse:

'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitive, harmful, or unwanted that is incited on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability)'

Types of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is Child Abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse:



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- Can happen inside or outside the home
- Can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- Can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- Both men and women can be abused or abusers

Signs of Domestic Abuse

It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening and those carrying out the abuse can act very different when other people are around. Children and young people might also feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include:

- Aggression or bullying
- Anti-social behaviour, e.g. vandalism
- Anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- Attention seeking
- Bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- Constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- Eating disorders
- Problems in school or trouble learning
- Tantrums
- Withdrawal
- Drug or alcohol use (older children)



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Our priority is to ensure the abuse stops and that children have a safe and stable environment to grow up in.

Safeguarding procedures relating to Domestic Abuse

- Listen carefully to what the child is saying
- Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- Tell them it's not their fault
- Say you'll take them seriously
- Do not confront the alleged abuser
- Explain what you will do next
- Record and report what the child has told you as soon as possible to Gateway Team

Useful contact numbers for parents and children

Relate 0300 003 0396

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247



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- If a disclosure is made about Domestic Violence we will make a referral to Social Services
- If an interim court order is in place for a family staff may ask for proof of this before a child is handed over
- If a child presents with bruising and parents state it is because of a medical condition staff may ask for the child's medical reports from the GP or hospital

Childline 0800 1111

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