

Chipstead Sailing Club

Vulnerability

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse or find it more difficult to express their concerns. For example:

- a disabled child who relies on a carer to help them get changed may worry that they won't be able to sail any more if they report the carer
- a deaf child may not be able to express themselves or speak confidentially if they need an interpreter
- a child who has experienced racism may find it difficult to trust an adult from a different ethnic background
- children with low self-esteem or mental health problems can be more vulnerable to bullying or abuse, as can gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender young people, or any child who has a characteristic that marks them out in others' eyes as 'different'.

Grooming

WHAT IS GROOMING?

Grooming is when someone develops an emotional relationship with a child over a period of time to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or face to face, by a stranger or by someone they know: a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female and can be any age. Sometime the whole family is groomed, building a relationship with the child's parents/carers so that they are allowed more access to the child than would normally be the case. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse

SIGNS OF GROOMING

The signs of grooming are not always obvious and groomers will often go to great lengths not to be identified. If a child is being groomed they may be very secretive, including about what they are doing online, have older boyfriends or girlfriends, go to unusual places to meet friends, have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they cannot or will not explain or have access to drugs and alcohol. In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age. Similar behaviour could be used to radicalise young people and recruit them to a religious or political cause. This is unlikely to happen in a sailing club setting, but under the Government's 'Prevent' strategy, teachers and others working with young people are receiving training on recognising the warning signs.

THINGS YOU MAY NOTICE

If you are worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour. Such as withdrawal, sudden behavioural differences, anxiety, clingy, depressed, aggressive, problems sleeping, eating disorders, wets the bed, soils clothes, takes risks, misses school, changes in eating habits, obsessive behaviour, nightmares, drugs, alcohol, self-harm or thoughts about suicide.

HOW GROOMING HAPPENS

Grooming happens both online and in person. Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a child's trust. Groomers may try to gain the trust of a whole family to allow them to be left alone with a child and if they work with children they may use similar tactics with their colleagues.

Groomers do this by: pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online, offering advice or understanding, buying gifts, giving the child attention, using their professional position or reputation or taking them on trips, outings or holidays. They may also use secrets and intimidation to control children.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE

When sexual exploitation happens online, young people may be persuaded, or forced, to: send or post sexually explicit images of themselves, take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone, have sexual conversations by text or online. Abusers may threaten to send images, video or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped.

REPORTING GROOMING

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (“CEOP”) helps keep children safe from online grooming and sexual exploitation. If someone has acted inappropriately to a child or young person you know, report it to CEOP. www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre or contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000, the RYA Safeguarding and Equality Manager, Jackie Reid 023 8060 4104 or the Safeguarding Officer at Chipstead Sailing Club 0789 505 2730