‘Institutional Grooming’ and Abuse
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This chapter examines the dynamics of ‘institutional grooming’ — the abuse of a position of trust and authority as a further method of gaining control over a child and the immediate environment. It evaluates the key themes arising from a range of public inquiries and official reviews into institutional child abuse in England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland which have highlighted the prevalence of grooming behaviours with other staff, parents or carers, and children within an organisational environment. While other writers have examined sexual exploitation and grooming within sport, the chapter examines these processes within the context of the Catholic Church. The final part examines themes from the primary research including ‘preferential vs situational offending’ and ‘peer-to-abuse’. It further extends the notion of ‘institutional grooming’ to the processes of interaction between offenders and professionals who are responsible for their assessment, treatment, and management.