

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARRASMENT IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

Version 1.0 February 2022

Julia Storey
Julia.storey@stockport.gov.uk

Sexism, sexual harm, and sexual violence- a Stockport partnership approach

The Ofsted **Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges**, Published 10 June 2021, reported on the following:

Safeguarding and curriculum

- Is the existing safeguarding framework and guidance for inspectors strong enough to properly assess how schools and colleges safeguard and promote the welfare of children?
- How can schools and colleges be supported further to successfully deliver the new RSHE (relationships, sex and health education) curriculum, including teaching about sexual abuse, cyber bullying and pornography as well as healthy relationships and consent?

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- How well are safeguarding guidance and processes understood and working between schools, colleges and local multi-agency partners?
- Is there a need to strengthen the current work between schools, colleges and local safeguarding partners (LSPs), including local authority children's social care, the police, health services and other support agencies?

Victims' voice and reporting

- How do schools current safeguarding systems capture the voice of children when reporting sexual abuse whether incidents occur in or outside school?
- What prevents children from reporting sexual abuse?
- Do victims receive timely and appropriate support from the right place?
- Have inspections by ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) and Ofsted been robust enough in relation to the issues raised?

Other considerations

- In addition to what the government asked us to report on, we have also considered:
- the range, nature, location and severity of allegations and incidents, together with context
- the extent of schools'/colleges' (and other agencies and adults') knowledge of specific incidents and more general problems
- schools' safeguarding responses to known incidents and wider social and cultural problems, including:
- their immediate response to specific incidents, including referrals to LSPs and victim support (and liaison with other schools/colleges, where those involved attend different schools/colleges from abusers)
- schools'/colleges' use of sanctions
- any factors that have limited any immediate or subsequent response
- schools' safeguarding knowledge, culture and effectiveness, including their willingness to function as part of the wider safeguarding system with other partners

- the adequacy of schools' RSHE/PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum and teaching
- the extent to which recent inspections explored relevant cases and issues

Recommendations (schools and colleges)

As a result of the review the following recommendations were made for schools and colleges: School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.

In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them. This should include:

- a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'
- high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
- routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
- a behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
- working closely with LSPs in the area where the school or college is located so they are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour
- support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), such as protected time in timetables to engage with LSPs
- training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) can:
 - better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse

Recommendations (multi-agency Partners)

Multi-agency partners should:

- work to improve engagement with schools of all types in their local area, tailoring their approach to what their analysis (produced in partnership with schools/colleges and wider safeguarding partners) indicates are the risks to children and young people in their local area

The full document, its methodology can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

Sexual Harassment and Harm amongst peers is part of a continuum, dependent on circumstances some behaviours may need to be addressed as part of the school approach to Peer abuse.

Peer abuse may be captured in four key definitions (Firmin, 2013)

- The definition for domestic abuse (Home Office 2013) relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, and coercive control, in their intimate relationships. Children of a much younger age have had these experiences in their intimate relationships.
- The definition for child sexual exploitation (DfE, 2017) captures young people aged under 18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age – including another young person.
- The definition for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours).

Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences (as opposed to relationships/contexts) and captures all those of the most serious in nature. The term peer-on-peer abuse can refer to all of these definitions. Any response to peer abuse needs to cut across these definitions and capture the complex web of young people's experiences. In situations whereby victims of child sexual exploitation appear to also be perpetrators or facilitating the sexual exploitation of other children a nuanced approach is needed that recognises and engages with the child's perpetration within the context of their own victimisation. It is important that children who perpetrate child sexual exploitation receive a different response to adult perpetrators. (DfE, 2017)

Keeping children safe in education states Peer abuse includes the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of a child or young person by their peers, including:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Sexual violence & sexual harassment
- Sexting
- Teen partner abuse
- Physical abuse
- Initiation/hazing type violence/rituals

This abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g., someone's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences and it can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim.

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs themselves, such as significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, this may in turn impact on education outcomes or lead to exploitation and engagement in criminal activities. They may experience educational under-achievement or become involved in crime.

Identifying and stopping this physical, sexual or emotional harm and ensuring the immediate safety of children and young people is important for all practitioners and agencies.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that you find offensive, where the other person's behaviour is because:

- you have a [protected characteristic](#)
- there is any connection with a protected characteristic (for example, you are treated as though you have a particular characteristic, even if the other person knows this isn't true)

Sexual Harassment

This is when someone feels humiliated, offended, or degraded because they have been treated in a sexual way. This is known as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' and covers verbal and physical treatment, like sexual comments or jokes, touching, or assault. It also covers sending emails, texts, or messages of a sexual nature, or putting up pornographic pictures- nudes and semi nudes.

Victimisation

This is when someone is treated badly because they have made a complaint of sex related discrimination or harassment.

What is harmful sexual behaviour?

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive. (Hackett, 2014)

Peer abuse may include HSB where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development. (Hackett, 2014)

Problematic sexual behaviour (PSB) is developmentally inappropriate or socially unexpected, sexualised behaviour which doesn't have an overt element of victimisation or abuse. (NSPCC 2020)

Not all sexual behaviours displayed by children/ young people are healthy; some are harmful and some fall within a mid-range (problematic) which are not the most worrying but nevertheless cause an issue. The term problematic is used to indicate that the behaviour is problematic for someone whether for the child or young person themselves or someone else who is uncomfortable with the invasion of their personal space by a child/adolescent with little sense of boundaries.

The following behaviours give a **general indication** of categories and are more applicable to younger children:

Healthy sexual behaviours are:

Mutual
Consensual
Exploratory and age appropriate
No intent to cause harm
Fun, humorous
No power differential between participants

Problematic sexual behaviours are:

- Displaying behaviours that are not considered age/stage appropriate - e.g., invasion of personal space, sexual swear words in very young children.
- Some 'one off' incidents of low-key behaviours such as touching over clothing.
- Incidents where there is peer pressure to engage in the behaviour e.g., touching someone's breast, exposure of bottom.
- Behaviours are spontaneous rather than planned.
- They may be self-directed such as masturbation.
- There are other balancing factors such as lack of intent to cause harm, or level of understanding in the young person about the behaviours, or some remorse.
- The child or young person targeted may be irritated or uncomfortable but not scared and feel free to tell someone.
- Parental concern and interested in supporting the child to change.

Harmful sexual behaviours are:

- Not age appropriate.
- Elements of planning, secrecy, or force.
- Power differentials between young people involved such as age, size, status, and strength.
- Targeted children feel fear, anxiety, and discomfort.
- Negative feelings are expressed by the young person when carrying out the behaviour e.g., anger, aggression.
- The young person does not take responsibility for the behaviour and blames others or feels a strong sense of grievance.
- Incidents are increasing in frequency and the young person's interest in them is disproportionate to other aspects of their life.
- They are not easily distracted from the behaviour; it appears compulsive and is persistent despite intervention.

There are often difficult behaviours such as conduct disorder, problems with anger management, anxiety, clingy, aggression, disruption, poor peer relationships in evidence alongside sexually inappropriate behaviours. Neglect emotional abuse and poor attachments with parents and siblings, little empathy, disrupted patterns of care and loss of significant person and lack of role models are often features in harmful sexual behaviours.

(Procedures, n.d.)

What is sex discrimination?

This is when you are treated differently because of your sex, in certain situations covered by the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The treatment could be a one-off action or could be caused by a rule or policy.

It doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

There are [some circumstances when being treated differently due to sex is lawful](#).

What the Equality Act says about sex discrimination

The [Equality Act 2010](#) says you must not be discriminated against because:

- you are (or are not) a particular sex
- someone thinks you are the opposite sex (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone of a particular sex (this is known as discrimination by association)

In the Equality Act, sex can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.

Identifying concerns

As with any other safeguarding or child protection concern, colleagues may become aware of potential issues in several ways:

- A child or adult member of the school community make a direct allegation or disclosure.
- A child or adult member of the school community may have concerns about behaviour but may not be sure why/how to categorise it.
- Staff/volunteers in school/college may observe behaviour that gives cause for concern.
- School/college may be informed that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation (Police, Social Care, typically both).
- Self-disclosure - a child or young person may report they have harmed or intend to harm another young person.

Responding - Where a child or young person make a disclosure

Members of school staff/college staff should follow the disclosure protocol.

Typically, this is....

- **Listen** carefully and actively to the child. At this stage there is no necessity to ask questions.
- **Do not investigate.** If you need to clarify what is being said and whether the child is at risk, ask open questions (Use the TED method - **T**ell me, **E**xplain, **D**escribe, or ask when, who, how, where questions. Consider closing with- do you want to tell me anything else?).
- Avoid the question 'why?' as this can imply guilt / responsibility on the child.
- **Reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you.
- **Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality.** Make sure the child understands what will happen next with their information.
- **Record** factually what the child told you or what you have observed as soon as possible. Include behaviour and words used **by the child**. Failure to accurately record information or writing down your 'interpretation' of the child's account may impact future legal processes.

- If you have seen bruising or an injury, use a **body map** to record details, add any of the comments made about the injury by the child to your disclosure note.
- **Report to the DSL quickly**, but **do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you** to another staff member.
- Any information the child shared with you should remain confidential, you should only tell those who 'need to know'.

Advice on dealing with disclosures can also be found in this NSPCC video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvJ5uBIGYgE>

Responding- where a child is alleged to have harmed or be at risk of harming others

Where allegations have been made against a child/young person, or where they have self-disclosed harm or risk of harm the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately. No further conversation should take place without gaining agreement on how to move forward.

Responding to incidents

Where staff see a child/young person behaving inappropriately they should talk to them about this immediately, in order to manage the behaviour. Behaviour and anti-bullying processes may also converge with safeguarding guidance and staff will need to know how their setting expects them to respond and record issues. Remember that they may not realise their behaviour is unacceptable. Talk to them calmly and explain why their behaviour is unsuitable and what they can do to improve it.

It's helpful to have a code of conduct which everyone in your organisation agrees to, and which you can refer to when managing behaviour.

Recording

School/college recording systems should be designed to allow any type of peer abuse including sexually problematic to harmful behaviours to be tracked and for data analysis. All actions, responses and progress should be clearly recorded. If behaviours persist or escalate, school/college should have a clear internal flagging or escalation process.

Each setting should refer to their own recording policy here.

Identifying support levels

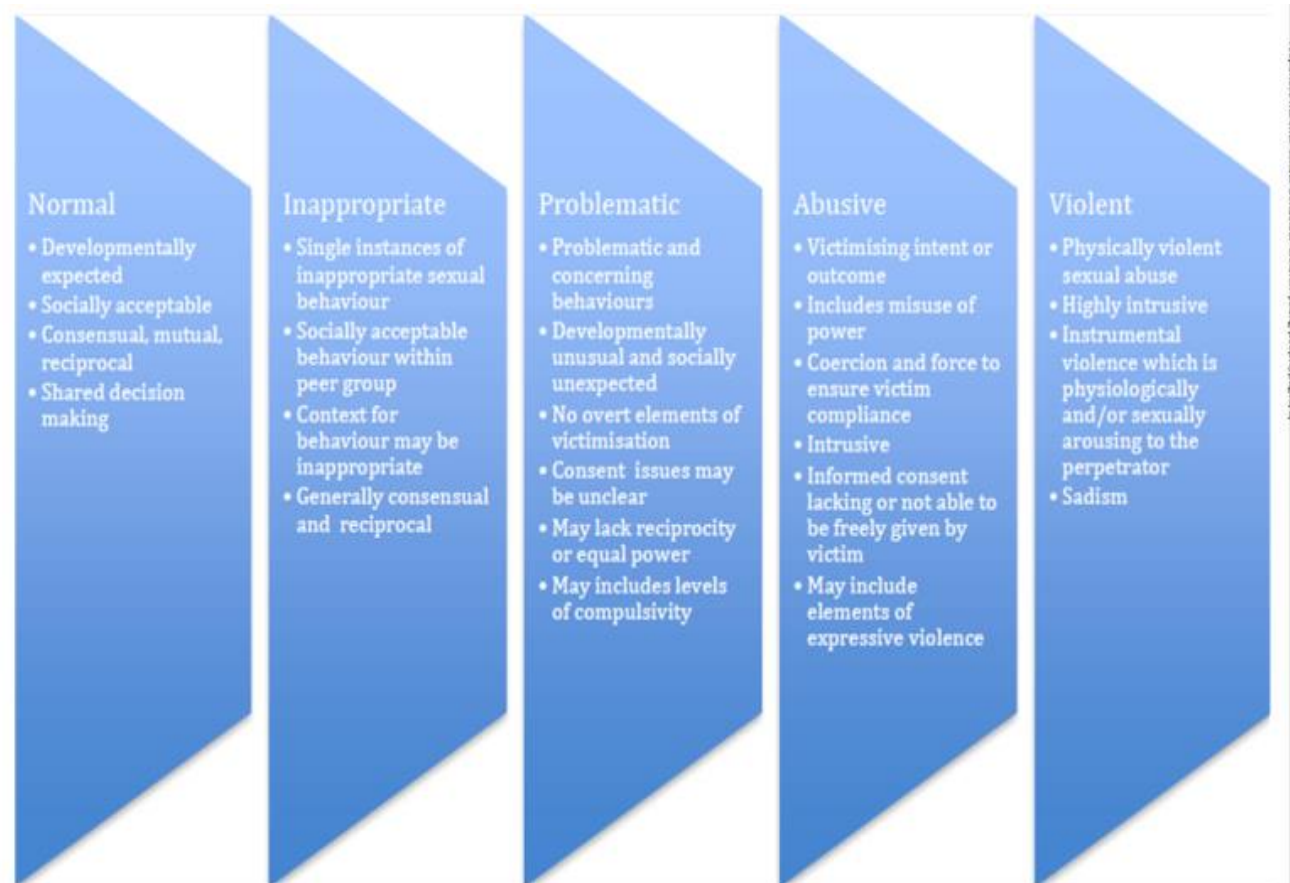
When considering the type of level of response, it is helpful for school colleges and partners to agree on possible support and intervention at a school level and to communicate this with staff and volunteers.

Reference to the new levels of need document can go here.

Some behaviours can and should be dealt with through school's own processes and pathways; others will need a partnership approach.

Sources of support

Where issues present, they should not be ignored, every behaviour should have an expectation of response, this includes, jokes, perceived banter and the use of sexist language which sit at the bottom of the continuum through to the highest end of the continuum- sexual assault, sexual violence, and threats of harm.



School and colleges are required to have a curriculum response which includes a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum. This should be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering SEND children and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as:

- healthy and respectful relationships.
- what respectful behaviour looks like.
- consent.
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality.
- body confidence and self-esteem.
- prejudiced behaviour.
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment

When designing the school/college approach it may be helpful to refer to Visit <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/> and their document Levers for addressing HSB in Schools.

Engaging with partners

Early Help

Partner/organisation name	Method of contact	Service offer	Contact details

Child protection referral

Specialist support/Services

Partner/organisation name	Method of contact	Service offer	Contact details

Key Contacts- education support or concerns about staff

Julia Storey, Senior Advisor for Safeguarding in Education -phone: 07800618042, email: julia.storey@stockport.gov.uk

Gill Moore, Local Authority Designated Officer- phone 07866999583, email: gill.moore@stockport.gov.uk

School- reputation and legal

Devon Sherwood, Headteacher Support -devon.sherwood@stockport.gov.uk

Emotional Wellbeing, PSHE/RSE

Tanya Cross, Schools Health & Wellbeing Advisor- tanya.cross@stockport.gov.uk , phone 07891949019

Use of exclusion

Emma Storer, Operational Lead Education Welfare Service – phone 07891949448, email: emma.storer@stockport.gov.uk

Additional materials

DfE & Ofsted

Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools(08.04.21)-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-review-of-sexual-abuse>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/indecent-images-of-children-guidance-for-young-people>

<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/04/what-is-peer-on-peer-abuse/>

National Police Chiefs' Council

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/sexual-abuse-victims-schools-helpline/>

Resources

Services in Greater Manchester and Stockport continue to develop materials to support an understanding of, and approaches to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours. There is also a multi-agency group which reports to the Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership (via Quality Assurance) which works to develop local approaches and awareness amongst professionals. Resources from these and similar sources will be shared on an ongoing basis, as will training opportunities.

Online safety- please check ages and suitability of these materials before using them, as we cannot take responsibility for external websites.

Parents

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/online-safety-guidance-for-parents/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/inappropriate-explicit-content/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety sexting-sending-nudes/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-porn/>

Children and young people

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/abuse-safety/sexual-abuse/>

Teaching

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/fundraising/number-day/number-day-resources-2021/online-safety-quiz-ks3-2020-final.pdf>

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/fundraising/number-day/number-day-resources-2020/ns002_quiz_7-11_aw2019_b.pdf

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/fundraising/number-day/number-day-resources-2021/online-safety-quiz-ks2-2020-final.pdf>

Something's Not Right,

Lesson plans and resources from the Home Office, for Key Stage 3-5, to support the 'Something's Not Right' campaign on recognising and making disclosures about different forms of abuse.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/home-office-somethings-not-right-abuse-disclosure>

Expect Respect—Healthy Relationships toolkit

Expect Respect is a set of resources produced by Women's Aid to help lead sessions on healthy and unhealthy relationships for pupils aged 4-18.

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/education-and-public-awareness/expect-respect/>

It's Not Ok

Lesson plans for Key Stages 3 and 4, films and accompanying activities, produced by the NSPCC, to help pupils identify characteristics of positive relationships and recognise concerning behaviour, including how to respond to it.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/its-not-ok>

Step up speak up

A toolkit, produced by ChildNet, to address the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people aged 13 – 17 years including lesson plans, a teaching guide, peer workshops, assembly presentations, films, and a quiz.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/step-up-speak-up?s=09>

Just a Joke?

Lesson plans, activities, a quiz, and teaching guide, produced by ChildNet, designed to explore the issue of sexualised online bullying with 9–12-year-olds.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/just-a-joke>

Disrespect NoBody

Teaching resources produced by the PSHE Association, Home Office, and Government Equalities Office. Topics include consent, relationship abuse and sharing sexual images.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/disrespect-nobody-teaching-resources-preventing>

Crossing the Line

Four films and accompanying lesson plans, produced by ChildNet, exploring the idea of online behaviour sometimes being riskier and the possible consequences of this. Topics covered are: cyber bullying, 'sexting', peer pressure and self-esteem.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/pshe-toolkit/crossing-the-line/about-this-toolkit>

Relationship Safety

A set of three lesson plans and accompanying materials for KS4 and KS5 produced by the PSHE Association and Alice Ruggles Trust. The lessons promote awareness of unhealthy relationship behaviours and stalking to help protect young people from the potential risks in such situations.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/alice-ruggles-trust-relationship-safety-resource-0>

Below are three slide decks which have been included to assist you. The choice to use them is your own, but we hope that they may be helpful to you. Sexual Harassment SHARE is for use with staff and can be personalised as you feel appropriate. To may wish to add in information about your processes.



4E5EC5EC.pptx

The second contains further information for school/college leaders which may be helpful when considering school/college arrangements.



876CDBF8.potx

The third is about healthy relationships, statutory guidance and contains links to resources.



A714EB74.pptx

Other resources

Government guidance providing advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.

[Open link](#)

Consent: It's as simple as tea

YouTube video by Blue Seat Studios helping people of all ages understand what is meant by consent by using the analogy of a cup of tea.

[Open link](#)

Childline – healthy & unhealthy relationships

Advice & guidance for young people on what makes a healthy and unhealthy relationship, together with tips on how to recognise this and make decisions to end an unhealthy relationship.

[Open link](#)

Is this sexual abuse?

2018 research by the NSPCC and ChildLine on young people's perspectives about peer abuse, how peer sexual abuse takes place; the impact it has on young people's lives; how best to provide support after peer sexual abuse; and how to prevent it from happening.

[Open link](#)

Sexual violence & sexual harassment – a summary

A summary and link to the May 2018 government guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment.

[Open link](#)