

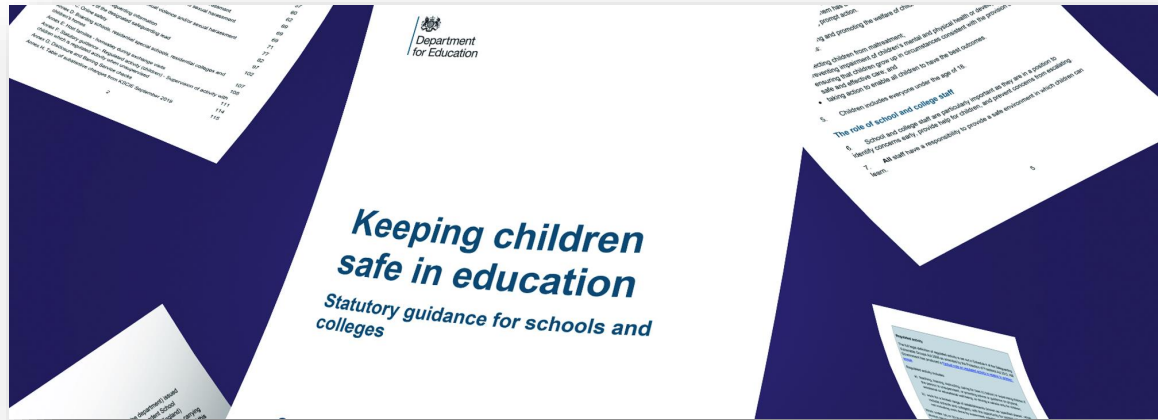
Understanding Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Child-on-Child Abuse

What You Need to Know and Do

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Responding to the OFSTED Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools



- [OFSTED's review](#) (June 2021)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

OFSTED – Some of the Findings

- Nearly 90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos
- 92% of girls, and 74% of boys, said sexist name-calling happens
- Young people talked about unsupervised spaces outside of school
- Young people do not want to talk about sexual abuse for several reasons, even where their school encourages them to.
- Some teachers and leaders underestimated the scale of the problem.
- School and college leaders are increasingly having to make difficult decisions that guidance does not equip them to make.
- What also stood out were the barriers for young people in reporting to schools

KCSIE 2023 – Child-on-Child abuse

Section One, point 32 onwards

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as Child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children

Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment ...leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

All staff should be clear as to the school’s or college’s policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Just because there are no reports in their school or college does not mean that it isn’t happening.

Child-on-Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- *Bullying,*
- *Abuse in intimate personal relationships*
- *Physical abuse,*
- *Sexual violence,*
- *sexual harassment*
- *causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent*
- *Up*
- *Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos,*
- *Initiation/hazing*

Lets look in more detail

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges – KCSIE Sept 2023, Part 5, Page 105 onwards

Point 451: What is sexual violence and sexual harassment between children?

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. *As set out in Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’.*

KCSIE says...

zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.

Challenging physical behaviour such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

Staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, may find the experience stressful and distressing. This is likely to adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.

What is Sexual Harassment?

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- Upskirting and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include: consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. As set out in UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence; sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

What is Harmful sexual behaviour?

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. **HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two.** HSB should be considered in a child protection context.

When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors.

Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.

a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

What is Sexual Violence?

It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it **can happen both inside and outside of school/college**. When referring to sexual violence in this advice, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003¹³² as described below:

**Rape, Assault by Penetration, Sexual Assault,
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**

Full definitions can be found in *KCSIE 2023 Page 106*

Understanding what is meant by 'CONSENT'?

KCSIE tells us that Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity

the age of consent is 16

sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#)

Understanding definitions

Figure 1. Definition: Sexual behaviours across a continuum

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentally expected - Socially acceptable - Consensual, mutual, reciprocal - Shared decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour - Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group - Context for behaviour may be inappropriate - Generally consensual and reciprocal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problematic and concerning behaviour - Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected - No overt elements of victimisation - Consent issues may be unclear - May lack reciprocity or equal power - May include levels of compulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victimising intent or outcome - Includes misuse of power - Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance - Intrusive - Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by victim - May include elements of expressive violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physically violent sexual abuse - Highly intrusive - Instrumental violence that is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator - Sadism

Source: Hackett, S, 'Children, young people and sexual violence' in 'Children behaving badly? Exploring peer violence between children and young people', 2010.

Four likely scenarios of response



Manage Internally



Intensive support
through Early Help



Specialist
intervention from CSC



Working together for a safer London

Police

OFSTED

Recommendations



- 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. high-quality training for teachers delivering sexual abuse lessons
- 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 behavior
- 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) are able to:
 - 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

What does this mean for our school/college?



ANY
QUESTIONS?

