**Context:**

Ofsted published the findings of [its thematic review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges) of sexual abuse in schools and colleges on 10 June 2021. The review included visits to 32 schools and colleges, conversations with over 900 children and young people about the prevalence of child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, in their lives and the lives of their peers as well as conversations with school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders.

The review highlighted how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people and the barriers to children speaking about their experiences even where encouraged to do so. In light of these issues the report recommended that even where school and college leaders do not have specific information that indicates sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are problems for their children and young people, they should act on the assumption that they are.

The report made a number of recommendations for school and colleges leaders, multi-agency partners as well as central government. It does acknowledge however that schools and colleges cannot tackle sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, on their own, and neither should they.

This guidance aims to support education settings to review their arrangements for responding to sexual violence and harassment and to signpost to further advice regarding the strategic response as well as individual cases of concern. It should be read alongside:

* Part 5 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2), DfE (September 2024) provides schools and colleges with detailed guidance about child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including responding to reports of abuse and protecting victims. It should be followed and referred to in the management of any cases.
* [Ofsted School Inspection Handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif) (2024)

**Key recommendations 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 approachto address them.

This whole-school and college approach should include:

* A carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum and 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.

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| **Pupil Voice** | | | |
| Key Questions | Further Guidance | Supporting Evidence | Identified actions |
| How do you engage with pupils to understand any barriers to disclosure and support them to shape policy, procedures and RSHE curriculum delivery? | * How have any barriers that could prevent a pupil from making a disclosure, for example communication needs, been identified and addressed? * How have you provided feedback to pupils to ensure that they feel listened to and are assured that their concerns have been acted upon? * How has pupil voice impacted on practice? |  |  |
| What mechanisms are in place to ensure that pupils know how to report concerns, they feel able to identify a trusted adult(s) to talk to and feel safe to report any issues? | * How do you regularly reinforce messages that sexual violence and harassment will not be tolerated? * How do pastoral structures support pupils to report concerns? * How are pupils equipped with the knowledge, values and skills to ask for help for themselves and/or peers? |  |  |
| **Policy & Practice** | | | |
| Key Questions | Further Guidance | Supporting Evidence | Identified actions |
| How is sexual violence and sexual harassment included within your safeguarding and child protection policy and related policies? | * [LA Model Policy](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/safeguarding/safeguarding-forms-and-templates) * [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2). * Does the policy reflect the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse? * Does the behaviour policy clearly outline the measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying? |  |  |
| In developing policy and practice, how have you involved:   * Children? * Parents & Carers? * Governing board? * All staff? | * Have you consulted with a wide range of parents, pupils and staff to ensure the needs of the school community are fully understood and recognised? How does this inform your RSHE consultation and curriculum planning? |  |  |
| Are all staff, pupils and parents clear on procedures for harmful sexual behaviour / child on child abuse? How have the policies and procedures been communicated*?* | * Is the up-to-date policy easily accessible to the whole of the school community? * How are staff, pupils and parents regularly reminded about the content of these documents? * Are all stakeholders aware of how to escalate concerns or of whistleblowing procedures if they feel issues are not being recognised or addressed?  How do you engage parents in supporting safeguarding arrangements and reinforcing key messages with their children at home?  * Consider how you are embedding consistent messages across every aspect of school life, so that policy becomes part of the culture and ethos of the school. |  |  |
| How do governors ensure that policies and procedures are understood by the whole school community so that all pupils are safeguarded effectively? | * Within safeguarding reports to the Governing Board, what information about sexual violence and harassment shared? * How do Governors offer support and challenge to the Headteacher and DSLs and test out the information provided? |  |  |
| **Prevention** | | | |
| Key Questions | Further Guidance | Supporting Evidence | Identified actions |
| How do you ensure that DSLs are appropriately supported? | * Are DSLs engaged with local DSL networks and LSCGs? * What training have DSLs received? * Where they have identified training needs for themselves or other staff, how have they been supported to address these? * Do DSLs understand local mechanisms for support and referral pathways? |  |  |
| How has the setting ensured that all staff have received appropriate training to recognise harmful sexual behaviour and how to report it? | * [HSB Training](https://www.s4s.norfolk.gov.uk/TrainingAndEvents)[[1]](#footnote-2) * [Whole school training package](https://csapps.norfolk.gov.uk/ms/default.asp) * How do you evidence training? * How have you measured the impact of training in practice? * How confident to staff feel? * Has evaluation provided staff with the opportunity to identify further training needs and can you evidence these have been acted upon? |  |  |
| How has the setting ensured that a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum is in place, based on the DfE’s statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual violence, including online safety? | * Has the school developed and published a RSHE curriculum and policy that is informed by pupil voice and developed with consultation from parents? * How has the school ensured that the curriculum is age and stage appropriate? |  |  |
| Is there high-quality training in place for teachers delivering RSHE? How is the impact of the training evaluated? | * Have school leaders conducted a staff skills audit to identify any CPD needs that will support teachers to deliver an effective provision of RSHE, within a safe learning environment? * How is the teaching and learning assessed to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to pupil needs? * What do pupil perception surveys tell you about the quality of the curriculum? |  |  |
| **Identification and response** | | | |
| **Key Questions** | **Further Guidance** | **Supporting Evidence** | **Identified actions** |
| Are there robust procedures in place for recording and responding to sexual violence and harassment in all its forms? | * Are all concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions clearly recorded (written or electronic)? * How do leaders maintain oversight of the quality of these records and the responses? * How are behaviour logs checked to ensure all safeguarding related incidents have received an appropriate response? |  |  |
| How are records analysed to identify trends and intervene proactively? | Is data collated centrally, as well as on individual child protection files to enable the creation of a clear overview of concerns?How is the data regularly analysed and reviewed to determine patterns, trends or vulnerable groups?How is it triangulated with other relevant information e.g. attendance, behaviour, SEND?  * How are policies and practices reviewed and updated to reflect lessons learnt? * If a pattern is identified, how has the setting taken appropriate action in a timely fashion? * How are leaders held to account for this data and supported to implement changes where required? |  |  |
| Are appropriate responses including robust and timely risk assessments embedded in practice? | * [Risk assessment tool](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/safeguarding/safeguarding-forms-and-templates) * In any case where a child or young person has displayed any form of harmful sexual behaviour, schools can access a consultation with the HSB team by emailing [hsbproject@norfolk.co.uk](mailto:hsbproject@norfolk.co.uk) The HSB team will provide specialist advice, support and resources to schools to address the HSB directly with the CYP and offer advice on managing any risk effectively. * An immediate risk and needs assessment is undertaken by DSLs when a report of sexual violence is made. * Risk assessments are recorded (written or electronic) and are kept under review. * DSLs actively consider the risks posed to all their pupils and adequate measures are put in place to protect them and keep them safe. * Where required, DSLs work with other professionals such as social workers to ensure risk assessments are in place. These professional assessments are used to inform the school’s or college’s approach to supporting and protecting pupils and students and to update their own risk assessment. |  |  |
| Is there evidence to indicate that responses are in place to support both the victim and perpetrator? | * Support is tailored on a case-by-case basis. * The needs and wishes of the victim are paramount allowing them to feel in control as much as possible * Referrals to external agencies are made as required * How are interventions reviewed to ensure that they are effective? * How is the pupil voice recorded and responded to in the development on risk assessments and plans? |  |  |

**Additional resources and guidance:**

The [Bystander Intervention Programme resources](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/60829/Bystander-Programme) are available from the Education Safeguarding Team webpages.

For further information about Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), please visit the [Norfolk HSB website](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-children-and-young-people/professionals). You can request a consultation for individuals displaying HSB via the inbox: [HSBproject@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:HSBproject@norfolk.gov.uk).

For information, resources and training available nationally to help schools comply with the statutory RSHE Guidance, visit: [Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/57619/Relationships-and-Sex-Education-and-Health-Education-RSHE)

For local subsidised and fully-funded training, resources and guidance visit: [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) - Schools (norfolk.gov.uk)](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/57619/Relationships-and-Sex-Education-and-Health-Education-RSHE) or email [inclusionandsend@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:inclusionandsend@norfolk.gov.uk).

There are a number of tools that can support schools to review their approach to tackling sexual violence and harassment:

* [Schools – UK Feminista](https://ukfeminista.org.uk/schools/) provides free training for teachers on tackling sexism and how to take a contextual a whole school approach to promoting gender equality.
* [Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals (Schools)](https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/toolkits/beyond-referrals/) provides a school self-assessment toolkit and guidance for addressing HSB in schools.
* The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has developed a [HSB toolkit](https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-persons-sexual-behaviour/preventing-harmful-sexual-behaviour/?utm_campaign=1540968_HSB%20Toolkit%20email_SOCIAL%20MEDIA&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Lucy%20Faithfull%20Foundation&dm_i=48W7,X10O,38NO7C,43A9L,1), which amongst other things, provides support, advice and information on how to prevent it, links to organisations and helplines, resources about HSB by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing child sexual abuse.
* [NSPCC Learning - Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour) and [NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework)

1. Search for courses using keyword ‘harmful’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)