
Local advice: Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

November 2025

SUMMARY

Local advisory information for Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor Schools, to support implementation of KSCIE in regard to Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

OWNER

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VERSION

4.0 (updated August 2026)

DATE

1 September 2024

REVIEW

August 2027 or in line with additional guidance

Expectations on Schools from in relation to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Context

This policy has been co-produced by Achieving for Children services and schools to provide further support and guidance for RBWM schools when responding to incidences of child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is a term used to describe sexual actions that are outside what is safe for the young person's stage of development. HSB includes actions that put either the young person themselves or another person at harm. This can include a spectrum of behaviour such as; frequently and intentionally accessing age inappropriate sexual material online, using inappropriate language, undertaking mutual sexual activity they are not ready for with peers, sending and receiving illegal messages, or engaging in abusive or sexually violent sexual behaviour online or offline (Lucy Faithfull Foundation).

Ofsted's Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (June, 2021) was hard-hitting and said that all schools should act as if this is occurring in their schools, even without the evidence.

What is also apparent is that sexually harmful behaviours are often: not reported, trivialised, not addressed appropriately or with sensitivity to the needs of all the children and young people involved. Nor are all of these behaviours prevented through curriculum content, teaching sequences and or the day-to-day responses of adults.

All school leaders should, therefore, assume that sexually harmful behaviours are happening in their school and ensure that appropriate steps and procedures are in place within their setting to respond effectively and manage issues relating to and the reporting of child-on-child abuse.

Leaders should not feel alone in either their improvement journey or in managing cases of harmful sexual behaviour. The behaviours exist on a continuum and can escalate. We want to use the Hackett Continuum as a common language and uniform way in AfC to identify levels of concern. Achieving for Children and our partners are here to help with any aspect of safeguarding including improving aspects of your policy and culture.

We encourage you to utilise this information pack for useful resources, links, documents and advice to support you to implement the changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment'.



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Royal Borough
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Local Contacts for consultation support with Child-on-child Abuse: Reports of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence

If you have concerns over the best action to take to effectively safeguard a child or young person, **always** take advice from your local contacts

Police

Call 999 if a child is in immediate danger, if you are unsure if an incident should be reported – call 101

Health

CAMHS urgent queries phoneline - 0300 365 1234
School Nursing Team: rachael.park-davies@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Children's Social Care

Call for safeguarding advice & guidance, refer safeguarding concerns or make a referral for Early Help Support:
[Concerned about a child? Report a child in trouble](#)

School Standards Service

Relevant advice and support regarding safeguarding policy:
clive.haines@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Virtual School

Advice and support for a child in care, previously looked after, a child subject to a child protection plan or child in need plan
clive.haines@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Education Inclusion Service

Relevant advice and support regarding exclusion and inclusion:
rosie.gossage@achievingforchildren.org.uk
alasdair.whitelaw@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Concerns related to staff conduct towards children and young people:
lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk

A systems consultation to the organisation on the psychological experiences, responses and impact at a whole school, group, staff, parents/carers and individual level

Psychological/mental health support for children and adults following traumatic and critical incidents:
frances.lee@achievingforchildren.org.uk
Rebecca.askew@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Immediate response to reports of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence

Staff

Ensure actions for staff are clear in your safeguarding policy and that staff training and regular supervision has been provided. If possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the DSL or Deputy).

Images

Consider if there are online elements to the report, staff should not view or forward illegal images of a child. On occasion viewing an image is unavoidable, therefore, it may be more appropriate to confiscate devices to preserve evidence and pass to the police for inspection <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with->

Recording

It is essential that a written record is made; best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. It may be appropriate to make notes, especially if a second member of staff is present.

Confidentiality

Never promise confidentiality, ensure that the young person/child knows who the information will be passed to at this stage.

DSL

Inform the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Response & Triage

If you have concerns over the best action to take to safeguard a child/ young person - local support is always available

If you are unsure about the severity of the sexual behaviour reported the following continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviour can be a useful starting place to aid thinking



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Normal

Developmentally expected sexual behaviour, socially acceptable, consensual, mutual, reciprocal, shared decision making

Inappropriate

Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour, socially acceptable behaviour within peer group, context for behaviour may be inappropriate, generally consensual and reciprocal

Problematic

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

Abusive

Intrusive behaviour, may involve a misuse of power, may have an element of victimisation, may use coercion and force, may include elements of expressive violence, informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely)

Violent

Physically violent sexual abuse, highly intrusive, may involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the alleged instigator, may involve sadism

Consider if the situation can be managed internally in line with existing safeguarding policies.

Assess/identify needs of alleged instigator to put in appropriate support and prevent escalation

If safeguarding concerns are not present, what early intervention and /or therapeutic support can the school offer to the child/ young person to;

- Educate them about age appropriate behaviour
- Protect other children/ young people from the behaviour re-occurring
- Communicate issues and support parents/ carers
- Consider, on a case-by-case basis, completing a risk assessment and therapeutic plan for all children/young people involved.

Consider how the child's future experiences can be managed to provide educational and protective support and consequences. Refer to **AfC Trauma informed and Therapeutic practitioners** if support is needed.

Refer to SPA/MASH if any child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

Refer to **Early Help** for support for victim **and** alleged instigator via the SPA/MASH.

Refer to **school nursing service** via early help if sexual health support is needed for victim **and** alleged instigator.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Resources

Several resources for schools can be accessed via the link below:

[Harmful Sexual Behaviour in School Resources | SWGfL](#)

The link includes templates for schools on policies, writing effective referrals and frequently related questions relating to incidents of harmful sexual behaviour

Refer to SPA/MASH and The Police

Always report to the Police:

- Report of rape
- Report of assault by penetration
- Report of sexual assault
- Reports of sexual contact without consent
- Sexual contact where there is an age/power imbalance
- [When to call the police – Schools Guide NSPCC](#)

Where a report has been made to the police, ensure the referrer is clear on what information can be disclosed to others, in particular, the alleged instigator(s) and their parents/carers. Discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Make an immediate risk assessment & safety plan for **all reports of sexual violence** for **all children involved** and discuss ongoing support plans for the children involved with MASH/SPA, the police (officer in the case) and AfC incident response team.

Intervention/Prevention Advice & Support



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NSPCC Self-assessment tool

Sign up for a free audit of your current processes & procedures:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-self-assessment-tool>

PSHE in School

Ensure that your PSHE curriculum is robust & covers all appropriate topics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

It is a **statutory requirement** to teach Relationships Education at KS1 & KS2 which will explore online friendships, being kind, relationships with family & friends

It is a **statutory requirement** to teach Relationships & Sex Education at KS3 & KS4 which will include staying safe online, recognising unhealthy or abusive behaviours, families, respectful relationships, contraception, understanding consent, parenthood, recognising abusive behaviours and healthy intimate and sexual relationships

School inputs by external agencies including Achieving for Children, DASH charity & Police

Achieving for Children & Partners offer a range of informative interventions including small group sessions & 1-1 inputs on specific topics which is available to all RBWM schools. Classroom based workshops are offered by all partners. Assemblies are offered by the DASH charity.

The free workshops should be used to support your setting to deliver important messages on specific topics and add to your PSHE delivery & lesson plans.

More specific early & targeted intervention support can be accessed where there are identified concerns and further education around specific topics is required to prevent behaviours from escalating or becoming more frequent.

Thames Valley Police

The police work closely with a range of local partners across the RBWM in supporting the Safer Schools programme. This includes delivering a range of preventative sessions to students. You can contact the TVP Problem Solving Team to request support who will be available to present student sessions on topics related to policing, crime and safety.

Police: TVP Problem Solving Team

E: RBWM_PST@thamesvalley.police.uk

AfC Family Hub

The Family Hub works with young people in Year 3 and above who need to be supported with making informed decisions around risk taking behaviour and engaging in positive activities both in and outside school. For all topics that the Family Hub delivers workshops on, they can also support young people on a more in-depth one-to-one basis following a referral.

Family Hubs: Gemma Kelly

E: gemma.kelly@achievingforchildren.org.uk

DASH

The Dash Charity provides healthy relationships workshops in a classroom setting for Year 1 upwards. The fun, interactive sessions are specifically created to be age appropriate. Domestic abuse itself is not addressed until the comprehensive session in Year 5, which sensitively introduces children to the concept and illustrates how to get help if they ever need it.

DASH: Gaby Laking

E: gaby@thedashcharity.org.uk

Further details of AfC inputs accessible to all schools in RBWM

The link below provides you with a full breakdown of topics & age-related interventions delivered by AfC, DASH & Police. It is strongly recommended that you access & build in these workshops & inputs with your current PSHE offer:

[Schools Inputs Offer](#)

Individualised risk assessment & safety plan for victim(s) & alleged instigator(s)

A risk assessment and safety plan should be created by ALL relevant professionals involved in responding to the incident of child-on-child abuse. Templates of individualised risk assessments & safety plans can be found [here](#)

Victim Support & Restorative Justice Referrals

The Youth Justice Service offers the following support services: Restorative Justice & Victim Support Worker

SAFE! provides support to children and families around the Thames Valley who have been affected by crime or abuse through one-to-one and group sessions: [Referral to SAFE!](#)

Consultation Request Form for Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

The Youth Justice Service offers free consultations to schools working with young people displaying harmful sexualised behaviour. To request a consultation, contact:

louise.hulse@achievingforchildren.org.uk

School checklist

Response to a child-on-child abuse disclosure



Action	Notes	Completed
1. Follow your <u>internal safeguarding policy & response to child-on-child disclosures</u>	Establish who was involved, where the incident took place and the nature of the incident <i>Ensure there is a written record</i>	
2. If the incident constitutes as a crime, <u>inform the police</u>	Was the incident an assault, sexual assault, sharing of indecent images of children, rape. <i>This list is not exhaustive.</i>	
3. Consider if contact between the children involved needs to be limited	Refer to KCSiE and DfE guidance on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges	
4. Ensure you make <u>relevant referrals to police, early help, CAMHS & social care</u>	Request consent from parents/carers for referrals to be made If police/social care are involved take advice from professionals around what can/cannot be disclosed to parents	
5. Communicate and inform <u>parents/carers</u>	Ensure a written record of communication and outcomes is logged Take advice from police & social care professionals if they are involved in regard to what should or should not be disclosed to parents/carers	
6. Consider if you need to complete a risk assessment in response to the incident	Ensure RA is shared with relevant staff and external agencies	
7. Consider if you need to complete an individualised risk assessment & support plan for all children/young people involved	Ensure risk assessment & support plan is shared with child, parents/carers, relevant school staff & external involved agencies Invite external agencies to contribute to create multi-agency RA's and Support Plans <i>Template documents can be found here</i>	

A word version of the above checklist can be downloaded [here](#)

School review of processes

Template for schools to review their internal process and response to child on child abuse disclosures



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School Focus	Details & guidance	Yes/No/Requires focus/improvement
1. Adult language & behaviour used in school	Think about the use of language and behaviour and how this may be viewed by others and the impact this may have on a child	
2. Reporting systems in school	Ensure <u>all staff</u> are aware of all internal reporting systems in school and how to use them	
3. Identify hot spots in school	SLT to identify hot spots on school sites and increase supervision to make it safer (e.g. corridors, playground, toilets, queues)	
4. Understand the drivers behind behaviour	Children and young people are very different from adults and those who display Harmful Sexual Behaviour are a complex group with different needs. In many cases, the origins of childhood sexual behaviour problems are likely to be a combination of abuse experiences, family, social, economic, and developmental factors. Contributing factors may include maltreatment, poor parenting practices, exposure to sexually explicit material or highly sexualized environments, and family violence. It is important to note that, although some children who display HSB may have been sexually abused in their past this is not always the case and should not be assumed.	
5. Clear policies on recording all of the incidents	Use common language (Hackett Continuum). Alongside the notion of the continuum of harmful sexual behaviour, the Brook traffic light tool (Brook, 2021) can help professionals to identify levels of concern and provide a prompt for responding proportionately.	
6. Staff training	All staff need to have confidence to respond appropriately and consistently to any concerns. understanding childhood sexual development can help to recognise which sexual behaviours are developmentally typical and identify if a child is displaying behaviour that is problematic or harmful.	
7. Future prevention	Ensure you regularly review your schools response to the management of child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour via learning lesson reviews.	
8. Embed a whole school approach	Safeguarding audit to be completed annually To ensure your overarching safeguarding statement reflects your culture	
9. Embedding Safeguarding and other Policies	Schools have a key role to play in the primary prevention of harmful sexual behaviours via a range of initiatives; provision of quality advice and work with children, young people and their families; and sensitive risk and casework management	
10. Promote healthy relationships through quality and inclusive PSHE & RSE	Schools to ensure PSHE curriculum mapping is in place Incorporate external interventions and inputs into your PSHE offer	
11. Focus on a cultural shift	Schools to maintain on-going vigilance with induction of new staff and continue to provide training and support to all staff – including lessons learnt reviews	

A word version template of the above checklist can be downloaded [here](#)

Tools & Training for Schools

There are several recognised & credited training resources and assessment tools that can be used by professionals to support and manage disclosures and incidents relating to child-on-child abuse. These should not replace current safeguarding policies and responses but should be used to aid and support the management of specific incidents in relation to child-on-child abuse.

The NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/resources-sexual-abuse-education-healthy-relationships>

The NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1658/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework-health-audit-tool.pdf>

Brook traffic light toolkit: <https://www.brook.org.uk/product/traffic-light-tool/>

Resources



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Issues raised in the updated guidance	Where can I read about this in guidance	Other helpful resources
Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026	Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) All staff must be familiar with this document and understand the key responses to ensuring all children are safe in education Expanded Child-on-Child Abuse and Serious Violence Framework 2026; - The "zero-tolerance" approach has been expanded to address contemporary risks, including AI-driven harms. - Policies must now explicitly cover misogyny, misandry, upskirting, and AI-generated imagery (both consensual and non-consensual). - The DSL must play an active role in assessing risks related to weapons and peer conflict. When a concern arises about a weapon, a formal safety and support plan must be implemented. - High-Risk Periods: Staff should be particularly vigilant during "high-risk" times, such as the period immediately following the end of the school day. Raising staff awareness of HSB: Page 185 KCSIE 2026 Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment: Page 30 KCSIE 2026 Writing risk assessments guidance: Page 133 KCSIE 2026	The following guides do an excellent job of summarising the key changes from September: Keeping children safe in education 2026: CASPAR briefing NSPCC Learning Useful guides to show healthy sexual behaviours at different ages: Healthy sexual development of children and young people NSPCC Learning Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour - CSA Centre Harmful sexual behaviour framework: an evidence-informed operational framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours (nspcc.org.uk) A really useful tool which includes a continuum of HSB to help assess severity and useful information about sexual violence and LGBTQI+ children: https://www.galop.org.uk/sexual-violence A useful and accessible guide for staff training about rape culture that makes clear the issues and scale of the problem: What is a culture of gender-based violence? TEACHERS/PARENTS (squarespace.com)
Ofsted inspection framework	Inspection framework for schools Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Useful guidance about what inspectors will be looking for – worth testing systems and understanding with staff
Ofsted: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, June 2021	Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK	This document has some excellent data about children's experiences in school. Useful for raising awareness with staff

How to ensure staff are able to respond appropriately to incidents, reports and disclosures	Responding to reports page 130 KCSIE 2026 This section is essential reading and should be reflected in policy- ensure staff are clear on the procedures at all stages. Don't forget to include what staff should say and what they should not do/say. This will require on-going training that should be built in to your CPD plans.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/s-haring-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people • Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people Appropriate language-Child sexual and/or criminal exploitation guidance for professionals.pdf (researchinpractice.org.uk) • How to think and talk about HSB and child victims- useful to address cultural and conditioned bias in staff and institutions https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/young-victims-crime/teachers-and-professionals/working-young-victims-crime/ • Great advice on what to say to reassure children and how to listen • Problematic, Violent and abusive behaviour is highly likely to require multi-agency support and involvement. Contact CSPOA. If it is likely that a crime has been committed contact the police as per guidance • When considering educational and protective consequences to address and prevent HSB the Therapeutic and Mental Health teams can offer guidance and support in creating plans and programmes contacts can be found in the contact document
Whole school approaches to preventing problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future and ensure a culture of safeguarding	Update and communicate whole school expectations Ensuring Systems to report abuse are: in place, well promoted, easily understood, easily accessible, overcome barriers to reporting (as outlined by Ofsted) The CPD programme should be reviewed to ensure that all the knowledge staff need is included and, perhaps more importantly, that they understand how it is to be implemented.	Beyond Referrals - Schools (csnetwork.org.uk) • An excellent advice and action planning tool https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour • An excellent practical tool kit for developing approaches Stop It Now harmful sexual behaviour prevention toolkit Oct 2020.pdf (theupstreamproject.org.uk) • Toolkit for schools with excellent support for parents

		https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/sexual-harassment-and-violence-what-can-schools-do-me-too-pshe-rse-bold-voices/ • Practical ideas and starting points https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/safeguarding-everyones-invited-have-i-done-enough-to-keep-children-safe-sexual-harassment-abuse-schools-students-metoo-esafety-child-protection/ • Practical ideas
Curriculum design to prevent and address problematic abusive and or violent behaviour	Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)	Relationships and sex education (RSE) resources for schools NSPCC Learning • Suite of useful resources to support the RSE curriculum delivery • Annex B has a list of useful resources to support curriculum development and teacher knowledge PSHE Association Charity and membership body for PSHE education (pshe-association.org.uk) • Excellent resources to support curriculum development I am an educator - Childnet • Teaching resources about online sexual exploitation and violence
Set out low-level concerns policy within their staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies	'Low-level' concerns: Page 107 KCSIE 2025 Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor: Should be responded to as per Page 118 KCSIE 2026	Part one: Safeguarding information for all staff (keepingchildrensafeineducation.co.uk) A useful guide about developing low level concerns policy

With thanks to guidance from Brighter Futures for which some sections of this toolkit have been adapted