

Safeguarding Matters

FAO Headteachers, Governors, Designated Safeguarding Leads and key professionals

All Schools

Briefing note to schools: Peer-on-Peer/Child-on-Child - Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

This briefing note aims to support schools to manage their response to the recent media coverage about peer-on-peer abuse in educational settings. It covers:

- Current Context
- Ofsted and DfE Statutory Guidance
- New DfE/NSPCC helpline for victims of abuse in educational settings
- Recommended strategies for schools to consider
- Seeking advice from School Improvement Liverpool's Safeguarding Team
- Seeking advice from the Press Office
- Key Resources

Current Context

Everyone will no doubt be aware of the media coverage related to peer-on-peer abuse within educational establishments linked to the social media campaign '#everyonesinvited'. This has led the [Government to launch a review into sexual abuse within schools](#). The DfE states '*the review will look at whether there is sufficient guidance on how schools deal with sexual violence, whether the relationship is working between schools and referrals to the police, if inspections are currently looking at this issue in the right way, and if schools are appropriately teaching the RSHE curriculum.*'

NSPCC CEO Sir Peter Wanless has commented that "*this is a watershed moment*" and he thanked "*those who have found the courage to speak out.*"

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, is quoted as having said she is "*deeply troubled*" by the accounts of sexual abuse and harassment that young people have suffered, and welcomed the education watchdog leading the review, which is to include representatives from social care, the police, victim support groups, and school and college leaders. She reaffirmed the role of schools: "*Schools have a crucial role to play in teaching young people about sexual consent and respect for women and girls. They must also be places where all children feel safe, and where they are able to report any incidents of abuse or harassment and be confident that what they say will be acted upon.*"

Ofsted and DfE Statutory Guidance

It is likely that all forthcoming Ofsted inspections of schools will have a renewed focus on safeguarding and in particular how the school is implementing chapter 5, Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, of the statutory guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2020\)](#). In addition, in 2018, the DfE set out additional statutory guidance: [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#). This provides advice on how to prevent and respond to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children. It sets out that the school should provide a planned curriculum as part of a whole school approach that covers at the right age and stage of development the following:

- 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 are always wrong
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment

Ofsted will also consider the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, including its approach to delivering the statutory guidance: [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#). This new curriculum became compulsory from September 2020. Schools were expected to start teaching from that date if they meet the statutory requirements. If they are not ready, or are unable to meet the requirements, they should begin teaching by at least the start of the summer term 2021. (Paragraphs 21, 32, 55-6, 62 and 69-82 are particularly relevant)

[Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings](#) sets out Ofsted's approach to inspecting safeguarding. We anticipate Ofsted will continue to:

- Review the school's child protection policy on the school's website to ensure there are clear procedures for dealing with child-on-child abuse
- Talk to children and young people about their experiences at school and the impact of the RSHE curriculum.
- Observe children's behaviour both inside and outside of lessons
- Review the school's behaviour data and the impact of any associated actions taken by school leaders. Ofsted will consider *if the setting takes effective action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic, sexist and racist language.*
- Establish if staff have received appropriate training and whether *there is a whole establishment approach to preventing sexual violence and sexual harassment between children or learners and supporting any children who are affected, including the alleged victim and perpetrator.*

Schools are reminded that Ofsted request the following, as part of a range of information, at the start any Section 5 or Section 8 inspection:

- records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and any use of internal isolation
- records and analysis of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence
- records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic / biphobic / transphobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and those who were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the resolution
- a list of all pupils who have open cases with children's services/social care and for whom there is a multi-agency plan

New DfE/NSPCC helpline for victims of abuse in Educational settings

In this last week the Government has also launched a [new helpline, 'Abuse in Education'](#) which will be run by the NSPCC from the 1st April:



Any child, young person or adult victim of abuse can reach the 'Report Abuse in Education Helpline' by telephoning 0800 136 663, on Monday to Friday 8am - 10pm, or 9am - 6pm at weekends. It can also be contacted by email at help@nspcc.org.uk More information about the helpline can be found [here](#).

The NSPCC's guidance about sexual abuse can be found [here](#).

The NSPCC guidance for adults about non-recent abuse can be found [here](#). (Non-recent child abuse, sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18.)

Seeking advice from School Improvement Liverpool's Safeguarding Team

Schools should follow Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Phil Cooper or Nicola Noon can be contacted by email on safeguarding@si.liverpool.gov.uk

(This should never delay the need to urgently contact Police or Children's Services.)

Seeking advice from the Press Office

If any school feels they need to write to parents following significant issues or concerns arising in their setting then they should consider contacting the local council press office or academy trust press office.

(Liverpool Schools: LCC Press Office 0151 233 0069/0071/0074, Out of Hours 0151 233 3040)

Recommended strategies for schools to consider having taken into account the needs and age of the children and young people:

Children and young people

- Signpost young people to the new 'Report Abuse in Education Helpline'
- Ensure they know what inappropriate, harmful and abusive behaviours are and know how to report incidents towards them
- Ensure they know how to seek help and advice both in school and outside of school
- Discuss with them whether the RSHE curriculum is impactful and meets their needs
- Find out from them if there are times during the day or places within school when they feel less safe
- Discuss with them the types of inappropriate, harmful and abusive behaviours they are experiencing or witnessing
- Make them aware of your whole school approach
- Invite them to share with you what they believe might make a difference
- Involve them in any working party that reviews the school's policies and practices

Parents and Carers

- Signpost parents/carers to the new 'Report Abuse in Education Helpline'
- Reassure parents/carers of the actions being taken by the school to review its whole school approach. Include what you already have in place, and what further steps you may intend to take
- Signpost parents/carers to the school's child protection policy and the procedures for dealing with incidents of inappropriate, harmful and abusive behaviours
- Make parents/carers aware of the support available to children and young people in school
- Signpost parents/carers to the NSPCC guidance for adults who have experienced [non-recent abuse](#). (Non-recent child abuse, sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18.)

School leaders and safeguarding team

- Ensure your child protection policy is up to date and reflects the school's own procedures. A model policy for schools to personalise can be found in the School Improvement Liverpool Safeguarding Handbook (Templates) found [here](#). The school's updated policy should be available on the school website.
- Ensure all school leaders and members of the safeguarding team are clear as to how to support children and young people who have experienced inappropriate, harmful or abusive behaviours.
- Review key guidance from the police: [When to call the Police](#)
- Review the effectiveness of the school's approach to implementing key statutory guidance:
[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education, Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2020\)](#). Consider developing a 'working party' to review the school's arrangements.
- Review with young people the impact of the RSHE curriculum.
- Revisit with young people key messages and learning. Gather evidence of the impact of the curriculum.
- Consider whether the analysis of the school's behaviour data mirrors the scale of concern indicated through 'student voice' activities.
- Liaise with your Safer Schools Police Officer, where appropriate.

Staff and volunteers

- Ensure all adults working within the school understand their responsibilities set out in the school's child protection policy; are familiar school's 'whole school approach' and are clear as to the school's procedures for reporting and managing incidents.
- Ensure all staff are briefed in using appropriate language and not victim blaming language
- Review the impact of staff training. Schools can access a staff training resource [here](#). (It is drawn from the resources previously shared with Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads following the changes to DfE statutory guidance in 2018.)

Governors

- Brief governors as to the school's whole school approach and any review of arrangements.
- Support governors to review the analysis of key behaviour data and the impact of any actions taken by the school.
- Involve governors in site and learning walks, when appropriate.

Key Resources

- [New helpline, 'Abuse in Education'](#)
- [When to call the Police](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) – **Annex A**
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2020\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education, Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)
- [Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings](#)
- [Disrespect Nobody](#)
- [Guidance on teaching about consent in PSHE education \(key stages 3 & 4\)](#)
- [Jigsaw PSHE programme](#)
- ['Think You Know' Send me a pic? Three sessions for 12-14 year olds on issues around nude image sharing](#)
- [PSHE Association](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Liverpool - Appropriate Language Practice Guide](#)
- [Children's Society - Appropriate Language Guide](#)
- [Victim blaming language - YouTube](#)
- Support from specialist sexual violence sector organisations such as [Rape Crisis](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#).
- The [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) has developed guidance for schools about preventing and responding to sexual bullying.
- [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#)
- [Contextual Safeguarding Network Beyond Referrals; levers for addressing harmful sexual behaviour in schools](#)