

Sexual Development and Sexual Harmful Behaviour – E-Guide

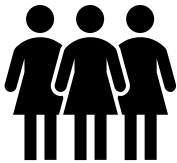
The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) identified that in the year ending March 2019, the police recorded 73,260 sexual offences where there was data to identify the victim as a child.

Previous studies have suggested that up to one third (24, 420) may have been perpetrated by another child.

Furthermore:



37% of females students at mixed sex schools have experienced sexual harassment at school.



2 in 3 girls aged 14-21 have been sexually harassed in public.



70% of 15-16 year olds have seen pornography.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020) states:

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex.
- It can also 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.
- It can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal).
- Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

What is sexual violence?

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual Assault

What is sexual harassment?

‘Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

It includes:

- 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; and
- online sexual harassment. (This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include: non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and upskirting).

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

In trying to minimise the risk of sexual harmful behaviour, the curriculum, including Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) offers an opportunity to teach children about safeguarding.

What sexual behaviours are healthy?

The NSPCC has recently updated their information on [Stages of healthy sexual behaviour](#). It states:

All children go through phases of sexual development. Just like every other part of growing up, some children mature sooner or later than others. For example, some children may have developmental delays whilst others may reach puberty early.

They list healthy behaviours as follows:

Age Range	Summary	Behaviour
0 to 4	You might notice sexual behaviour emerging for the first time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoying being naked• kissing and hugging people they know well, for example friends and family members• touching or rubbing their own private parts as a comforting habit• showing curiosity about or attempting to touch the private parts of other people• being curious about the differences between boys and girls• talking about private body parts and their functions, using words like 'willy', 'bum', 'poo' and 'wee'• role playing about different relationships, for example marriage.

5 to 9	As children get a little older they become more conscious of sex and their own sexuality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becoming more aware of the need for privacy • asking questions about sex and relationships, such as what sex is, where babies come from and same-sex relationships • kissing, hugging and holding hands with a boyfriend or girlfriend • using swear words or slang to talk about sex after hearing other people use them.
9 to 13	During these ages, children begin to get more curious about sex.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having a boyfriend or girlfriend (of the same or different gender) • using sexual language as swear words or slang • wanting more privacy • looking for information about sex online (this might lead to accidentally finding sexual pictures or videos) • masturbating in private.
13 to 17	During adolescence, sexual behaviour becomes more private with young people and they begin to explore their sexual identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forming longer-lasting sexual and non-sexual relationships with peers • using sexual language and talking about sex with friends • sharing obscenities and jokes that are within the cultural norm • experimenting sexually with the same age group

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• looking for sexual pictures or videos online.
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How can I identify Sexual Harmful Behaviours?

The [Brooks Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#) identifies sexual behaviours as **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED**, mean professionals within schools can work to the same criteria when making decisions and protect children and young people with a unified approach.



Brook_Traffic_Light_Tool.pdf

Brook also provide scenario examples of the kind of situations that are witnessed by / reported to professionals working with children and young people. They can be used as training exercises to support the use of the tool and to aid understanding.



SBTLT_all_scenarios.pdf

And finally remember....

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All staff should have received training and information on how to report a safeguarding concern in their school/nursery. Ensure you act on any concern of this nature immediately, follow the safeguarding children and child protection policies and procedures and contact the designated safeguarding lead or deputy (all staff should know how to make a referral to children's services and/or the police if contact with the DSL is not possible).

(July 2020)