

## PSA Bulletin

### This week let's talk about 'Healthy sexual development in young people'



#### Why is this important and how is this linked to safeguarding?

By understanding what is healthy and expected behaviour, you will be better able to identify and address behaviour that could be harmful. Typical sexual behaviour should not cause physical or emotional harm to anybody involved.

Every child is different and may become interested in relationships, sex and sexuality at slightly different ages. It's important to understand what healthy sexual development looks like in children as they grow. Children's sexual development is shaped by their environment, experiences and what they see...and our children today are influenced by the media and online world much more than we, their parents may have been. Some examples of 'typical sexual behaviour' for different ages can be found at the [NSPCC website](#).

#### Start a conversation

Some parents feel uncomfortable talking to their child about topics such as sex but the advice remains that we should be talking to our children from an early age about their bodies and how to stay safe. Some top tips to help you begin these conversations can be found [here](#). Teaching our children the correct names for their body parts is part of how we help them to remain safe from harm. Just as we would teach our children to wear a helmet when they ride a bike or never play with fire, we need to communicate healthy rules about their bodies too, examples of safety messages include:



- It's never okay to touch someone else's private body parts
- It's never okay for someone to touch his or her own private body parts in front of you
- It's never okay for someone to ask you to touch his or her private body parts

In school we refer to the PANTS rule, you can access resources and advice and view the Pantasaurus sing-a-long video by clicking [here](#)

#### How to promote 'positive sexual behaviour'

As children get older, we need to help them develop their understanding of positive sexual behaviour and healthy relationships. Lot's of this is 'modelled' by the adults around them, however they are influenced by their peers and the media too. They need our support to guide them towards safe and respectful behaviour and interactions.

[CEOP](#) has some great tips for parents about talking 'little and often' instead of having a 'BIG' chat.

For ideas about 'healthy relationship' conversations the [NSPCC](#) has some great advice including signs that your child might be engaging in relationships which are becoming unhealthy and how to talk about 'consent'.

As your child develops, it will be helpful for you to have conversations about various 'difficult or embarrassing' topics, this [guide](#) is perfect for families of pre-teens and covers all of the topics shown

with advice about how these issues affect children and how parents can broach these conversations successfully.

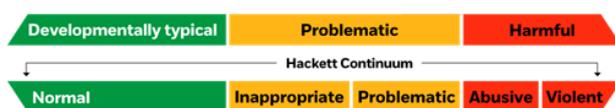


## What if you are worried?

Schools refer to a set of 'Traffic light tools' when determining whether a behaviour is cause for concern. Parents can also access similar resources to help them recognise when a behaviour may be a sign of worrying sexual behaviour. These leaflets are designed to help give adults guidance and information to help understand more about the difference between healthy and developmentally expected sexual exploration and play, in children of specific ages, and behaviour that is not appropriate and can cause harm to others or increase a child's vulnerability.

You can view these here for children [under the age of 5](#) and for those [aged 5- 11 yrs.](#)

Talk to us at school if you are at all concerned. We can support you and provide advice about how best to respond to the child's behaviour. We will support you to begin to unpick whether there is evidence



that the behaviour is 'problematic' referring to tools such as the Hackett Continuum. You can find out more by visiting the NSPCC website.

Listening to your child is as important as talking to your child; be sure to capture their 'voice' and avoid 'shaming' or 'blaming' as this will erode trust and breakdown communication.

Child sexual abuse/exploitation is a daunting topic for any parent, you can inform yourself better about the signs and effects as well as accessing support and advice about reporting concerns [here](#)

**Please do not forget that inappropriate sexual behaviour or harassment can happen online too!**

[CEOP](#) offers support and advice about what to do if a child experiences sexual or offensive contact online. You can also view our BB PSA Bulletin's, including titles 'Being safe online' and 'Harmful sexual behaviours' from previous weeks from our [school website](#)

## What if you suspect harm, who else could you talk to?

A GP or medical professional

Teacher or Parent support advisor

Anyone of the schools designated safeguarding team

The Multi-agency referral unit (MARU) 0300 123 1116 enables you to report a concern

The NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000

**How to contact me:** It's never too soon to make contact if you have any concerns. You can reach me via text on the PSA mobile **07903 613074** or via email, [terri-anne.old@celticcross.education](mailto:terri-anne.old@celticcross.education) Normal working days are Tuesday and Wednesday 8.00-16.00 and Thursday 8.00-13:00

