

## PSA Bulletin

### This week let's talk about 'Harmful sexual behaviours'



#### What does Ofsted say about this?

Ofsted expects school leaders to ensure that the school culture addresses harmful sexual behaviour.

Ofsted expects schools to assume that **Sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language)** are happening in the community and potentially in the school even when there are no specific reports. There must be a 'whole school approach' to address these issues and policies in place to make it clear that these matters are **unacceptable**.

Why is this important to Parents? You help us to form part of our '**School Culture**' and the '**community**' and you of course have a significant impact on the experience of the children who attend BB.

Our schools' approach to specifically addressing these issues are reflected throughout the curriculum including in RSHE but also through things like our behaviour policies and rules for life and in addition through our pastoral support offered to children and their families.

We particularly understand the **vulnerability** implications where children are faced with additional challenges and experiences, such as: Parental mental ill health, domestic abuse or having a disability/ additional need or anything which causes them to feel less able to report abuse. This is why we are keen to offer support from our Safeguarding and senior leadership team when issues at home arise.

To create a **culture of safeguarding**, we need to work with families to **proactively** address these issues in order to minimise them. We need to evidence how we are working with you to do this. It is not helpful if the lessons taught in school are not backed up by the lessons gained at home and in the community. I therefore wanted to share with BB Parents and Carers some important points about what **sexual harassment** might look like.

**The NSPCC say that "Teaching children and young people about [healthy relationships](#) and how to [stay safe online](#) can help prevent sexual exploitation. These foundations can be laid from a young age. Our [PANTS rules](#) are a simple way to teach younger children how to stay safe from abuse."**

**Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted sexual behaviour.** It can happen anywhere, such as at school, on the bus or at work and can be a 'one-off' or repeated behaviour. Forms of sexual harassment could include:

- someone making sexual comments, jokes or gestures,
- staring or leering at your body
- Something which violates your dignity or makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated
- unwanted touch or physical contact without consent

You can read more examples at [BROOK](#) or [CHILDLINE](#) and gain advice about how to report and get support if anyone has experienced this form of abuse.

It's also 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. **Children now are more likely to see or come across sexual images and videos at a younger age than their parents would have done. This can be through films, music videos or online.** Equally, it may be worthwhile pointing out that some 'older generations' might not realise that certain behaviours (that may have been 'tolerated' "in their day") have become illegal and that these forms of harassment are not ok. It is all of our responsibilities to **challenge inappropriate behaviour** and help to educate our communities about what is and what is not acceptable. We need to all think about our own conduct and the way we interact with others as our children are learning from what we role model.

The Children's Commissioner says

“My advice to parents and carers is to **create the culture before the crisis.**”

When I became Children's Commissioner for England I undertook the largest ever survey of children – The Big Ask – to understand children's lives. The findings of this survey gave me a lot of hope for this next generation, not least because of their incredible resilience. But children, especially girls, talked about their experiences of sexualised bullying and peer-on-peer abuse and were calling firmly for more support. Most children want that support to come from their parents or carers.

Read more [here](#) and access the **Parents Guide to talking to your children about online sexual harassment** which includes helpful subjects which children said were important including Pornography, Sharing nude images, Sexualised bullying, Editing photos and body image & Peer pressure

**Summary of top tips**

- 1 Start speaking to your children about these issues before you first give them a phone or set up a social media account. This might feel very early, but you can do it in an age-appropriate way. It is better to be proactive than reactive.  
**Don't wait for the crisis.**
- 2 Keep the conversation going. Adapt to your child so you can support them.  
**Don't mention it once and think that's enough.**
- 3 Keep it casual, find everyday opportunities to speak about these issues with your child – like when you're walking or driving somewhere.  
**Don't scare them with 'the big talk'.**
- 4 Focus on your child's emotions first and work out what they may have seen online. By listening to your child and understanding if they accessed harmful content, you can help to support them.  
**Don't punish them before listening and understanding.**
- 5 Keep curious about the technology your child is using and stay up to date with platforms, apps and trends.  
**Don't pretend these issues don't exist**
- 6 Set boundaries. Use filtering tools to limit your child's exposure to harmful content. Decide on rules and boundaries with your child, allowing them to input. Explain which monitoring and filtering tools you are using, and why.  
**Don't leave your child unsupervised online without using monitoring and filter tools. You wouldn't leave them alone in the park or the street, apply the same level of protection online.**

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

**How can I talk to my child about sexual harassment?**

*Parents sometimes feel uncomfortable, not just because of the sexualised nature of the topic, but also because their children know more about technology than they do. For mums, dads and carers who grew up without smart phones, this whole world can feel bewildering.*

**Talk EARLY, Talk OFTEN**

**Take advice!**

**Action For children** share their [Advice](#)

**NSPCC offer their [Advice](#)**

**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,

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Normal working days are Tuesday and Wednesday 8.00-16.00 and Thursday 8.00-13:00

