



**Shaw
Education
Trust**

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (Child-on-Child) Guidance

Risk Assessment and Management Guidance

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1. Introduction

This guidance sits alongside our full and comprehensive safeguarding procedures and systems, and reference to our Safeguarding Policy will outline recording, reporting, and other actions which this guidance fits into. It has been produced to provide our relevant staff, e.g. DSLs, with the relevant information regarding inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children which needs to be understood, risk assessed and managed to support the pupil and those around them. It. This includes:

- various forms of harmful sexual behaviour
- an awareness of age-appropriate sexual behaviour
- guidance for risk assessing inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviour
- a template for writing a RAMP (Risk Assessment and Management Plan)

This document is not intended to cover all aspects of child development regarding sexualised behaviour, although a brief overview is provided. It is aimed to help provide guidance to academies which need to assess and manage inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviours displayed by a child in our academies. **Part Five of [KCSiE](#) outlines how schools can manage reports of 'Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment' and should be referred to for advice and guidance when dealing with this aspect of safeguarding.** In addition, there is a wealth of useful resources online some of which are cited at the end of this document in Annex B.

This guidance does not attempt to provide detailed guidance on what action to take in every particular case, as ultimately, any decisions we make concerning a pupil need to be made on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and utilising their professional judgement, as well as supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police, as required.

Sexual exploration and play are a natural part of childhood sexual development, and help children develop physically and emotionally. This document aims to support colleagues with children who may display behaviours outside of what is developmentally expected.

This guidance also includes a risk assessment template (Annex A) which must be used by academy staff when supporting pupils in this matter.

2. Definitions of Harmful Sexualised Behaviours

Problematic sexual behaviour (PSB) is a term used to describe developmentally inappropriate or socially unexpected, sexualised behaviour which doesn't have an overt element of victimisation or abuse.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is a term used to describe sexual behaviours which are of concern and have either caused, or are likely to cause, harm to the child/young person themselves or to another person.

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 images or engaging in abusive or sexually violent sexual behaviour online or offline.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children **of any age and sex** from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges.

It can 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; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are **never acceptable**.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour **is** an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

Regarding **sexual violence**, we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003: (see KCSiE Pt 5 for full definitions)

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school, in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment.

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.

Sexual harassment can include:

- 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 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.

Online sexual harassment may include:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. As set out in [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#): advice for education settings working with children and young people (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence;
- sharing of unwanted explicit content;
- upskirting (is a criminal offence) - typically involves someone taking a picture under another person’s clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear);
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; o sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

3. Healthy Sexual Development in children and young people

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. 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, including pornography.

Every child is different and may become interested in relationships, sex and sexuality at slightly different ages. As children get older, the way they express their sexual feelings changes. It’s natural for adolescents to show

interest in sex and relationships for example, or for children to be curious about the changes that happen during puberty. Even young children can show sexual behaviours like kissing and hugging or using swear words they have heard others say.

Many sexual behaviours children and adolescents display as they grow up are normal and healthy, as long as they are not causing harm to others or themselves.

4. Assessing Sexualised Behaviours and Taking Action

Deciding whether a particular behaviour is age appropriate, problematic or harmful can be difficult.

The following factors must be taken into consideration to aid decision-making:

- The social development of the child;
- The cognitive development of the child;
- The emotional development of the child;
- The age of the child;
- Any additional needs the child may have;
- The cultural/religious environment of the child.

Additional questions to consider which may help you assess the behaviour displayed:

- 1 What is the age of the other children involved?
- 2 Is the behaviour unusual for that particular child?
- 3 Have all the children or young people involved freely given consent?
- 4 Are the other children or young people distressed?
- 5 Is there an imbalance of power?
- 6 Is the behaviour excessive, degrading or threatening?
- 7 Is the behaviour occurring in a public or private space?

Research has identified that children and young people with additional needs or special education needs (SEN), with a learning disability and autism, are over-represented among young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. The definition for HSB or PSB does not change with the addition of a learning disability or SEN. However, it is likely to

require additional thought and assessment in relation to the behaviour displayed.

It's important that everyone who works with children and young people has a good understanding of how children develop sexually. This can help us recognise which sexual behaviours are developmentally typical and identify if a child is displaying behaviour that is problematic or harmful.

[NSPCC guidance](#) includes some information about the stages of typical sexual development and behaviour for different age groups. We recommend staff familiarise themselves with the work of NSPCC in this area and have included a summary below of advice and guidance for assessing these behaviours.

In general, typical sexual behaviour should be:

- playful and curious, not aggressive or angry;
- displayed towards children of a similar age, stage of development and physical size, who know each other well;
- voluntary and consensual.

Typical sexual behaviour should not cause physical or emotional harm to anybody involved.

Under 5 years old
<p>At this stage, it's common to notice natural exploratory behaviour emerging when children feel safe and comfortable. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having no inhibitions about nudity• touching their own private parts• showing curiosity about other people's private parts or naked bodies• talking about bodily functions, using words like 'poo' and 'wee'• consensually role playing with their peers, exploring different relationships or roles such as 'playing house', 'playing mummies and daddies' or 'playing doctor'• Very young children can have erections, beginning from birth <p>It is uncommon for younger children to discuss specific sexual acts, use explicit sexual language or have adult-like sexual contact with other people</p>
5-9 years old
<p>As children get a little older, it's common to see them displaying behaviour like:</p>

- becoming more modest and asking for privacy
- asking questions about sex and relationships, such as what sex is, where babies come from and same-sex relationships
- consensually exploring relationships with peers, for example mimicking adult relationships by holding hands with a 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' or giving them a kiss on the cheek
- As children become more aware of social norms and 'rules' around sexualised behaviour, it's common for them to test boundaries. This might include using 'naughty' words they've heard from other people

It's **uncommon** for children aged 5-8 to have adult-like sexual interactions, discuss specific sexual acts or self-stimulate in public

9-13 years old

During these ages, it's **common** to observe children begin to get more curious about sex and relationships. They may start to be attracted to other people. Examples of typical sexual behaviour during this stage are:

- having or wanting to have a romantic relationship with peers (of the same or different gender)
- using sexual language, making jokes about sex or discussing sexual acts with peers
- wanting more privacy
- looking for information about sex in books, online or in the media (this might lead to accidentally finding sexual pictures or videos)
- masturbating in private

It's **uncommon** for children in this age group to display sexual behaviour in a public place, or regularly display adult-like sexual behaviour such as having oral or genital contact or intercourse

13-17 years old

During adolescence, sexual behaviour becomes more private and young people begin to explore their sexual identity. You might notice them:

- experimenting sexually and consensually with the same age group
- looking for information about sex and sexual relationships
- masturbating in private

The [age of consent](#) to engage in sexual activity in the UK is 16-years-old. However, the law is there to protect children from abuse or exploitation. It is not designed to unnecessarily criminalise children.

It is **uncommon** for adolescents to masturbate in public, or display sexual attraction towards a much younger child.

Hackett's continuum presents sexualised behaviour as a range from 'normal' to 'inappropriate', 'problematic', 'abusive' and 'violent'. The table below also gives some suggestions on actions to consider/take.

Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

It's important to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviours from those that may be problematic or harmful, and make sure children get appropriate support. Always consider the child's holistic needs and safeguarding concerns alongside any sexualised behaviour and follow due procedures accordingly. This guide is a tool to support objective decision making about a child or young person's sexual behaviour and does not replace professional judgement or policy and legislation. Visit nspcc.org.uk/hsb for more information.

Need advice?

Contact our helpline for advice and support:

- Call **0808 800 5000**
- Email help@nspcc.org.uk
- Visit nspcc.org.uk/helpline

Childline

For children who need further support our free, confidential helpline is available 24/7:

- Call **0800 1111**
- Visit childline.org.uk

Developmentally typical	Problematic		Harmful	
Hackett Continuum				
Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour Consensual, mutual and reciprocal Decision making is shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single instances of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour Behaviour that may be socially acceptable within a peer group but not in wider society May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour May be compulsive Consent may be unclear and the behaviour may not be reciprocal May involve an imbalance of power Doesn't have an overt element of victimisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically violent sexual abuse Highly intrusive May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator May involve sadism
<p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse Signpost helpful resources like our 'Talk PANTS' activity pack: nspcc.org.uk/pants Make sure young people know how to behave responsibly and safely 	<p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber behaviours should not be ignored Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally Consider the child's developmental age as well as their chronological age, alongside wider holistic needs and safeguarding concerns about the problematic sexualised behaviour Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who can be notified and will provide support Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate 		<p>How to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999 Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who should be notified and will provide support Typically referrals to children's social care and the police would be required. Referrals to therapeutic services should only be made once statutory services have been informed and followed due procedures 	

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4. Top tips in responding to an incident of harmful sexualised behaviour

This is by no means an exhaustive list of actions to take or consider, but may assist academies when dealing with incidents.

- Record all disclosures and pupil conversations verbatim, i.e. exact terminology used by pupil.
- Reassure any pupil who discloses or gives evidence, that they have done the right thing speaking up, and advise them of next steps and how they will be supported, including the pupil(s) who may have committed the behaviours.
- Speak with witnesses separately and advise of the confidential nature of the discussion in terms of not discussing outside of this safe space.
- Contact all relevant parents/carers and advise of next steps.
- Contact and collaborate with any external agency that either has to know, e.g., police, social care, and any that could offer support, e.g., counselling for pupil who has experienced behaviours.
- Discuss actions/priorities and plans/RAMPs with senior colleagues to agree steps. (Include Trust Director of Safeguarding if advice/support needed)
- Draft RAMP for all relevant parties (maintained for internal records).
- Draft safety plan (Annex B) for pupils/parents. This document is similar to RAMP but in a format more suitable for pupil/parent. Please ensure child-friendly language and terminology is used in all plans. (For ease of creation, it may be useful to simply create this from an edited version of the RAMP.)
- Maintain all lines of communication and monitor, evaluate and regularly review plans when needed, such as if there is a change of circumstances.
- Be conscious of how wider pupil population may view this and act accordingly.

5. Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP)

When there has been a report of **sexual violence**, the designated safeguarding lead should inform appropriate services, including police, and create an immediate RAMP, and where there has been a report of **sexual**

harassment, the need for a RAMP should be considered on an individual basis.

In regards to this guidance, the focus is on the child who may have displayed inappropriate and/or harmful behaviour, who may be a risk to others. Each DSL will of course make that decision on a case-by-case basis.

In developing the RAMP, we do have a balancing act to perform in that we need to safeguard the pupil(s) who has(have) been harmed, and the wider pupil body, as well as provide the child who may have displayed inappropriate and/or harmful behaviour with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate, and possibly implement any disciplinary sanctions.

We must consider many aspects including those listed at start of section 4 on this document. In addition:

- consider the proportionality of any responses, e.g. sanctions, due to individual circumstances;
- ensure if the pupil does move schools, that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children and staff, including the sharing of any RAMP in place;
- ensure communication is continuous with the parent/carer of the pupil who may well be struggling to cope with a report of their child being a risk to others;
- balance the safety of others with any restrictions which may be placed on the pupil.

When creating the RAMP there are specific things to consider and the list below gives a guide to some of those considerations:

Teaching and learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is current level of supervision appropriate and relevant staff aware?• Are the seating arrangements satisfactory?• Are there times when the pupil is allowed to leave the class during class times?• How is sex and relationships education managed?• Are there particular areas of risk in the class e.g. when the teacher is occupied with other pupils, and how can this be managed?• How will risk be managed during off-site activities - school trips, work experience etc.?
Unstructured times

- Have there been concerns about the pupil's sexual behaviours in school when out of the classroom? If so, what pupils may be particularly vulnerable and how can this be managed?
- Does the location of the toilets cause a problem?
- Are there rules around changing for PE that need to be considered?
- Are there rules about physical contact during play to consider?
- Has the pupil a history of absconding?
- Does consideration need to be given to use of school technology?
- What are the arrangements to get safely to and from school?

Outside area

- Are there areas within the school and grounds that are unsupervised?
- Is there a need to make certain areas 'out of bounds' either for the time being or permanently?
- Can you involve more staff to engage pupils in constructive play/conversation to encourage them to be more interactive and, therefore, less open to inappropriate play?

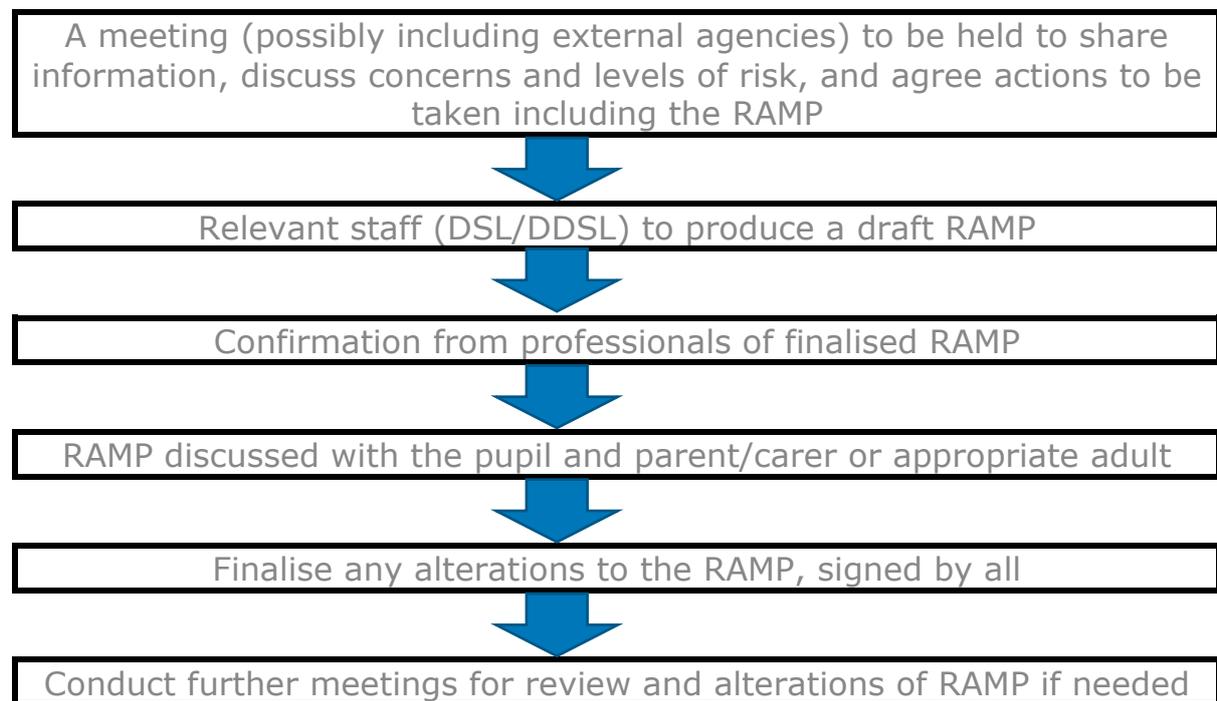
Pupils

- Is any additional input around pupils been taught about keeping safe needed due to the current concerns?
- Are all pupils aware of who they can go to if they have a worry?
- Do all pupils feel that they are listened to and confident that appropriate action will be taken if needed?

Individual work

- Who will talk to the pupil about their sexual behaviours if the need arises? Will this staff member require any support?
- Are reporting and recording systems clear?
- Are there clear boundaries and expectations of acceptable behaviours?
- What work is being undertaken to address the pupil's unmet needs in relation to sexual behaviour?
- What support is in place to reduce the risk of isolation and to encourage the pupil to enjoy and achieve?
- Are there any additional factors to consider in relation to the pupil's age, sex, race, religion, disability, mental / physical health or other?
- Who will communicate and support parents/carers?

When it is assessed that behaviour, or potential behaviour, may be a risk to others and a RAMP is to be produced, a process should be actioned as follows:



"This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe in line with the Equality Act 2010. It does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality."

ANNEX A: Risk Assessment and Management Plan Template



Name of pupil		Academy	
Date of birth		Date RAMP written	
Class/form		RAMP written by (staff)	
Parent/Carer (give a copy to)		External Agencies involved (if relevant)	

Give an overview of the incident / reason this RAMP is being produced.
Please refer to any existing safeguarding documentation which may be on file.



Risk	1. Likely to occur	2. Level of harm caused if risk occurs	Who might be harmed and how?	Actions to date, and current actions.	Further action to be taken - by when and by whom?	Action Completed Date & signed	3. Level of harm caused if risk occurs after actions
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

Risk Rating

Table below shows 3 considerations to take on each risk. The table above should have 3 colours assigned to each risk. Colours may well all be different. The aim is for step 3 to all be green.

1. Likelihood risk will occur.	Highly likely to occur	Some chance risk may occur	Small/no chance risk will occur
2. Level of harm caused if risk were to occur.	Significant harm	Some harm	Very little/no harm
3. Likelihood that risk will occur if all actions taken.	Highly likely to occur despite actions taken	Some chance risk may occur after actions taken	Small/no chance risk will occur if actions taken

Signature of Lead Staff:

Print Name:

Review Date:

Signature of Parent/Carer (if appropriate):

Print Name:

Communication and Review

This RAMP should be communicated to all staff who may come into contact with the risks being assessed. The assessment must be reviewed regularly or following a significant change or incident.

ANNEX B: Safety Plan Template (for pupil(s)/parents)

Use page 1 and 3 of RAMP for 'Safety Plan', but table below may be more appropriate for pupils and parents/carers to have, if deemed more suitable...not compulsory.

Risk / Potential Issue	Actions to date, and current actions.	Intended Impact of Actions	Action Completed Date & signed	Staff Responsible
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Annex C: Resources

1. [NSPCC](#) has lots of information which can be accessed on this topic including on [sexual behaviour in children](#).
2. [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#) has a [Stop it now! Helpline](#) for support for professionals and parents or carers worried about a child/young person.
3. [SWGfL](#) and The [Marie Collins Foundation](#) has created a support service for professionals working with children and young people in tackling harmful sexual behaviours, funded by the Home Office and in collaboration with the Department for Education.
4. [NHS dealing with challenging behaviour in children](#) includes sexualised behaviours.
5. [Just for Kids Law](#) - Just for Kids Law is a London-based charity which provides advocacy, legal and youth opportunities services to children and young people.

Professionals and parents/carers can seek support from the charity if they needed advice regarding supporting a child/young person legally regarding their behaviour.

6. [Just for Kids Law Schools Exclusions Hub](#) - Information and resources for professionals and community organisations supporting children and their families through challenges to school exclusions. A helpful resource for parents if their child is excluded for their behaviour/sexualised behaviour.
7. [Youth Justice Legal Centre \(YJLC\)](#) - Legal toolkits for professionals and parents. There is also an advice line for professionals and parents.
8. [Bish UK](#) - 'A guide to sex, love and you'. For everyone over 14.
9. [Thinkuknow](#) - CEOP support for online abuse
10. [Brook](#) - Online support agency for children
11. [Parents Protect](#) - 'We help parents and carers protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.'



Shaw Education Trust

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**Pupil &
people
centred**

**Act with
integrity**

**Be
innovative**

**Be best
in class**

**Be
accountable**