



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

Child on Child Abuse - Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

Updated: March 2023 and September 2023 in line with KCSIE 2023

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Updated 20/9/23 with DDSL at HJ/WPS

5/1/24 Updated with DSL name changes

April 2024 updated with DDSL change at HJ

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



Children at the HEART

	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Trust: Nicola Rainford Briscoe Primary School and Nursery: Terri Chudleigh Hilltop Infant School: Janine Travi Hilltop Junior School: Ann Leech Stambridge Primary School: Debbie Loveless (Including EY) Waterman Primary School: Karen Collison The Wickford Church of England School: Annie Bristow (including EY) The Atrium: Abi Cansdale Executive Head for Hilltop Junior School, Waterman Primary and Stambridge Primary - Don Wry	01268 572672 01268 727751 01268 762531 01268 734649 01702 544369 01702 546237 01268 733297 07541 823626
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Trust: Louise Johnson, Debbie Rogan Briscoe Primary School and Nursery: Richard Hall, Kathryn Wright, Emma Davis, Heather Purcell Briscoe Primary Early Years: Michelle Spight (EY) Hilltop Infant School: Jenny Ready (EY), Christine Kennedy Hilltop Junior School: Kelly Wells, Zoe Taylor, Emily Arthur Stambridge Primary School: Grace Marshall, Heather Purcell, Kelly Faherty (EY), Waterman Primary School: Heather Purcell, Sophie Shields, Claire McCleod, Gary Capps The Wickford Church of England School: Julie Stuart, Lucy Springall (EY), Maria Boyce (EY), Chloe Scammell (EY) The Atrium: Graham Head	01268 572672 01268 727751 01268 727751 01268 762531 01268 734649 01702 544369 01702 546237 01268 733297 07541 823626
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE:	Sharon Wilson	01268 572672
TRUST SENIOR MENTAL HEALTH LEAD (TRUST COUNSELLOR)	Kerry Westbrook	01268 572672

ECC Education Safeguarding Team
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An overview of the guidance

This guidance draws together a number of key statutory and non-statutory guidance documents, to support Essex schools and education settings in preventing and addressing harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse. It has been sourced from the documents below. All settings should read and be familiar with:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#)
- [When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(2021\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
- [SET Procedures \(ESCB, 2022\)](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(DfE, 2022\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff \(DfE, 2022\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools \(DfE, 2014\)](#)
- [Positive environments where children can flourish \(Ofsted, 2021\)](#)
- [Creating a Culture: how school leaders can optimise behaviour \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE, 2022\)](#)
- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges \(Ofsted, 2021\)](#)

No guidance can provide definitive step-by-step advice for every case. Each case will need to be handled according to its own unique circumstances and decisions made on a case-by-case basis.

In this document, we use the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. These are widely recognised and understood terms and helpful for the purposes of this guidance. However, it is important that settings are mindful of the language used to describe children and young people (CYP) and that they use appropriate language and terms. It is also important to understand that not all those who have experienced abuse will recognise themselves as a 'victim' and to understand that 'alleged perpetrators' may also be 'victims' of abuse themselves.

A whole school/setting approach

Schools, colleges, and education settings have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people (CYP) within their organisations. Safeguarding underpins everything in a setting. It should run through all policies, procedures and training and be fully understood by all staff, pupils and parents and the wider community to ensure the setting is a safe environment where pupils can learn and flourish.

It is vital that settings adopt a whole setting approach to safeguarding, including child on child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, and sexual harassment / violence. Whilst there are societal factors beyond the setting that can drive such behaviour, settings should ensure there are clear messages that it is not acceptable and will never be tolerated – such behaviour should not be normalised. Any inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour should be challenged (by staff and pupils) and pupils should feel safe to report any concerns and be confident these will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely way. The [Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) found that CYP are most likely to share concerns and seek advice from their peers, so it is important that CYP are taught about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and can support each other to bring their concerns to adults within the setting.

Settings should be alert to issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes. They should be proactive in setting a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Settings should have clear values and standards that are upheld and demonstrated through all aspects of school / setting life. These should be underpinned by effective safeguarding arrangements, training and policies, a robust Behaviour Policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme for curriculum delivery to address and support key safeguarding issues. There should be sound procedures for reporting and recording concerns, and mechanisms in place to review, analyse and triangulate data to inform practice.

Settings should adopt the approach ‘it could happen here’ and realise that harmful sexual behaviour is likely to exist within the setting, even if there have been no reports.

Legal responsibilities

All settings have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the CYP within their organisation and must work to a range of statutory guidance in terms of harmful sexual behaviour:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty

In Essex, all professionals must also work to the [SET Procedures \(ESCB, 2022\)](#)

Policies

Each setting must have a policy which sets out its approach to child-on-child abuse. This may be in a Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy, or a separate Child on Child Abuse / HSB Policy. All staff must be clear about the setting's policies and procedures in relation to this. Paragraphs 156 and 157 in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) detail the elements that should be included within the policy regarding harmful sexual behaviour.

RE / RSE and Health curriculum

All settings are required to provide relationships education (RE) to all primary age pupils and relationships and sex and education (RSE) to all secondary pupils. There must be a written policy in place which reflects the setting's approach to this aspect of the curriculum, which should prepare CYP for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and help them become responsible, respectful members of their community. Further information is available in [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#). Resources to support settings in this area can be found in Appendix D.

Online safety

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#) highlights the importance of understanding that CYP live in an increasingly online world and often operate more freely within the online environment than they would offline. To help to prevent child on child abuse from occurring online, the setting's curriculum should prepare CYP to operate safely within the online world by supporting them to recognise abuse and behave safely online within the three main areas of online risk: content, contact and conduct. Further guidance for settings can be found within [Teaching Online Safety in School \(2019\)](#).

Pupil voice

The [Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) found that CYP rarely speak to adults about sexual harassment and sexual violence, even though it is prevalent for them. It sets out there should be an assumption that harmful sexual behaviour is happening in a setting, even when there are no specific reports of it.

It is vital that all settings provide a safe environment in which pupils can discuss challenging issues (including harmful sexual behaviour) in an open way. Pupil voice should be actively sought and heard and should feed into the setting's culture and systems.

Settings should consider how (and when / how often) they gather pupil views and how they enable their CYP to contribute to and shape policies and develop practice. Initiatives should be designed to reach as many pupils as possible, be pupil-led and remove barriers to discussion - this may include small focus groups on specific HSB issues, pupil councils, questionnaires, RSHE lessons, 'listening events', or assemblies and include both online and face-to-face options. It would be beneficial for settings to ask pupils about the current pupil voice initiatives and reporting routes and use the pupil recommendations to create further mechanisms for gathering pupil voice. There should be fair representation of pupils within initiatives, including from more vulnerable groups and those harder to reach. Settings should be able to evidence that pupil voice is heard and responded to and demonstrate how it has influenced aspects of school / setting life. It is important there are

arrangements in place to feed back to CYP so they can see their concerns are listened and responded to and taken seriously.

Further information on this topic can be found within the [Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) section 'How does the current system of safeguarding listen to the voices of children and young people?', the '[Beyond referrals](#)' project and in Appendix D.

Reporting and recording procedures

Settings should have effective systems and mechanisms to enable pupils to report any concerns or incidents. These systems should be well promoted, easily understood and accessible, and CYP should be confident that their concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

Settings should be aware of the barriers to CYP reporting harmful sexual behaviour concerns to adults at their setting, and the systems should seek to alleviate these barriers as far as possible. The [Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) section 'How does the current system of safeguarding listen to the voices of children and young people?' provides a list of common barriers to reporting and examples of how some settings addressed these in practice.

Settings should understand that CYP may not find it easy to tell staff about abuse. If CYP do not feel able to share their concerns with an adult at school, they may prefer to tell a friend, a family member or submit their concern online. The reporting systems should enable pupils to report concerns in a variety of ways and these systems should be well understood by the whole school community, including parents / carers, so they are aware of how to share concerns that a CYP has disclosed to them (further information can be found in the '[Communicating safeguarding arrangements](#)' section).

It may be through behavioural or emotional changes that CYP communicate they have a concern – the [Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) found that professionals can rely too much on CYP verbally reporting abuse so it is important that staff notice and act on these changes. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) is clear that staff should act immediately if they have any concerns about a CYP's welfare, rather than wait to be told by the CYP.

There should be an assumption that harmful sexual behaviour is happening in a setting, even when there are no specific reports. It is important that reporting procedures are monitored and reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and being used effectively. Pupil voice should be a key part of this process. Resources to support settings on this subject can be found in Appendix D.

Communicating safeguarding arrangements

Settings should have effective communication systems in place to inform parents, pupils, and the wider school community about safeguarding arrangements, including the approach to HSB. All stakeholders should be aware of the setting's key messages in relation to HSB and should know where to find information on the setting's processes and policies, as well as be clear on the reporting process and support available if they have any concerns. The communication systems should engage parents in supporting the safeguarding arrangements, keeping their CYP safe, and in reinforcing key messages with their CYP at home. Both pupils and parents should know that the setting takes the management of harmful sexual behaviour seriously and should be aware of how to escalate concerns if they feel issues are not being recognised or addressed.

Data collection and analysis

Settings should gather and analyse data on harmful sexual behaviour concerns and incidents, so the systems for recording incidents, should support this process. Data is useful in assisting settings to understand the scale of harmful sexual behaviour. It should also be used to review the setting response to incidents, identify any emerging patterns and implement changes to positively influence practice. Scrutiny of this data should take place at leadership level, to ensure there is strategic oversight of harmful sexual behaviour and that it is considered as part of the setting's wider approach to safeguarding.

Governance

Governing bodies and proprietors have strategic leadership responsibility for the setting safeguarding arrangements, including the response to harmful sexual behaviour and child on child abuse. As such, they must have regard to Part two of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) and ensure that the setting's policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law. They should ensure the relevant policy complies with the standards outlined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#). The [Governor Monitoring of Safeguarding Tool](#) supports Governors with their oversight responsibilities, including in relation to HSB.

Governors should receive regular reports about harmful sexual behaviour, including the number of incidents that have occurred / been reported.

Understanding Harmful Sexual Behaviour

A CYP's sexual behaviour exists, occurs and / or progresses on a continuum, from normal and developmentally appropriate to inappropriate and / or harmful. Each CYP is different and may become interested in relationships, sex, and sexuality at slightly different ages. As CYP get older and develop, the way they express their sexual feelings changes. Many sexual behaviours displayed by CYP as they grow up are normal and healthy. However, sometimes CYP can develop sexual behaviour that is inappropriate and / or harmful to themselves or others – these may include:

- displaying sexual behaviour that's inappropriate for the age of the CYP
- sexual behaviour that's becoming a compulsive habit or happening frequently
- behaviour using force, aggression or pressuring other CYP
- engaging in behaviour that upsets other CYP
- sexual interest in adults or CYP of very different ages to their own
- sexual behaviour that starts to affect other aspects of the CYP's life
- use of pornography or sending explicit images online, particularly without consent
- any sexual behaviour that's harmful to themselves or others

Settings must be alert to such behaviours and appropriately address any concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures. It is important to note that harmful sexual behaviour can occur online or offline or simultaneously between the two.

The NSPCC website page [‘Understanding sexualised behaviour in children’](#) provides support for settings to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviour from sexual behaviours that are problematic or harmful. The tool is based upon Hackett's Sexualised Behaviour Continuum (2010) and provides settings with guidance, training, and resources.

The Brook Traffic Light Tool can also be used for this purpose if the setting has completed the training and holds a licence – see appendix D for information.

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence / harassment can occur between two CYP of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of CYP against a single CYP or group. Settings should understand that certain CYP are more likely to be abused than their peers – for example, girls, LGBTQ pupils or CYP with SEND. Settings should think about the context of their own organisation and have appropriate arrangements in place to meet its specific needs and issues.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and that every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted.

Sexual offence definitions

Settings should ensure they are familiar with the definitions of sexual violence offences and sexual harassment, and the subsequent actions that should be taken following a report of a particular offence, so they are able to respond quickly and appropriately.

The DfE defines **sexual violence** as an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party).

(Consent – an agreement by choice to that penetration and the freedom and capacity to make that choice) Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#)

The DfE defines **sexual harassment** as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ and something which 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 can occur online and offline and settings should have clear plans for preventing such behaviour and processes for responding to it where it occurs.

Further information is available in the DfE guidance: [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

Online Harmful Sexual Behaviour, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes

It is important to recognise that harmful sexual behaviour can occur online or offline (or simultaneously between the two) and that technology is a significant factor in many safeguarding concerns. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) notes that online child-on-child abuse can include, “*abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content*”. All staff in the setting, including the DSL, should be aware of and alert to these factors when dealing with incidents of child-on-child abuse.

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) defines sharing nudes and semi-nudes as “the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple’s AirDrop which works offline.”. Section 1 of the guidance, ‘Background and context’, should be read and understood by settings.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) knowledge and training

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) states that safeguarding is most effective when settings are prepared to respond to incidents before they occur. The DSL will need to take a lead role in each incident of harmful sexual behaviour and make decisions on a case-by-case basis, taking a wide range of factors into account each time. The DSL and deputy DSLs should be knowledgeable on harmful sexual behaviour and confident in both distinguishing and categorising sexualised behaviour, as well as handling and responding to incidents, including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes. They should have read the relevant guidance, accessed training and be aware of their policies and processes (including when statutory agencies need to be contacted) in advance of incidents being reported. This allows for professional decisions to be made quickly and for responses to be considered and appropriate in often complex situations.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff at the setting have the required training to confidently understand and respond to disclosures of harmful sexual behaviour, alongside their wider safeguarding training.

Part 3 - Responding to incidents of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

No guidance can provide definitive step-by-step advice for every case. Each case will need to be handled according to its own unique circumstances and decisions made on a case-by-case basis.

Principles to guide the setting response

When responding to a report of an incident of HSB, there are some general principles which should guide the setting response:

- the needs of both the victim and alleged perpetrator should be considered immediately to ensure that both are safeguarded and protected. The safeguarding of all pupils should underpin any actions taken by the setting. Within this, CYP sharing a classroom must be considered carefully. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) provides guidance.
- responses to harmful sexual behaviour should be proportionate and reflect the level of risk and need presented
- all reports of harmful sexual behaviour should be responded to appropriately, whether it has occurred online or offline and including those that have happened outside of the setting
- the response should be at the least intrusive level required to effectively address the behaviour
- the wishes of the victim and how they wish to proceed must be important considerations within the setting's response to a report. They should have as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding the support provided to them and the progression of the investigation, however this must be balanced carefully with the setting's duties and their responsibility to protect CYP

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) identifies four likely scenarios that settings will consider when managing a report of harmful sexual behaviour:

1. Manage the incident internally
2. Early Help
3. Referrals to local authority Children's Social Care
4. Reporting to the Police

The considerations in Part 3 of this guidance document will support settings to determine which response will most likely be appropriate. Further information on the four likely scenarios can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#).

Handling reports and disclosures sensitively

Any adult in the setting may observe an incident or receive a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour, so it is important that all staff understand how to respond to it appropriately. It is important that everyone in the setting understands concerns will be taken seriously and responded to in a sensitive way. Appropriate handling of a concern will increase confidence across the setting, contributing to a positive culture and encouraging others to report in the future, should the need arise.

A victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report. They should be made to feel comfortable to disclose further information at a future date if needed, as it is recognised that they may not feel comfortable to disclose all information at first. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) recommends that, where possible, two members of staff should manage a report of harmful sexual behaviour and one should preferably be a designated or deputy designated safeguarding lead.

All staff at the setting should be trained to handle a report/disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour/child-on-child abuse, following the guidance principles provided in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) on The document 'Supporting Young Survivors of Sexual Violence' produced by SERRIC gives further guidance on handling disclosures and can be found in Appendix D. The NSPCC's [Let children know you're listening](#) is another useful resource.

If an incident involves nudes or semi-nudes, the setting should refer to the guidance provided in [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Section 2 of the guidance 'Handling Incidents' gives detailed advice, including a flowchart of actions to take, on how to respond to an incident. It is important to note that **in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed** and further guidance is given within section 2.10 of the document. The setting should also follow the advice within [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE, 2022\)](#) if necessary.

Confidentiality

Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others to provide support and engage appropriate agencies. Parents or carers should normally be informed unless this would put the victim at greater risk, or if the police/Children's Social Care have advised not to. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) should be followed when working with parents and carers following an incident involving their CYP.

If a CYP requests that a report of harmful sexual behaviour is kept confidential, the setting should follow the guidance provided in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#), as the setting may still be required to lawfully share information.

Initial investigation - establishing the facts

The setting's initial response should include asking questions to establish the basic facts of the incident. It is important to decide at an early stage whether the incident needs to be reported to police and/or Children's Social Care or whether it should be managed internally. If the incident needs to be reported to the police, the setting should stop any internal investigation and contact the police.

The setting should:

- fully document the initial disclosure and setting enquires as they may be required if the matter goes to court. This includes recording the questions asked to CYP and their replies
- make every effort to preserve any relevant evidence
- carefully consider when to inform the alleged perpetrator. If the incident requires a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police, then, generally, the approach should be discussed with these agencies. However, this does not and should not stop the setting taking immediate action to safeguard its CYP where required

Assessing whether an incident of sexual behaviour is harmful

To decide whether an incident of sexual behaviour could be harmful, and therefore guide the setting response, several factors need to be considered. Settings should note that even if both CYP involved claim the act was consensual, if any of the following factors apply, the behaviour may still be harmful. The factors to consider include:

- the nature of the alleged incident(s) and whether a crime may have been committed or HSB has been displayed
- the ages of the CYP involved (particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the CYP is pre-pubescent and the other is not)
- the stages of development of the CYP involved
- whether there are any SEND needs of the CYP involved
- whether the behaviour is secretive or has an element of manipulation
- whether the behaviour is an isolated incident or a pattern of behaviour following previous advice and interventions
- if there is any power imbalance between the CYP involved (e.g., related to race, gender, age, maturity, social standing, confidence, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability of the victim). Settings should note that an incident of sexual violence or harassment is likely to create a power imbalance

The NSPCC website page ['Understanding sexualised behaviour in children'](#) provides also provides support.

When to contact other agencies, including statutory agencies (see Appendix C)

Settings are not alone when dealing with incidents of harmful sexual behaviour and should be supported by other agencies as appropriate. Local authority Children's Social Care and the police are statutory agencies and will be vital partners where a crime may have been committed or where there are safeguarding concerns for a CYP. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this should be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. Alongside a report to the police, there should also be a referral to Children's Social

Care. In some cases, the police may decide that a welfare, rather than a criminal, response will be more appropriate, but it is for the Police and / or Social Care to decide that, not the setting. There are also health agencies available to provide specialist support for both victims and alleged perpetrators.

Appendix C provides detailed guidance to support settings when deciding whether they need to contact the police, Children’s Social Care, and/or health agencies following an incident of HSB.

Risk assessments and safety plans

If a report includes sexual violence, a risk assessment and safety plan should be created immediately. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risk assessments and safety plans should be kept under constant review and should be contributed to by the CYP, parents / carers and any other agencies involved with the CYP.

There are resources available to support settings in completing a risk assessment and safety plan. Appendix B provides a risk assessment and safety plan template and guidance on how to complete it. Settings should follow the guidance provided in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#). ‘Safety planning in education: a guide for professionals supporting CYP following incidents of harmful sexual behaviour’ provides further practical advice and can be found in Appendix D.

Reporting and recording incidents

It is essential that concerns about harmful sexual behaviour, once reported, are recorded on a child protection file and that all subsequent actions, rationales for actions and decisions and outcomes are then recorded and added to the file. Templates (for paper files) for reporting concerns are available on [Essex Schools Infolink](#).

Data about the incident should be made available as part of the setting’s wider monitoring of harmful sexual behaviour within the setting (See Part 1 – [Data collection and analysis](#)).

Sanctions, suspension, and exclusion

Disciplinary action, in line with the setting’s Behaviour Policy, can be taken whilst other investigations by the police or social care are on-going as long as they do not interfere with the investigation. Settings can decide on a balance of probabilities relating to what happened in the incident and act accordingly. Support can be provided for the CYP alongside disciplinary action.

[Suspension and Permanent Exclusions DfE 2023](#) provides guidance on the suspension and exclusion processes and provides specific guidance on safeguarding for pupils who have abused another pupil. In Essex, the [Education Access Team](#) can provide advice and guidance on exclusions and suspensions and the team must be contacted without delay if an exclusion or suspension is issued. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) acknowledges that education settings can be a significant protective factor for CYP who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour and continued access to education, with a comprehensive safety plan, is an important factor to consider before making a final decision. If the CYP does move to another setting, all relevant information about the CYP, including on-going support needs and potential risks, must be shared with the new setting.

A setting must not ask a CYP to stay at home for any period unless they are formally excluded, suspended or unless one of the reasons for absence listed within the attendance guidance has been agreed. An informal or unofficial exclusion is unlawful when it does not follow the formal school exclusion process and regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents – this includes asking pupils to stay at home to ‘cool off’. Settings should refer to page 15 of [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(DfE, 2022\)](#) for further information.

Disciplinary action may also be taken if a report of harmful sexual behaviour is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious. The setting’s Behaviour Policy will guide the response as appropriate.

Part 4 – Ongoing considerations following an incident of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Ongoing support for victims

Following a report of harmful sexual behaviour, ongoing support should be provided to the victim. Their voice is important and should be captured within all record keeping and safety planning. A priority should be to make the setting a safe space for the victim, minimising disruption to their education as much as possible. If the victim wishes to move to another educational setting, this should also be supported.

A regular review of the ongoing response should be planned and undertaken. A list of principles to guide the setting’s ongoing response, based on effective safeguarding practice, can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#).

Referrals to appropriate agencies should be considered within the on-going support response, including referrals to health agencies for any resulting physical, mental, or sexual health needs. Further guidance on making referrals to other agencies can be found within Appendix C and details of agencies who can offer support can be found within Appendix D.

CYP who have experienced harmful sexual behaviour may not disclose the whole picture or may not feel ready to access support when they initially report the incident. Settings should ensure they keep an open dialogue with the victim, ideally with a designated trusted adult in place for the victim who can be available for further disclosures or to signpost to support when/if the CYP feels ready.

Ongoing support for alleged perpetrators

CYP who display harmful sexual behaviour also need to be offered appropriate support. Settings should be aware that CYP who display harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and trauma themselves and this should be acknowledged/explored within the response. It should also be acknowledged that displaying harmful sexual behaviour is often due to the CYP having an unmet need themselves. They are also likely to be negatively impacted by the incident and may require support for this. It may be necessary for the setting to provide both support and sanctions at the same time.

A list of principles to guide the setting’s on-going response, based on effective safeguarding practice, can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#). Further guidance on making referrals

to other agencies can be found within Appendix C and details of agencies who can offer support can be found within Appendix D.

Supporting parents/carers and siblings

Parents and carers of a CYP who has experienced or displayed harmful sexual behaviour may require support themselves. They may also benefit from guidance on how to support their CYP. Details of agencies who can offer support to parents/carers and families can be found within Appendix D.

The impact on the siblings of CYP involved in incidents of harmful sexual behaviour must be considered (if applicable). They should be considered within the risk assessment and safety plan and their on-going support needs should be addressed and reviewed as appropriate.

Supporting other CYP

The support needs of any CYP who have witnessed, or have been impacted by, an incident of harmful sexual behaviour between other CYP will need to be considered and addressed. The possibility of other CYP 'taking sides', harassing, or bullying the CYP involved in an incident and should also be considered and factored into the setting response. Further guidance can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#).

Appendix A: Harmful Sexual Behaviour: Common Language Framework

When dealing with incidents of sexual behaviour, it is important there is mutual understanding of these behaviours and of whether they are normally developmental or harmful. This framework is to support settings in assessing behaviours and to promote consistency of approach across the system. It is also important to think about appropriate and inappropriate language when discussing sexual behaviours, and the impact of this for the children/young people (CYP) we are working with.

The below Common Language Framework is in-line with the current language used and recommended by several sources including: the Government, Children’s Social Care, the Police and Health.

1. General language around harmful sexual behaviour
2. Sexual Offence definitions

General language around harmful sexual behaviour	
Term	Definition
Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)	<p>Description from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): <i>Children’s sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour” (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.</i></p> <p>Description from Hackett, 2021 & NICE 2014: <i>Any Young Person under 18 years of age, who demonstrates behaviours outside of their normative parameters of development.</i></p>
Child on child abuse	The term used to describe abusive behaviour, including harmful sexual behaviour, occurring amongst CYP. This was previously referred to as peer-on-peer abuse.
Child displaying the harmful sexual behaviour / perpetrator / alleged perpetrator	<p>Harmful sexual behaviour is a behaviour the CYP is using to communicate an unmet need. Understanding this unmet need is important. Labels such as ‘perpetrator’ and ‘abuser’ should be avoided, especially in front of the CYP. ‘Child displaying the harmful sexual behaviour’ is a useful term.</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>‘... schools and colleges should think very carefully about terminology [Alleged perpetrator(s)] and where appropriate ‘perpetrator(s)’, especially when speaking in front of children, not</i></p>

	<i>least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well... the use of appropriate terminology will be for schools and colleges to determine, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.</i>
Child who has experienced harmful sexual behaviour / victim / survivor	<p>A CYP who has experienced harmful sexual behaviour may not want to be referred to as 'victim' or 'survivor'. Settings should be guided by the CYP's wishes on how they would like to be referred to.</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>... 'victim'... is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that schools and colleges recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, schools and colleges should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.</i></p>
Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')	For relationships where both CYP are under 16 and abuse is present, it is referred to as 'abuse in intimate personal relationships between children' or 'teenage relationship abuse'. In law, the term 'domestic abuse' is only applied to relationships where both parties are over 16 years of age.
Sexual violence offences	Sexual violence is a non-legal term which can be used to describe the range of sexual offences set out in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Definitions of these offences can be found in the section below.
Consent	<p>The dictionary definition of consent is 'permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.' But consent in a sexual context is wider than this.</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity.</i></p> <p>Rape Crisis UK states: <i>Consenting to someone touching you in a sexual manner means agreeing to it by choice and having both the freedom and capacity to make that choice.</i> <i>It is NOT consent if you or someone else was:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Asleep, unconscious, drunk, drugged or 'on' drugs.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Pressured, manipulated, tricked or scared into saying yes.</i> ▪ <i>Too young or vulnerable to have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.</i> <p><i>Consent can be withdrawn at any time, including during sex or a sexual act. Just because someone consented to something before doesn't mean they consented to it happening again.</i></p>
Zero-tolerance culture	<p>School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people (CYP). (Ofsted 2021)</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>"Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it"</i></p>
Power imbalance	<p>A power imbalance is an environment, relationship, or interaction where one party has far more social power than the other. Many factors can lead to a power imbalance such as: physical strength, social standing, abuse, age or one party holding sensitive information about the other.</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>"Schools and colleges should be aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s)."</i></p>
Coercive and controlling behaviour / coercion	<p>The Government definition outlines the following: <i>"Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim"</i> <i>Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour"</i></p>
Continuum of sexual behaviours	<p>Hackett (2010) created a continuum which presents sexualised behaviour as a range from 'normal' to 'inappropriate', 'problematic', 'abusive' and 'violent'.</p>
Statutory Partners	<p>Children's Social Care, the Police and Health Services are known as Statutory Partners.</p>

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).	Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>“SARCs offer confidential and non-judgemental support to victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They provide medical, practical, and emotional care and advice to all children and adults, regardless of when the incident occurred.”</i>
Children and Young People’s Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs)	Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states: <i>“[ChISVAs] provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with schools and colleges to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim.”</i>
Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals	This could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	<p>The ESCB define Child Sexual Exploitation as: <i>“Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Department for Education, 2017)”</i></p> <p>The Children’s Society have produced ‘Appropriate Language in Relation to Child Exploitation: Guidance for Professionals’. The document seeks to provide guidance to professionals on the appropriate use of language when discussing CYP and their experience of exploitation in a range of contexts.</p>
Risk in the Community	The ESCB Risk in the Community page states: <i>“Risk in the Community is the Essex partnership approach to tackling exploitation of young people. Traditionally, safeguarding young people focused on risks within the home, but it is more apparent today that young people experience risks in various contexts outside their family unit”</i>
Grooming	The ESCB define grooming as: <i>“Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and/or emotional connection with a child or young person so that they can exploit them. Children and young people who are groomed can be exploited, radicalised, trafficked or sexually abused.”</i>

Sexual Offence definitions	
Sexual Offences	Definition
Rape	Sexual Offences Act 2003 definition: <i>A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.</i>
Assault by Penetration	Sexual Offences Act 2003 definition: <i>A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.</i>
Sexual Assault (previously referred to as 'indecent assault' prior to the Sexual Offences Act 2003)	Sexual Offences Act 2003 definition: <i>A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.</i> Note from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): <i>Schools and colleges should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.</i> Rape Crisis UK: <i>It's a really common myth about sexual assault, rape and other kinds of sexual violence and abuse that they have to involve physical force or leave the person with visible injuries. But that isn't true. There are many other 'tactics' that someone might use to sexually assault someone. For example: pressure, manipulation, bullying, intimidation, threats, deception, drugs or alcohol. BUT, none of these have to have happened for it to still be sexual assault. Many people find themselves unable to speak or move when faced with a scary, shocking or dangerous situation. If that happened, it does not mean the person gave their consent. And if there's no consent then it is always sexual assault.</i>
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent	Sexual Offences Act 2003 definition: <i>A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.</i> Note from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): <i>this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.</i>
Sexual harassment	Rape Crisis UK: <i>Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual behaviour that makes someone feel upset, scared, offended or humiliated, or is meant to make them feel that way.</i>

	<p><i>Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.</i></p> <p><i>This means that people are legally protected from sexual harassment in certain places – for example, at work, on transport and at schools, colleges and universities. So, if sexual harassment does happen in these places, victims and survivors have the right to take action to find a solution. This could include making a complaint or making a claim in the civil courts.</i></p> <p><i>Some forms of sexual harassment automatically break criminal law in England and Wales and are therefore crimes. These include: stalking, indecent exposure, ‘upskirting’ and any sexual harassment involving physical contact (this amounts to sexual assault in English and Welsh law).</i></p> <p><i>Other forms of sexual harassment might also break criminal law, depending on the situation. For example, if someone carries out sexual harassment behaviours on more than one occasion that are intended to cause another person alarm or distress, they may be committing the crime of harassment.</i></p> <p><i>Description from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023):</i> <i>[Sexual harassment is] ‘Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. 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.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names</i> ▪ <i>sexual “jokes” or taunting</i> ▪ <i>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.</i> ▪ <i>displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature</i> ▪ <i>upskirting (this is a criminal offence)</i>
<p>Online sexual harassment</p>	<p><i>Description from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023):</i> <i>This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence.</i> ▪ <i>sharing of unwanted explicit content</i> ▪ <i>sexualised online bullying</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media</i> ▪ <i>sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and</i> ▪ <i>coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.</i>
Upskirting	<p>The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to make upskirting a specific offence of voyeurism Description from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): <i>[Upskirting] typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.</i></p>
<p>Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos</p> <p>Sexting</p> <p>Youth produced sexual imagery</p> <p>Nudes</p> <p>Indecent imagery</p>	<p>The Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) criminalised indecent photographs of children. The Act states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is an offence to take, permit to be taken, possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children ▪ The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18 <p>The below is paraphrased from the Government guidance 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (2020):</p> <p>In the context of harmful sexual behaviour within education settings, we are referring to: a person under the age of 18 creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of themselves with a peer who is also under the age of 18; a person under the age of 18 sharing nudes and semi-nudes created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18; and a person under the age of 18 who is in possession of nudes and semi-nudes created by another person under the age of 18.</p> <p>The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes of under 18s by adults (18 and over) constitutes child sexual abuse and education settings should always inform their local police force as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' encompasses the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:</p>

- CYP find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer
- CYP digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame

Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one CYP

Definition of indecent

‘Indecent’ is not defined in legislation. When cases are prosecuted, the question of whether any photograph of a CYP is indecent is for a jury, magistrate or district judge to decide based on what is the recognised standard of propriety.

Indecent imagery does not always mean nudity; however, images are likely to be defined as such if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- nude or semi-nude sexual posing (e.g. displaying genitals and/or breasts or overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear)
- someone nude or semi-nude touching themselves in a sexual way
- any sexual activity involving a CYP
- someone hurting someone else sexually
- sexual activity that includes animals

Appendix B: Harmful Sexual Behaviour: Individual Risk Assessment and Safety Plan

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#) advises that an immediate risk and needs assessment is made following a report of sexual violence. Where sexual harassment is reported, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The setting risk assessment and safety plan is not designed to replace risk assessments created by other agencies such as Children's Social Care or the police - these professional risk assessments should inform the setting's response and assessment.

This individual risk assessment and safety plan template can be used to assess the risks for the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Each child or young person (CYP) will need a separate individual risk assessment and safety plan. The tool should be used immediately after the incident to help inform the response and should be updated as the situation develops and reviewed regularly.

When completing this risk assessment and safety plan, settings will need to consider whether the sexual behaviours displayed are harmful. The NSPCC website page '[Understanding sexualised behaviour in children](#)' provides support for settings to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviour from sexual behaviours that are problematic or harmful. The tool is based upon Hackett's Sexualised Behaviour Continuum (2010), as referenced in Keeping Children Safe in Education, and provides settings with guidance, training and resources. Settings that have a licence to use the Brook Traffic Light Tool can also use this to assess the behaviour.

In this document, we use the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator'. These are widely recognised and understood terms and helpful for the purposes of this guidance. However, it is important that settings are mindful of the language used to describe CYP and that they use appropriate language and terms. It is also important to understand that not all those who have experienced abuse will recognise themselves as a 'victim' and to understand that 'alleged perpetrators' may also be 'victims' of abuse themselves.

The Individual Risk Assessment and Safety Plan has the following sections:

1. [Child or Young Person's details and risk assessment information](#)
2. [Incident and response details](#)
3. [Risk considerations](#)
4. [Risk factors and protective factors](#)
5. [Safety plan](#)
6. [Risk assessment and Safety Plan agreement](#)
7. [Appendix A: Risk and Protective Factors - examples](#)

1. Child or Young Person's details and risk assessment information

CYP details	
Name	
Date of birth	

Risk assessment and safety plan details	
Risk assessment and safety plan completed by:	
Agencies contributing to the risk assessment and safety plan: <i>Include the agency name and worker name</i>	
Date risk assessment and safety plan completed:	
Date to be reviewed:	
Dates the risk assessment and safety plan has been updated:	

Contextual information about the CYP	
Is the CYP currently known/open to Social Care? Have they previously been known/open? <i>If yes, please detail the level of involvement: Child Protection (CP), Child in Need (CiN), Child in Care (CiC) or Family Solutions.</i>	
Does the CYP have a One Plan or EHCP?	
Does the CYP have any health needs, including mental health concerns?	
Are any other professionals involved with the CYP or their family? <i>If yes, please detail the agency, name of the worker and the worker's role.</i>	
Who are the CYP's parent/carers and siblings? What is the family background?	

2. Incident and response details

The incident/behaviours	
Date and time of incident	
Location of incident	
Name and age of the victim	
Name and age of the CYP displaying the harmful sexual behaviour	
Is there a power imbalance between the CYP involved? <i>For example, is there a difference in: age, maturity, confidence, social status? Does one CYP have a disability or learning difficulty? Was there consent or the possibility of forced consent/coercion?</i>	
How the incident became known to staff	
Detail of the incident <i>Include the types of behaviour and language observed/reported. Record any harm caused that you are aware of</i>	
Has a crime possibly been committed as part of this incident? <i>See the Common Language Framework (Appendix B) for crime definitions</i>	<i>If you have answered yes to this question, you need to seek advice from both the Police and Social Care as part of your response. The seriousness of the potential crime will impact the method you use to contact these Statutory Partners. For guidance, see Appendix E – Contacting other agencies, including statutory agencies’.</i>
Is this the first time that the CYP has displayed harmful sexual behaviours? <i>If no, detail the previous incidents/behaviours. Is there a potential pattern of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour? Are there any patterns to the behaviour such as similar times/locations/victims etc</i>	
Could there potentially be other victims?	
Assessed category for this behaviour	<i>Normal, inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent</i>

Reasoning for assessing the behaviour in the category	
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CYP's response to the incident	
How has the CYP responded to the incident? <i>Capture the CYP's voice here. Consider their behaviour, mental health, whether they reported the incident, their attitude to it etc</i>	
If applicable, what needs could their behaviour be communicating?	

3. Risk considerations

Overview of wider risks and concerns for the CYP	
Presenting behaviour	
Dysregulation	
Relationship	
Family dynamic	
Community	
Any other concerns	

Assessment of harmful sexual behaviour risk	
CYP's risk to self	How? -
CYP's risk to/from specific CYP	Who? - How? -
CYP's risk to/from other CYP in the setting	Who? - How? -
CYP's risk to/from staff/adults	Who? - How? -
CYP's risk in the community	Who? - How? -
Does the CYP have any siblings whose risk needs to be considered as part of the setting response?	

Contextual considerations

Record any known stressors/triggers for the behaviour. <i>Consider: particular lessons, activities, times of day, peers, staff, activity outside of school etc.</i>	
Record any risky locations identified. <i>Consider: Toilets, changing rooms, unsupervised areas of the school etc.</i>	
Record any risky activities including use of technology. <i>Consider: school trips, sports lessons, use of internet, computers, phones etc.</i>	
Record transport arrangements to and from school and associated risks	

Overview of the CYP's wellbeing	
Before the incident	
After the incident	
Are parents/family accessing support for CYP?	

4. Risk factors and protective factors

See [Appendix A](#) for prompts on the risk factors and protective factors to consider

Risk factors	
In the CYP	
In the family	
In the setting	
In the community	

Protective factors	
In the CYP	
In the family	
In the setting	
In the community	

5. Safety plan

Identified issue <i>Is the presenting behaviour/risk potential or actual?</i>	Strategies to reduce the presenting behaviour/risk <i>Consider protective factors and current on-going work</i>	Agency/adult supporting the strategy	Review <i>Has the presenting behaviour/risk reduced? Are the strategies effective or do they need amending?</i>
<i>Example: Evan is touching his genitals in public spaces where other CYP may witness him</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education work – NSPCC - Pants - Identifying private spaces where Evan can do this - Welfare check with CYP who have witnessed the behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DSL - Parent(s) 	

6. Risk assessment and Safety Plan agreement

Risk assessment and Safety Plan agreed by and shared with:		
Name	Role	Signature
	Headteacher	
	Designated Safeguarding Lead	
	Child / Young person	
	Parent / Carer	
	Other agencies	

Appendix A: Risk and Protective Factors

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Genetic disposition • Prenatal alcohol exposure • Low IQ • Learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic 'failure/disappointment' • Low self-esteem • Feelings of isolation • Difficulties with impulse control • Underdeveloped executive functioning skills • Low harm avoidance • Sensation seeking • Difficulties with self-control/regulation • Aggressiveness • Anxiety • Depression • Hyperactivity/ADHD • Early persistent social, emotional and mental health needs • Early substance use • Social disengagement / Retreating coping strategy • Conduct disorder • Favourable attitudes toward drugs • Rebelliousness • Early substance use • Antisocial behaviour • Self-injury • Risk taking behaviours • Risk of knowing or knowing of someone who has completed suicide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure attachment(s) experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Confident • A positive attitude, optimistic approach to life • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect • Ability to self-regulate/self-soothe • Ability to make friends and get along with others • Positive physical development • Good self-esteem • Good coping skills and problem-solving skills • Engagement and connections in two or more of the following contexts: at school/setting, with peers, in athletics, employment, religion, culture • Identity exploration in love, work, and world view • Subjective sense of self-sufficiency, making independent decisions, becoming financially independent • Future orientation • Achievement motivation • Feeling valued

<p>In the family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear boundaries and limitations • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child’s changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect, maltreatment • Parental or sibling psychiatric illness • Parental or sibling criminality, Substance e.g. drugs & alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship & pets • Permissive parenting • Parent–child conflict • Inadequate supervision and monitoring • Low parental warmth • Parental hostility • Harsh discipline • Low/high parental aspirations for child where the child is experiencing extreme pressure or feel unsupported • Fragile attachments with parents • Leaving home as a result of conflict • Homelessness • Family distress • Leaving institutional/government care (hospital, foster care, correctional facility, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord • Responsiveness • Protection from harm and fear • Opportunities to resolve conflict • Adequate socioeconomic resources for the family • Consistent and clear boundaries and limitations implemented and maintained including family that provides structure, limits, rules, monitoring, and predictability • Language-based, rather than physical, discipline • Extended family support • Supportive relationships with family members • Clear expectations for behaviour and values • Balance of autonomy and relatedness to family • Behavioural and emotional autonomy • Healthy prenatal and early childhood development • Connectedness to adults in the extended family / family support network
<p>In the setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying / abuse including online (cyber) • Discrimination e.g. Racism • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Peer influences towards risk taking e.g. associating/partaking with drug-using peers • Peer pressure • Fragile pupil to teacher/setting staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive practice • Personalised/ tailored curriculum if required • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • ‘Open door’ policy for children to raise problems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of educational setting ‘failures’ • Low motivation around education setting • Accessibility/ availability • Peer rejection / lack of a sense of belonging/ Interpersonal alienation • Exclusion / Non-attendance • Aggression toward peers • Accessibility/ availability • Lack of positive role models • Low ratio of caregivers to children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole-setting approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil to teacher/setting staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences/ friendships • Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively including risk assessments • Support for early learning • Access to supplementary services to support the child’s needs • Stable, secure attachment to childcare provider • Regulatory systems that support high quality of care • Healthy peer groups • Pupil educational setting engagement/ motivation • Positive teacher expectations • Effective classroom management • Positive partnering between educational setting and family • High academic standards • Presence of mentors and support for development of skills and interests • Opportunities for engagement within educational setting and community • Positive norms • Physical and psychological safety • Opportunities for exploration in work and setting • Positive adult role models, coaches, mentors
In the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network

community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events • Presence of neighbourhood crime • Negative Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good/stable housing • High standard of living • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities available • Steady employment • Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc) • Access to Technology
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Appendix C: Contacting other agencies, including statutory agencies

“Schools and colleges should not feel that they are alone in dealing with sexual violence and sexual harassment” [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

When dealing with incidents of Harmful Sexual Behaviour, schools and settings will often need to contact outside agencies to access specialist advice and services. Local authority Children’s Social Care and the police will be important partners where a crime might have been committed or there are safeguarding concerns for a CYP.

This guidance brings together statutory and non-statutory guidance on when schools should consider contacting other agencies in their response to harmful sexual behaviour incidents and child-on-child abuse.

No guidance can give definitive step-by-step advice for every case. Each case will need to be handled according to its own unique circumstances and decisions made on a case-by-case basis.

Contents

When to contact the Police
When to contact Children’s Social Care
When to consider Early Help procedures
When to involve Health agencies
When to contact the ECC Education Access Team

When to contact the Police

This guidance draws upon several statutory and non-statutory documents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs should read the below documents in their entirety and be familiar with them.

Document	Summary in relation to HSB	Specific pages of interest for Police contact advice
When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges	This document contains information on when settings should contact the police. Regarding Sexual Offences, it advises settings to defer to the documents below. It advises that if the crimes of rape or a serious sexual assault are involved, the police should be called immediately.	Pages 2 to 8 – set out the general principles on when settings should contact the police and how to handle this alongside the setting’s processes and policies Page 13 – Harassment flow chart. Sexual harassment is included Page 14 – Sexual offences flow chart
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)	Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding CYP, including information on how to handle cases of harmful sexual behaviour.	Pages 105 – 135 - Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. Reporting to Police and the on-going management of cases is covered in this section. We advise being familiar with the whole section Pages 121 – 123 – Contains the information on initially reporting to Police
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)	A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP. In many incidents of harmful sexual behaviour, it will be important to engage other agencies and this document provides the framework for doing so.	The whole document is relevant
Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people	A guidance document providing advice for education settings dealing with incidents involving CYP sharing nudes and semi-nudes.	The whole document is relevant

Do you need to consider contacting the police?

If a crime has or may have been committed, the setting needs to consider contacting the police. [When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges](#) contains a list of factors you will need to consider within this decision. These include:

- the seriousness of the incident – some crimes MUST be reported to the police (see the table below for further information)
- the level of harm caused
- the circumstances leading to the incident
- aggravating factors which contribute to making the incident and level of harm more serious. Aggravating factors increase the level of risk, or highlight the need for a wider investigation and the need for the involvement of a range of agencies as well as the police
- whether the young people involved have any vulnerabilities
- whether this could be part of a pattern of behaviour also occurring in the community, in which case the police will want to be involved
- the age of the CYP who has displayed the harmful sexual behaviour. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases. This should be in parallel with contacting Children’s Social Care
- the wishes of the victim and how they wish to proceed must be important considerations within the setting’s response to a report. They should have as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding the support provided to them and the progression of the investigation, however this must be balanced carefully with the setting’s duty and responsibility to protect CYP

The table below organises the guidance on reporting to the Police by crime. Definitions of Sexual Offences can be found under the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#). The setting must be familiar with these definitions to enable accurate decision making.

Crime	Guidance on involving the Police	Factors to consider in your decision
Rape Assault by Penetration Sexual assault	When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges - call the Police immediately if a rape or serious sexual assault is reported. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) - rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children’s Social Care
Sexual harassment, sexual bullying	When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges - a sexual element within harassment is an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the nature of the harassment? What behaviours have constituted the harassment? Are any of them crimes?

Crime	Guidance on involving the Police	Factors to consider in your decision
and online sexual harassment	aggravating factor and requires consideration of a referral to police. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) – depending on the circumstances of the incident/s and the presence of aggravating factors, the response to a report of sexual harassment can vary from handling the incident internally to reporting to statutory partners such as the police.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the victim’s wishes? Do they want to report to the police? ▪ What level of harm has been caused by the harassment? ▪ Is this a one-off incident of harassment or an on-going campaign? ▪ How many victims of the harassment are there? Is it in the interests of the school/wider community to report to police?
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent	Sexual Offences Act 2003 -Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent is a crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children’s Social Care
Upskirting	Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) – lists upskirting as a behaviour that can be included within sexual harassment but acknowledges that it is a criminal offence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children’s Social Care
Youth produced sexual images / sexting / nudes	Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is ‘indecent’ is illegal, including self-produced imagery. However, the NPCC has made it clear that incidents involving sharing nudes and semi-nudes should have an immediate focus on safeguarding CYP. In many cases, education settings may respond to incidents without involving the police, for example where an incident can be defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the incident be defined as aggravated or experimental? See Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) 1.6(a) for definition guidance. ▪ Is there an immediate risk to the CYP? For example, they are presenting as suicidal or self-harming as a result? ▪ What are the victim’s wishes? Do they want to report to the Police? ▪ Would contacting the police be a proportionate response? ▪ What was the motivation behind the incident? ▪ How appropriate was the CYP’s behaviour?

Crime	Guidance on involving the Police	Factors to consider in your decision
	<p>as 'experimental' and there is no evidence of abusive or aggravating elements.</p> <p>The police may need to be involved in some cases where there are abusive and/or aggravating factors. A referral should be made to the police if a CYP has been pressured or coerced into sharing an image, images have been shared without consent and with malicious intent, if there was a deliberate intent to cause harm by sharing the nudes and semi-nudes or if they have been used to bully or blackmail a CYP.</p> <p>If the incident involves an adult (age 18 or over), the Police must be informed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How widely has the image been shared? Was it shared without the consent of the CYP who produced the image? ▪ Is there reason to believe that the CYP has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs)? ▪ Does what you know about the images or videos suggest the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent? ▪ Do the images involve sexual acts and the pupil in the images or videos is under 13? ▪ Has the nude or semi-nude been shared beyond its intended recipient? ▪ See ANNEX A of Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) for a comprehensive list of questions to support the assessment of the incident

If an incident is reported to the police, a referral to local authority Children's Social Care will also generally be made.

In the initial response to an incident, whilst considering whether to report the crime to the police, the setting should:

- make the decision to report to police or manage internally at an early stage, stopping any internal school/setting investigation immediately once the decision to report to police has been made. The setting should only ask questions to establish the basic facts of the incident before making the decision
- fully document the setting's initial enquires to establish the basic facts, as they may be required if the matter goes to court. This includes recording questions asked to young people and their replies
- record the rationale for involving the Police. This will include advice received from other agencies such as the police or Children's Social Care
- make every effort to preserve any relevant evidence

- assign a single point of contact between the setting and police – this will usually be the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead

For further information on how to proceed within the setting once a report has been made to police, please see [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#). Pages 3 and 4 of [When to call the Police – Guidance for schools and colleges](#) provide information and advice for settings who are reporting a crime to the police.

How to contact the Police in Essex

- 999 – for an emergency. If there is: a danger to life; a risk of injury; or a serious crime is in progress or about to happen
- 101 or [online](#) – to report non-emergency crimes
- Your local Children and Young Persons (CYP) Officer or the Youth Justice Police Team (YJT) (Youth.justice.team@essex.police.uk) - for advice and guidance. The CYP Officers work alongside the Youth Justice Police Team so if you do not know your CYP Officer or your Officer is not on shift, this is a good alternative contact. *The YJT may be able to offer general advice but if the CYP's details are shared with them, it is likely they will be duty bound by National Crime Recording Standards to record the crime. This does not criminalise a CYP but will amount to sharing information with the police. Be clear on whether you are seeking 'general guidance' or 'specific information sharing about an incident'.*

Dealing with an incident internally

If a setting decides to deal with an incident internally without reporting it to the police, the setting should:

- record the rationale for not involving the Police if there has been a crime or potential crime reported. This will include advice received from other agencies such as the Police or Children's Social Care
- investigate the incident in line with the setting's behaviour policy and any other relevant policies
- record the outcome of the investigation and how the incident has been resolved

Please note that if a referral to the Children and Families Hub is deemed necessary, this may result in a referral to the Police.

When to contact Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care is the main point of contact for settings if there are safeguarding concerns about a CYP. ***If a CYP is suffering significant harm, or is at immediate risk of significant harm, a request for support to Children's Social Care must be made immediately via the Priority Line.***

The [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(2021\)](#) contains the information settings need to decide whether Children’s Social Care should be contacted about an incident of harmful sexual behaviour or child on child abuse. The ‘indicators of possible need’ (pages 23 – 29) are a helpful resource for settings looking for an indication of the likely level of need for the CYP.

The 4 Levels of need in Essex, set out on pages 8-11 in the Effective Support Document, are:

- Universal – Level 1
- Additional – Level 2
- Intensive – Level 3
- Specialist – Level 4

In many cases of harmful sexual behaviour or child on child abuse, Children’s Social Care should be consulted. A request for support may be needed, depending on the level of need the CYP is presenting.

The Consultation Line at the Children and Families Hub offers professionals in Essex the opportunity to discuss with a social worker their concerns about a CYP. This can support settings in deciding whether a request for support is needed (Levels 3 and 4) or if Early Help procedures should be initiated (Levels 2 and 3). Further details of this service can be found on page 21 of [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(2021\)](#).

How to contact Children’s Social Care in Essex:

- **Request for Support:** Requests for support are made online via an [Online Form](#). Details of how to make a good referral are included on the website
- **Consultation Line:** Settings can contact the Children & Families Hub on 0345 603 7627 and ask for the Consultation line
- **Priority Referral:** For emergencies that require a rapid social care response only. Telephone the Children and Families Hub on 0345 6037627 and ask for the Priority Line. Requests for Support made through the Priority Line must be followed up with a [written Request for Support](#) within the given timeframe

When to consider Early Help procedures

This guidance draws upon several statutory and non-statutory documents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (DDSL) should read the below documents in their entirety and be familiar with them.

Document	Summary in relation to HSB	Specific pages of interest for Early Help advice
Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (2021)	Guidance for all practitioners in working together with CYPs and families to provide early help, targeted and specialist support.	Early Help is discussed on pages 8 – 13, 20 – 22, 24 - 25

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)	Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding CYPs, including information on how to handle cases of harmful sexual behaviour.	Part 1 of the guidance, as well as page 119 and 120 for the use of Early Help in HSB cases
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)	A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP. In many incidents of harmful sexual behaviour, it will be important to engage other agencies and this document provides the framework for doing so.	'Chapter 1: Assessing Need and Providing Help' covers Early Help

[Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(2021\)](#) sets out the indicators of need for Level 2: accessing additional support and early help. Early Help is appropriate where the threshold for referral to a statutory agency (Police and Children’s Social Care) is not met, but the CYP requires support from other services, whilst the setting manages the incident internally. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#) recognises that [Early Help may be useful for non-violent HSB and for preventing sexual violence from escalating.](#)

The Children & Families Hub may be contacted about an incident of harmful sexual behaviour or child on child abuse, as part of the setting’s response to an incident. The Children and Families Hub can provide advice and signpost to other services, to support the Early Help process. The Consultation Line at the Children & Families Hub can be contacted on 0345 603 7627.

How to contact Early Help providers in Essex

- [Early Help Drop-in sessions](#) are available in each quadrant for advice and guidance to settings
- A selection of Early Help resources, including Early Help Plan templates, can be found on the [Essex.gov.uk 'Resources for Practitioners' page](#)
- Team Around the Family Support Officers (TAFSOs) can be contacted via TAFSO@essex.gov.uk
- The Essex [directory of services](#) has the details for a vast number of services that can support CYP and families.
- The [Level 2: getting some additional support and early help page](#) provides up to date information on Early Help options in Essex

When to involve Health agencies

Settings should consider whether the CYP involved in an incident of harmful sexual behaviour / child on child abuse have any presenting health needs and whether they would benefit from a referral to a specialist health service. This may be for either the victim or alleged perpetrator for their physical, sexual or mental health.

Support for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse

There are several specialist services who can support CYP who have experienced sexual violence. Settings should signpost CYP to these services following an incident and support with referrals if requested. Referrals will often be in parallel with referrals to police and social care. Settings should be aware that CYP who have been abused may not be ready to access help instantly and therefore should ensure that CYP are aware of the services so they can access them when/if they feel comfortable.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) - CYP that have a health need arising from sexual assault or abuse can access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). SARCs offer confidential and non-judgemental support to victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. They provide medical, practical, and emotional care and advice to all CYP and adults, regardless of when the incident occurred. Details of local SARCs can be found on the [NHS website](#).

Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) - Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs) provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with schools and colleges to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim. In Essex, ChISAVs can be accessed via [Synergy Essex](#), a partnership of rape and sexual abuse centres in Essex (CARA and SERRIC). They deliver specialist community-based services in Essex for victims and survivors of all forms of sexual violence and abuse, sexual domestic violence, sexual harassment and child sexual abuse.

Appendix H signposts to agencies and resources to support CYP who have experienced harmful sexual behaviour.

Support for CYP displaying harmful sexual behaviours

Settings should be aware that CYP who display harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and trauma themselves and this should be acknowledged within the response. It should also be acknowledged that displaying harmful sexual behaviour is often due to the CYP having an unmet need themselves.

Appendix H signposts to agencies and resources to support CYP who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour.

When to contact the ECC Education Access Team

The Education Access Team has responsibility for commissioning suitable education for pupils who are unable to attend school, including permanent exclusion, suspensions, alternative education and commissioned placements at Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

If a permanent exclusion or suspension is being considered following an incident of HSB, the ECC Education Access Team can be contacted for advice and guidance using the contact details on the [Essex Schools InfoLink Education Access page](#). A commissioned placement at a PRU may be a more positive option and can be explored by making a [Request for Support](#) to the Education Access Team. If a permanent exclusion is issued, the Education Access Team must be notified via a Permanent Exclusion Notification which can be found on the [EA Permanent Exclusion page](#). If a suspension is issued, the local authority must be informed without delay, regardless of the length of the suspension, by forwarding a copy of the suspension letter issued to parents to suspensions@essex.gov.uk.

Appendix D: Harmful Sexual Behaviour: Signposting to agencies, resources, and support

This document signposts to resources, websites, training, and agencies to support:

[A whole school / setting approach to HSB, including RSHE](#)

[Knowledge and training for DSLs and other staff, including handling incidents of HSB](#)

[Victims of harmful sexual behaviour](#)


[Online sexual abuse and images](#)

[CYP displaying harmful sexual behaviour](#)

[SEMH support](#)

[Parents / carers](#)


A whole school/setting approach to HSB, including RSHE

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum support and contact information for Essex Schools - ECC	Signposting to RHSE resources and information	Essex schools have access to a range of commissioned services which support the RSHE curriculum including offers to schools, teachers, children and young people, parents and carers. Details of these services and other support organisations can be found in this document	 RSHE Support offer to Schools Autumn
Talk Relationships - Learning service for secondary teachers to support RSHE delivery - NSPCC	elearning course, lesson plans and a dedicated helpline	Talk Relationships aims to support secondary school teachers with delivering sex and relationships education and fostering a sense of safety for young people to discuss relationships	Visit the page: Talk Relationships Access the training: Talk Relationships: delivering sex and relationships education training
Relationships and sex education (RSE) resources for schools - NSPCC	Lesson resources	A list of teaching resources to help settings plan health, relationships and sex education that protect young people and promotes healthy wellbeing	Relationships and sex education (RSE) resources for schools NSPCC Learning
Resources on harmful sexual behaviour in schools including child-on-child sexual abuse and healthy	Resources	A range of resources from the NSPCC on healthy relationships and harmful sexual behaviour, including child-on-child sexual abuse. These can be used by anyone who works or volunteers	Resources on child-on-child sexual abuse in education and healthy relationships NSPCC Learning

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
relationships - NSPCC		with children and young people	
Tackling Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools - DfE	Recorded webinars	The Department for Education and subject experts recorded a series of three 90-minute webinars to support high quality delivery of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The webinars focus on three important topics: Domestic abuse and coercion, Pornography and the impact of viewing harmful content online and Child Sexual Exploitation	Visit the DfE page Tackling Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools
Respectful School Communities - DfE	Self-Review and Signposting Tool	This tool has been designed to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline, in order to combat bullying, harassment and abuse of any kind. It is intended for use by the senior leadership team within schools	Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool - Educate Against Hate
That Guy – better ways to be a man – Police Scotland	Website	Police Scotland Campaign that aims to reduce rape, serious sexual assault and harassment by having frank conversations with men about male sexual entitlement	That Guy website page
Equally Safe at School	Website	Equally Safe at School has been developed for secondary schools to help them take a whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence, with staff and students working together with a shared understanding and commitment to equality and safety for all	Equally Safe at School A whole school approach to preventing gender based violence

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Undressed - LGFL	Resource	Provides settings with advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online	LGFL Undressed website
Thinkuknow	Website and resources	Provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online and includes lesson plans and resources to teach children about staying safe online and maintaining healthy relationships	Thinkuknow website
Beyond referrals: Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Website and resources	Resources for gathering pupil voice	Beyond referrals: Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Knowledge and training for DSLs and other staff, including handling incidents of HSB


Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Brook Traffic Light Tool	Training and tool	A tool to support professionals to recognise sexual behaviours and assess whether they are age and developmentally appropriate or harmful / abusive	Book on to a training session on the Education Essex Online Booking System <i>only available in Spring and Summer 2023 terms</i>
NSPCC helpline – Report Abuse in Education	Helpline	The dedicated NSPCC helpline 'Report Abuse in Education' provides a bespoke helpline for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance	0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk The helpline details can be found online here .
Supporting Young Victims and Survivors - SERRIC	Guidance leaflet	CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse) collaborated with young survivors and the professionals who support them to identify actions that schools can take to support young survivors in school. This guidance details the findings from this collaboration	 Supporting victims and survivors.odt

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Understanding Young People's Experiences of Sexual Harm: Supporting Students	Animations, PowerPoints and worksheets	A series of five animated videos to support professionals working with children and young people to understand the impacts of sexual violence	The animations can be accessed on the CARA website
Safety planning in education: a guide for professionals - Ilford: Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse,	Guide to safety planning and responding to HSB incidents	Aims to support education professionals' knowledge, skills and confidence to understand and respond to incidents of harmful sexual behaviour and ensure the safety of all children and young people is addressed	Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse website
Lucy Faithfull HSB prevention toolkit	Toolkit including practical tips and signposting	This toolkit is designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families	Harmful sexual behaviour toolkit (The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2021)
StopItNow – Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children	Website and helpline	Help for professionals working in child sexual abuse prevention, so that they're well equipped to keep children safe	StopItNow website
SWGfl Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Schools resources	Website and resources	Support for professionals working with children and young people when responding to incidents or issues surrounding harmful sexual behaviours	SWGfl Website
NSPCC HSB pages	Website, training and resources	Advice on how to respond to incidents, preventative measure support, training opportunities and resources to use with CYP	NSPCC Learning website
NSPCC 'Let children know you're listening'	Training	Helping adults respond to children disclosing abuse	Let children know you're listening

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
NSPCC Learning - Children and young people's views on learning about sex, sexuality and relationships: literature review	A narrative review of UK literature	A literature review which drew on the direct views of children on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how and where 11- to 25-year-olds learn about relationships, sex and sexuality children's views of the relationships and sex education (RSE) they currently receive or have previously received differences in children's experiences based on their personal characteristics (e.g. sexuality, gender identity, age) 	The review can be accessed on the NSPCC Learning website .
Anti-bullying Alliance - Sexual and sexist bullying	Training, a guide for schools	The Anti-Bullying Alliance have created and curated tools to help settings develop effective anti-bullying practice in this area	Anti-bullying Alliance website
'Appropriate Language in Relation to Child Exploitation: Guidance for Professionals' – The Children's Society	Guidance document	This document seeks to provide guidance to professionals on the appropriate use of language when discussing CYP and their experience of exploitation in a range of contexts	Appropriate Language in Relation to Child Exploitation: Guidance for Professionals'
Essex Schools InfoLink Harmful Sexual Behaviour page	Information	An overview of HSB and support available in Essex	ESI Harmful Sexual Behaviour page
Beyond referrals: Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Website and resources	Resources for schools to assess their own response to harmful sexual behaviour	Beyond referrals: Harmful Sexual Behaviour and A briefing on the findings, implications and resources for schools and multi-agency partners
Podcast: harmful sexual behaviour in schools - NSPCC	Podcast	A 3 part series of Podcasts on harmful sexual behaviour in education settings	Podcast: harmful sexual behaviour in schools

Victims of harmful sexual behaviour

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
NSPCC helpline – Report Abuse in Education	Helpline	The dedicated NSPCC helpline ‘Report Abuse in Education’ provides a bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school	0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk . The helpline details can be found online here .
Synergy Essex	A partnership of rape and sexual abuse centres in Essex (CARA and SERRIC).	Specialist community-based services in Essex for victims and survivors of all forms of sexual violence and abuse, sexual domestic violence, sexual harassment and child sexual abuse. ChISAVs can be accessed via Synergy	Synergy Essex
The Survivors Trust	Website signposting to counselling, support, helplines, resources and advocacy services	A collection of member agencies who provide a range of specialist services to survivors including counselling, support, helplines and advocacy services for women, men, non-binary people and children	The Survivors Trust website
NHS - Help after rape and assault	Website and signposting	Advice and guidance from the NHS on the support available following rape and sexual assault	NHS website - help after rape and sexual assault
SARCs – Sexual Assault Referral Centres	Sexual assault support service	SARCs offer a range of services, including crisis care, medical and forensic examinations, emergency contraception and testing for STIs. They can also arrange access to an independent sexual assault advisor (ISVA), as well as referrals to mental health support and sexual violence support services	Local SARCs can be found on the NHS website - help after rape and sexual assault
The Terrence Higgins Trust	Young Persons 1:1 early	Support for young people aged 13-24 who may be at	Referrals can be made via the online referral system

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
	Intervention and Education Programme	risk from sexual ill health or harm	<p>The team can be contacted with further questions relating to the programme via essexyoungpeople@tth.org.uk</p> <p>The below document contains further information, including criteria and exclusions for referral.</p> <p> 1-1 Early Intervention Criteria</p>
Rape Crisis	Helpline (for ages 16+) and website	Information and support for people who have experienced rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse or any other type of sexual violence	Rape Crisis England and Wales
Childline	Helpline, website	A free, private and confidential service where children can access advice and support at any time with a counsellor	Childline
The Male Survivors Partnership	Signposting website	Provides details of services which specialise in supporting men and boys	The Male Survivors Partnership
The Lucy Faithfull Foundation	Charity, website, helpline	A UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with entire families that have been affected by sexual abuse including young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours and victims of abuse	The Lucy Faithfull Foundation
The Marie Collins Foundation	Charity	Provide support to people to recover from technology assisted sexual abuse in childhood by	The Marie Collins Foundation Website

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
		supporting individuals and their families	
Anna Freud	Website and support service	A website with support and information for professionals, CPY and their families	The Anna Freud website

Online sexual abuse and images

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Report Remove - Internet Watch Foundation and Childline	Online image reporting and removing service for CYP	If you're under 18 and need to report online sexual images of yourself, you can report these confidentially	Childline website - report remove tool
CEOP	Online sexual abuse reporting tool	If a CYP has experienced online sexual abuse, or are worried this is happening to someone they know, they can report to a CEOP Child Protection Advisors	CEOP Safety Centre website
The UK Safer Internet Centre	Helpline for professionals	An online safety helpline for professionals that provides expert advice and support for school and college staff	0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation	Reporting tool	If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)	Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) website
Thinkuknow	Website and resources	Provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online	Thinkuknow website
ESI online safety page	Information	An overview of online safety and support available in Essex	ESI online safety page


CYP displaying harmful sexual behaviour

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Lucy Faithfull Foundation	Charity offering support	A UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with entire families that have been affected by sexual abuse including young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours and victims of abuse	The Lucy Faithfull Foundation
The Terrence Higgins Trust	Young Persons 1:1 early Intervention and Education Programme	Support for young people aged 13-24 who may be at risk from sexual ill health or harm	<p>Referrals can be made via the online referral system</p> <p>The team can be contacted with further questions relating to the programme via essexyoungpeople@tht.org.uk</p> <p>The below document contains further information, including criteria and exclusions for referral.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>1-1 Early Intervention Criteria</p> </div>
Stop It Now website	Helpline, online chat service and website	Information and support services for CYP who are worried about their sexual behaviour / thoughts online and offline	StopItNow website

SEMH support

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
SET CAMHS - Children's and Adolescent's Mental Health Service	Mental Health support service	Provides advice and support to children, young people and families who are in need of support with their emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties	Southend, Essex and Thurrock Children's and Adolescent's Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
SET CAMHS Professionals Advice Line	Support line for mental health queries from professionals supporting CYP	An advice line where settings can access advice and guidance from mental health professionals	The number is 0300 300 1996 and the line operates every Monday – Thursday between 10:00 and 12:00, excluding bank holidays
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Portal on the Essex Schools InfoLink	Website, signposting	Contains a wide range of SEMH information to support children, families and settings	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Portal

Parents / carers

Resource	Resource type	Description	Access details
Dedicated NSPCC helpline – Report Abuse in Education	Helpline	The dedicated NSPCC helpline 'Report Abuse in Education' provides a bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance	You can contact the NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk . We helpline details can be found online here .
Looking after yourself and your child	Guidance leaflet	A guide for parents/carers who are caring for a child who has experienced sexual violence and abuse. It is designed to help understand how the child may be responding to their thoughts and feelings, and includes ideas for trying to	SERICC – Looking after yourself and your child  SERICC - Looking after yourself and yc

		help the child cope and suggestions for the parent/carer to take care of themselves too	
Lucy Faithfull HSB prevention toolkit	Toolkit including practical tips and signposting	A toolkit designed for parents, carers, family members and professionals, to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe. It has links to useful information, resources, and support as well as practical tips to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and provide safe environments for families	Harmful sexual behaviour toolkit (The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2021)
Parents Protect	Website, information, helpline	Help for parents to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation	Parents Protect website
Thinkuknow	Website and resources	Provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online	Thinkuknow website
Stop It Now! - If your child gets into trouble for their online sexual behaviour	Website	Information for parents about supporting children who have got into trouble due to their online sexual behaviour	Stop It Now! Website page
Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents	Resource for parents	A guide for parents on how to talk to their children about online sexual harassment	Children's Commissioner website
eSafety Training - The 2 Johns	Website and training	Information and training for parents/carers, CYP and professionals on online safety	eSafety Training - The 2 Johns