

7 MINUTE BRIEFING – Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

6. Recommended actions:

- protected time for DSLs to meet with agencies.
- routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse. (Ofsted may request evidence.)

Introduction:

Ofsted was asked by the government to carry out a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. This report summarises our findings and recommendations. The report looks at the following areas: safeguarding and curriculum, multi-agency safeguarding, victim's voice and reporting, other considerations deemed within scope. The review included visits to 32 schools and colleges and consulted over 900 children.

5. Recommendations:

- a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the DfE statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online.
- high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
- training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - better understand the definitions
 - identify early signs
 - consistently uphold standards in their responses



1. Definitions:

Peer on peer sexual abuse:

- Sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting and sexting.
- (Sexual harassment includes sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.)

Harmful sexual behaviours:

- Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or abusive towards another child/ young person.

4. Referrals:

Therefore, when schools and colleges are made aware of sexual activity involving a child under the age of 13, they should always refer this to the police and children's social care. They should use the statutory guidance and their professional curiosity to establish whether risk factors are present before making a decision on whether to engage external agencies if the children are aged 13 to 17.

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November 2021

3. Guidance for staff:

The DfE has published guidance for schools and colleges to help them to respond to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, between children. This explains that it is an offence for anyone to have any sexual activity with a person under the age of 16 and provides specific protection for children aged 12 and under who cannot legally give their consent to any form of sexual activity. The guidance acknowledges that professionals may be required to make complex decisions in situations of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. It stresses the importance of effective training and clear policies for staff to help them take a considered and appropriate response.

2. Definitions:

In terms of **online behaviours**, there were a wide variety of behaviours mentioned:

- receiving unsolicited explicit photographs or videos,
- sending, or being pressured to send, nude and semi-nude photographs or videos
- being sent or shown solicited or unsolicited online explicit material.

Typical platforms tended to be Whatsapp or Snapchat.