

Guidance on child-on-child sexual harm, violence and harassment

For the purpose of this guidance, we use the term ‘alleged perpetrator(s)’ and where appropriate ‘perpetrator(s)’ and ‘victim’. These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate to aid effective drafting of guidance in-line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). However, schools and colleges should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

Please note the term school is inclusive of colleges also.

Underlying principles:

- It can happen both in and outside of school, online and face-to-face, physical and verbal
- All victims are always reassured they are being taken seriously, will be supported and kept safe
- Zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and harassment (SVSH), it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated
- Schools should not feel alone when dealing with SVSH

What is sexual violence (SV)?	What is sexual harassment (SH)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Assault by penetration • Sexual assault • Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ can be on and offline ○ in and out of school ○ likely to violate their dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated e.g., comments, jokes, taunting, physical behaviour, upskirting, displaying images/drawings

National guidance:

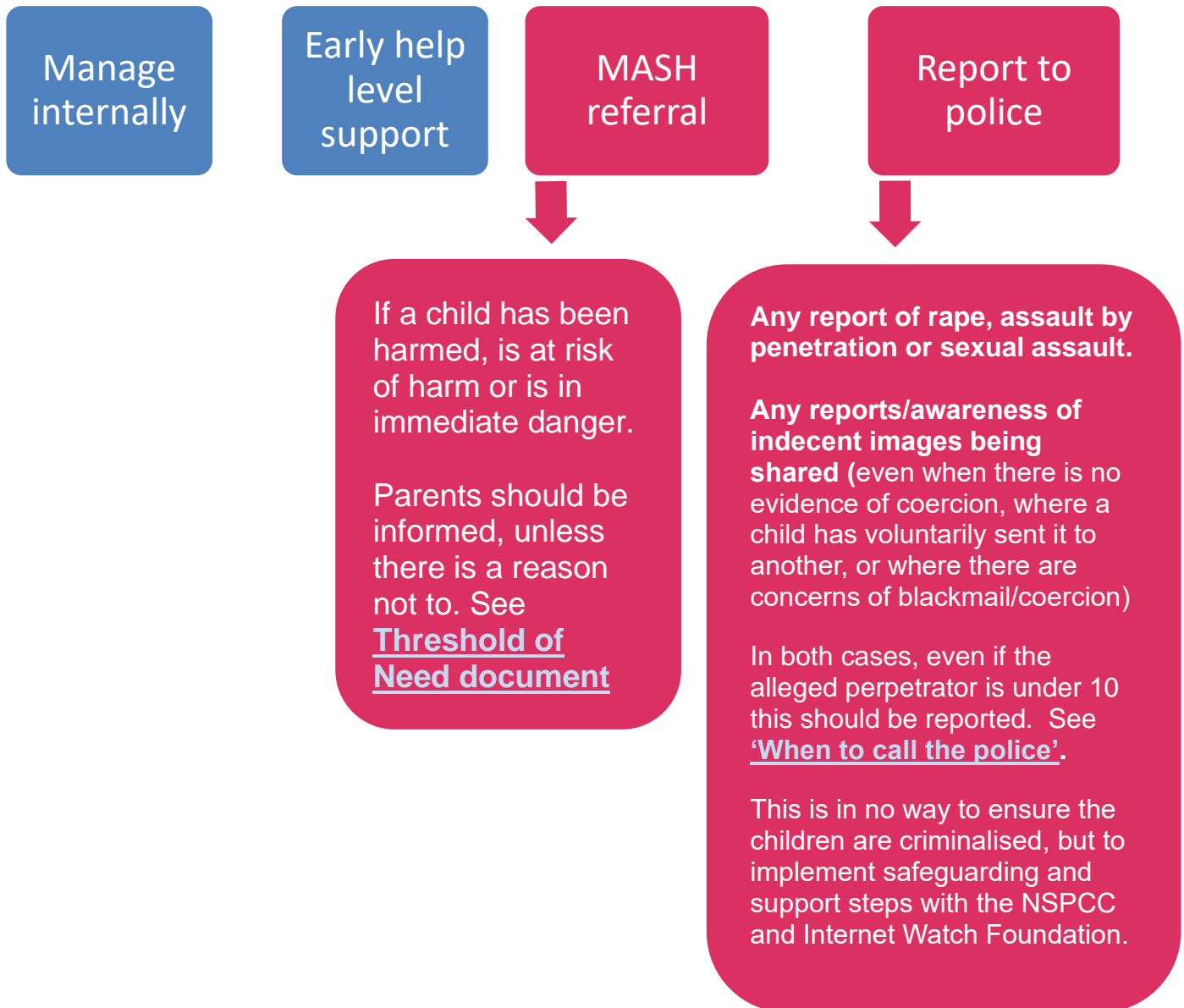
- [Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

Areas to consider when deciding how to manage report:

- Wishes of the victim- victims should have as much control as possible on decisions over how any investigation is progressed, this should be balanced with the duty to protect other children
- Nature of the incident including if a crime? Harmful sexual behaviour?
- Age and developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Is the alleged incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Ongoing risks to victim or others
- Consider any exploitation concern, intra familial harm, harm within intimate relationships.

- When staff become aware of indecent images, they do not delete the image/s, and inform the parent/child not to delete the images

Options to manage the report:



It is likely that any report to Police, will be in parallel with a MASH referral. If reporting to MASH/Police, informing the alleged perpetrator (when and how) will be agreed with MASH/Police. Consult with Police on what information can be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator and their parents, and to staff.

The Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service (CAHBS) can offer early help discussion and advice, through to support and guidance on dealing with the incident, risk assessment, safeguarding and considering next steps: [Child & Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service \(CAHBS\) | Oxford Health CAMHS Oxford Health CAMHS](#)

Risk assessment

Underlying principles, the risk assessment should be:

- Immediate, do not wait for the outcome of social care enquiries or a Police investigation before protecting the victim and other children
- Informed by the Police on the best way to protect the victim

The risk assessment should be kept under review and consider:

- The victim, their protection and support
- Have there been other victims?
- The alleged perpetrator(s)
- All other children, and any other person at the school that require protection from harm or future harm
- Time and location of the incident, any action required to make the location safer
- Other things to consider e.g., social media and online safety.

Support with risk assessment is available through CAHBS and ESAT (Education Safeguarding Advisory Team).

- CAHBS (add link)
- Risk assessment template (add link)

Communication and monitoring in school

Ensure that information/the safety plan is communicated sensitively and only shared with key members of staff who need to be aware of adjustments and the safety plan.

Some examples of areas to monitor may include:

- Key teachers to be aware of any adjustments or agreed seating plans
- Staff to be aware to monitor carefully at lunchtime/communal areas
- Ensure supply/cover staff are informed
- Extra-curricular clubs
- Consider school visits/trips and any adjustments required
- School transport

Support

Support for the victim

Appoint a single point of contact for the victim, ideally someone non-teaching whom the child can engage with and is able to make decisions.

Regularly hear the victim's voice, and that of their parents. Support the victim to feel they have as much control as possible, the needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount.

Possible support services:

- [Oxfordshire CAMHS](#) – for mental health difficulties
- [Horizon](#) (supporting young people and families affected by sexual harm) – treatment/consultation/parent group
- School Nurse support who can work alongside Horizon- be aware of range of health needs- physical, mental, sexual and unwanted pregnancy

- [Young Persons DASH](#)
- [SAFE! Support after Crime Service](#) – support for young people aged 5-18 who have been harmed by crime or abuse
- [OSARCC](#)- support for children and young people aged 14-18 who have experienced sexual violence

Support for alleged perpetrator (who may also be a victim)

They may feel isolated, appoint a different point of contact for them.

Consider how to maintain safety, education and well-being for the alleged perpetrator, whilst also managing any potential risks.

Work with colleagues across the safeguarding network to put in place the correct support to try to address any underlying trauma that may be causing this behaviour, and to reduce the risk of reoffending.

If there is any suspension/PEX risk, then school must consult with the Exclusion and Reintegration Team, although this can often increase vulnerability of the alleged perpetrator.

[CAHBS](#) and [fCAMHS](#) advice line (01865 902613) is available for consultation and support around managing risk, as is support from the School Health Nurse.

Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations (Police/social care) are ongoing and liaison with these agencies can determine if any such action would impact on other investigations.

Support for staff

Horizon and the School Nurse will also be able to support staff/de-brief as appropriate, along with emotional support through the staff system, or externally as needed.

Advice and support may be required around managing complaints/conflict regarding what parents expect/want.

Ongoing management and outcome

Ongoing management:

- The school must balance the needs of safeguarding the victim (and others) and provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support and implement any disciplinary sanctions
- Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately
- Consider proportionality of response- support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis
- Decisions and actions are regularly reviewed
- Lessons learnt are reflected in policies and procedures
- Consider if there are any patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour- are there wider cultural issues in the school?
- Support and protection for the victim may be a long-term need

Working with parents

In most cases schools will engage with both parents unless this will put a child at risk. Social care/Police advice can be sought.

School should discuss any arrangements that are being put in place with the parents of victim and alleged perpetrator.

Schools should consider signposting parents to support services:

- [Healthy relationships | NSPCC](#)
- [Get advice \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)
- [Supporting Parents and Carers: A guide for those working with families affected by child sexual abuse \(csacentre.org.uk\)](#)

Outcome of Police investigation

Once the Police investigation is concluded a meeting is required so that school can continue to have sufficient information to safeguard children, for example if there has been a charge, or no further action.

School should arrange this meeting if necessary.

If the Police are not charging, the suspect and victim will be informed by the Police of this outcome. If applicable, the Police will share that there is not sufficient information to charge at this time to help support the victim know that they are believed.

Anyone under 18 will be informed of this outcome with an Appropriate Adult.