Holyport CE Primary School

Child-on –child Abuse/Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Holyport CE Primary School recognises that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers. We take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. This includes verbal as well as physical abuse. Child on child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as part of “banter” or “growing up”.

1.2. We are committed to whole school approaches to ensure the prevention, early identificationand appropriate management of child-on -child abuse within our school and beyond.

1.3. In cases where child-on -child abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, taking a contextual approach to support all children and young people who havebeen affected by the situation.

1.4. We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- Upskirting
- Bullying
- Radicalisation
- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- Gang association and serious violence (County Lines)
- Technology can be used for bullying and other abusive behaviour.

1.5. Some of these behaviours will need to be handled with reference to other policies in school such as the behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, child protection policy and online safety policy.

1.6. This policy concentrates on child-on -child abuse in the context of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child-on -child abuse as set outin Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) and should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, andany relevant Practice Guidance issued by it.

2. Aims

2.1. The policy will: -

- Set out our strategies for preventing, identifying and managing child-on -child abuse
- Take a contextual approach to safeguarding all children and young people (CYP) involved, acknowledging that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable and may have been abused by peer/a child, parents or adults in the community.

3. Understanding Child-on –child abuse

3.1. Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- sexual harassment and sexual violence
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm

- sexual harassment or sexual violence which may pressurise, force, or coerce someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.

3.2. Our school also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

3.3. CYP can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At our school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, common rooms, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities, and when CYP are travelling home.

4. The Context

4.1. All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it. We use Simon Hackett's continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours. (Appendix 1) to distinguish between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour (Harmful Sexual Behaviour HSB).

4.2. We are adopting the definition of HSB as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, 2021: -

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on –child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges' policy and procedures for dealing with it.

5. Vulnerable groups

5.1. We recognise that all children can be at risk. However, we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence; young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities); children who identify or are perceived as LGBTQ and/or have other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

5.2. While research tells is us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peersand girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools, this is not confined to girls.

5.3. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as antisocial behaviour. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they areaffected by gangs. We recognise that both boys and girls experience child-on –child abuse, but they do so in gendered ways.

5.4. All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and HSB.

6. How we seek to minimise the risk of harmful sexual behaviour

6.1. The principal aim of our approach is to foster the conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and

realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. We work to a culture in which the voice of our CYP is central, where pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, and that they will not be judged.

7. Children and Young People

7.1. We use relationships, and sex education (RSE) and our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, to help our pupils understand, in an age-appropriate way, what harmful sexual behaviour is, including by peers. We teach them the knowledge they need to recognise and report abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We also teach them about the importance of making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear that if a CYP is abused it is never their fault.

7.2. We help our pupils to develop the skills to understand:

- what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour
- that such behaviour is not acceptable
- the possible reasons for such behaviour, and vulnerability of perpetrators
- that they must tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable and must tell a trusted adult if they witness such behaviour towards others.

7.3. We understand our pupils may not always feel able to talk to adults about child-on –child sexual abuse. To help them, we will encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions, respond to their concerns, and respect and listen to them. We want our pupils to feel confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately.

8. Parents and Carers

8.1. It is important that parents and carers understand what is meant by harmful sexual behaviour and reinforce key messages from school at home. We work in partnership with parents to support our pupils and want to help them keep their child/ren safe. Parents and carers should understand:

- the nature of harmful sexual behaviour
- the effects of harmful sexual behaviour on CYP
- the likely indicators that such behaviour may be taking place
- what to do if it is suspected that child-on –child sexual abuse has occurred

8.2. Further information to support parents and carers in relation to harmful sexual behaviour is available online, including on the NSPCC and Lucy Faithfull Foundation websites.

9. Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

9.1. All reports of child-on –child abuse will be made on a case by case basis with the designatedsafeguarding lead or their deputy taking a leading role using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as social care or the police as required.

10. The immediate response to a report

- We will take all reports seriously and will reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- All staff will be trained to manage a report.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or social care). Staff will, however, only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written record of the conversation will be made as soon after the disclosure as possible using the words of the child. This may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later.
- Where the report includes an online element the school will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. The staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the DSL) is present.
- The DSL will be informed as soon as possible.

11. Risk Assessment

11.1. When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the

need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-casebasis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school orcollege, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

11.2. Risk assessments will be recorded, are stored in the safeguarding cabinet folder and kept under review.

11.3. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will ensure they are engaging with the local MASH.

12. Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

12.1. Following an incident, we will consider:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especiallyimportant in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have beencommitted and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, whether the alleged perpetrator is significantly older, more mature or more confident, or whether the victim has a disability or learning difficulty
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse
- Whether there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or to school or college staff
- Other related issues and wider context.

13. Follow up Actions

Children sharing a classroom:

13.1. Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children's social care and the police:

- The perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the schoolor college.

These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be ajudgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

14. Options to manage the report

Manage internally

i. In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, we may decide that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising the behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support (ELSA)

ii. This decision will be made based on the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All decisions, and discussions around making these decisions, will be recorded and stored in the safeguarding cabinet, in the Head/DSL Office.

iii. In line with (i) above, we may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Early help

i. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, we willmake a referral to the MASH following locally agreed protocols.

ii. Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy will be working alongside, and cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker.

iii. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

iv. Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, schools should make a referral to local children's social care.

v. We will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school.

vi. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

15. Reporting to the Police

15.1. Any report to the police will generally be made through the MASH as above. The designatedsafeguarding lead (and their deputies) will follow local processes for referrals.

15.2. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this will 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**. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.

15.3. Where a report has been made to the police, the school will consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

15.4. Where there is a criminal investigation, we will work closely with the relevant agencies to support all children involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice fromthe police will be sought in order to help us.

15.5. Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, we will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensureany actions the school takes do not jeopardise the police investigation.

16. The end of the criminal process

16.1. If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school will update its risk assessment and ensure relevant protections are in place for all children. We will consider any suitable action following our behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in school we will be very clear as to our expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions we think are reasonable and proportionate about the perpetrator's timetable. These expectations and any restrictions will be subject to written record and shared with the parent/s and carer/s.

16.2. Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going togenerate interest among other pupils in the school.

16.3. We will ensure all children involved are protected, especially from any bullying orharassment (including online).

16.4. Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA) by the police or Crown ProsecutionService, or where there is a not guilty verdict, we will continue to offer support to the victimand the alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. We will continueto support all parties in this instance. Records will be retained in all such cases.

17. Support for Children Affected by Sexual-Assault

17.1. Support for victims of sexual assault is available from a variety of agencies (see Appendix 2).

17.2. We will support the victim of sexual assault to remain in school but if they are unable to doso we will enable them to continue their education elsewhere. This decision will be made only at the request of the child and their family.

17.3. If they are moved, we will ensure the new school is aware of the ongoing support they mayneed. The DSL will support this move.

17.4. Where there is a criminal investigation the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any shared classes with the victim and we will also consider how best to keep them a reasonabledistance apart on the school premises or on school transport. This is in the best interest of the children concerned and should not be perceived to be a judgement of guilt before any legal proceedings. We will work closely with the police.

17.5. Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, we may take suitable action, if we have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils).

17.6. Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, we may, ifwe have not already done so, consider any suitable sanctions using our behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.

17.7. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

17.8. Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). Some cases of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment are reported to the police and then not progressed or are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim andalleged perpetrator. Appropriate support will be provided to both as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as required on a case-by-case basis. Details of support and any considerations will be subject to written record and shared with the parent/s and carer/s as appropriate.

17.9. All the above will be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements will be kept under review.

18. Physical Abuse

18.1. While a clear focus of child-on-child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physicalassaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

18.2. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will bereported to the police.

18.3. The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognitionthat any police investigation will need to take priority.

18.4. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's continuum (Appendix 1) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning

- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour
- involves a misuse of power.

19. Online Behaviour

19.1. Many forms of child-on- child abuse have an element of online behaviour including behaviourssuch as cyberbullying and sexting.

19.2. Policies and procedures concerning this type of behaviour can be found (in Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

20. Prevention

20.1. Holyport CE Primary School actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on –child abuse by: training all Local Governing Body (LGB) Members, Senior Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, pupils and parents about this issue. This will include training all LGB Members, Senior Leadership Team,staff and volunteers on the nature, prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it.

This includes:

- Contextual Safeguarding
- The identification and classification of specific behaviours
- The importance of taking seriously all forms of child-on –child abuse (no matter how low level they may appear) and ensuring that no form of child-on –child abuse is ever dismissed as horseplay or teasing
- Educating children about the nature and prevalence of child-on –child abuse via PSHE and the wider curriculum.

20.2. Pupils are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience such abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of those who inflict such abuse.

20.3. They are regularly informed about the school's approach to such issues, including itszero-tolerance policy towards all forms of child-on –child abuse.

20.4. Engaging parents on this issue by:

- Talking about it with parents, both in groups and one to one;
- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they wouldlike to see the school address those risks;
- Involving parents in the review of school policies and lesson plans; and
- Encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue.

20.5. Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the school's DSL so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils who may be in need of additional support. This is done by way of a weekly staff briefing and SLT/DSL meeting at which all concerns about pupils (including child-on –child abuse issues) are discussed:

- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom)
- Working with LGB Members, Academy Trustees, Senior Leadership Team, all staff and volunteers, pupils and parents to address equality issues, to promote positive values, and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community
- Creating conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgmental environment, and have them listened to
- Responding to cases of child-on –child abuse promptly and appropriately.
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21. Multi-agency working

21.1. The school actively engages with its local partners in relation to child-on –child abuse, andworks closely with the OCSB, the RBWM Safeguarding Partnership (through Achieving for Children), Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) and their associates, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies, and other schools.

21.2. The relationships the school has built with these partners are essential to ensuring that theSchool is able to prevent, identify early and appropriately handle cases of child-on –child abuse. They help the school:

- To develop a good awareness and understanding of the different referral pathways thatoperate in our local area, as well as the preventative and support services which exist
- To ensure that our pupils can access the range of services and support they need quickly
- To support and help inform our local community's response to child-on –child abuse
- To increase our awareness and understanding of any concerning trends and emerging risks in our local area to enable us to take preventative action to minimise the risk of thesebeing experienced by our pupils.

21.3. The school actively refers concerns/allegations of child-on –child abuse where necessary to:

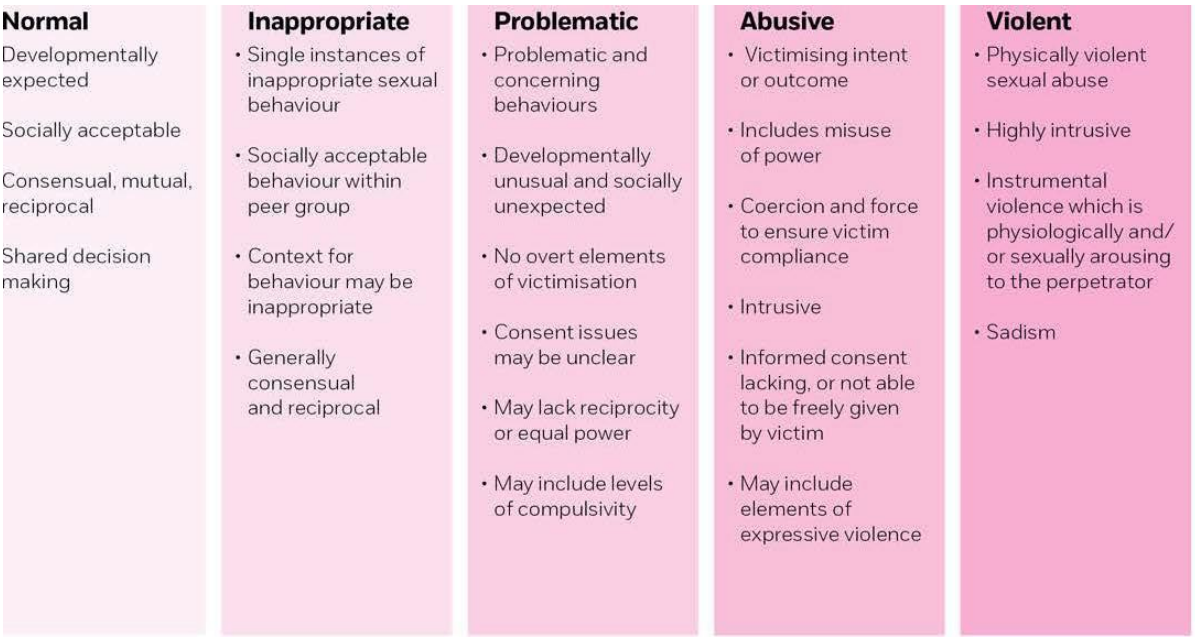
- The local Safeguarding Children Partnership MASH (or equivalent)], children's social care, and/or other relevant agencies
- Children resident out of county but attending an ODST school will report to their home MASH or equivalent Social Care.

21.4. In cases involving children who are subject to risk, harm and abuse and who have CLA status,the children's social worker will be informed and a coordinated approach to address any incidents or concerns will be made.

HOLYPORT CE PRIMARY SCHOOL	
date policy adopted and signed by LGB: on 18th September 2025 (FGB)	NAME AND SIGNATURE Governor/ Chair of Governors: P Mew
Name of Head teacher: Amanda Featherstone	Signature of Head teacher: 
Date to be reviewed: September 2026	This policy will be subject to review by the Governing Body in the light of changes in KCSiE 2025 - the curriculum or provision or legislation or advice from the ODST/LA or DfE

Appendix 1

Simon Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant:



https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/publications/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework.pdf

Appendix 2 - **Useful Publications and Websites**

Government Publications

Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools - www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between- children-in-schools-and-colleges

Keeping Children safe in Education - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth- violence

Preventing and tackling bullying in schools - www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Other useful documents

Sexting in schools and colleges-Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

There are some useful links on the section on sexual bullying:-

Sexual bullying: developing effective anti-bullying practice - A guide for school staff and other professional - https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying

Preventing abuse among children and young people-guidance from Stop it Now -

https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/files/stop_booklets_childs_play_preventing_abuse_among_children_and_young_people01_14.pdf

What is Age appropriate? - http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/what-is-age-appropriate

NSPCC-Harmful sexual behaviour - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual- behaviour/

Harmful sexual behaviour - https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/Downloads/LARC%207%20Harmful%20sexual%20behaviour_Final_Web_0.pdf

NSPCC – Is this sexual abuse? - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/nspcc-helplines- report-peer-sexual-abuse.pdf

Online sexual harassment - Project deSHAME- Digital Exploitation and Sexual Harassment Amongst Minors in Europe Understanding, Preventing, Responding - https://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame

Sexism - https://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame

It's Just Everywhere- a study on sexism in schools –and how we tackle it - https://ukfeminista.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Report-Its-just-everywhere.pdf

Relationship Education , Relationship and Sex Education HMSO - www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex