

# Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Policy



*Believe, Succeed, Together*

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## Contents

1.0 What is Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)?.....	3
2.0 How serious is HSB? .....	4
2.1 What if I have concerns around HSB?.....	4
2.2 Why do I need to take action?.....	4
3.0 The Curriculum and Harmful Sexual Behaviours .....	5
4.0 Related Policies and Documents.....	6
Appendix 1 – Hackett’s Continuum of Sexual Behaviours.....	7

## 1.0 What is Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)?

It is normal for some children to display sexualised behaviour towards their peers as they develop, however, sexualised behaviour between peers that has become harmful or abusive is unacceptable and must be addressed. We recognise that children are vulnerable to, and capable of, abusing their peers sexually. All schools must assume that this is occurring within their pupil body. The Academy considers any allegation of child-on-child sexual abuse seriously and does not tolerate or pass off harmful sexual behaviour as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

This policy was produced in line with the requirements in [KCSIE 2021](#) and DfE guidance [Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Children 2018](#)

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is *'developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children which may be harmful or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults and is harmful to the children who display it, as well as those it is directed towards'*. It may include:

- **Sexual Harassment** – creating an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment e.g. sexist jokes, sexual comments, flicking bras, and other specific criminal acts such as upskirting or 'sexting' (sending nudes or semi-nudes).
- **Sexual Abuse** – "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities" this includes touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent.
- **Sexual Violence** – rape and assault.

HSB includes (although is not limited to) the following:

- Sexist jokes and comments.
- Physical and sexual abuse.
- Sexual harassment and violence.
- Gender based violence.
- Emotional harm.
- Offline bullying (of a sexual nature).
- Teenage relationship abuse.
- Technology assisted HSB (sexualised behaviour which children engage in using the internet or technology such as mobile phones and tablets).
- CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation).

All staff **must** take a zero-tolerance stance on HSB – it is not acceptable and **must** always be challenged. This includes behaviour we see in school or incidents that are reported to us.

## **2.0 How serious is HSB?**

It's important to remember that sexualised behaviours occur on a continuum from normal to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent and that to ensure consistency in responding to an incident, a standardised approach is used to identify where the behaviour sits on this continuum.

When dealing with instances of HSB the Safeguarding Team, and staff CPD, refer to Hackett's Sexual Continuum (refer to **Appendix 1**) to help identify whether: the behaviour reflects healthy and safe normal development; it has the potential to be outside of healthy and safe development by being inappropriate or problematic; the behaviours are clearly outside of safe and healthy behaviour; or the behaviours are abusive or violent.

Using the continuum also gives clarity on how to respond and aids the determination of decisions about safeguarding children. Importantly this also helps the Safeguarding Team to assess, and respond, appropriately to sexual behaviour in children and understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from harmful behaviour.

### **2.1 What if I have concerns around HSB?**

Incidents of HSB will be dealt with under Child Protection procedures. The Safeguarding Team will, in the first instance, use Hackett's Sexual Continuum to identify whether the behaviour lies on the continuum. The Safeguarding Team's response will vary as to the individual concern/incident. Members of the Safeguarding Team will regularly complete specific training on HSB. All incidents will be recorded, and appropriate information is reviewed in safeguarding audits and at Local Governing Body (LGB) level.

If behaviour is considered to be problematic, abusive or violent and there is concern that a child, young person or an adult might have been harmed by the behaviour of the child or young person then the behaviour should be reported to the Police if it has not already been done so. Allegations of peer abuse will be taken as seriously as allegations of abuse perpetrated by an adult. If the child is already known to Social Care (CSC), the allocated worker will be notified.

### **2.2 Why do I need to take action?**

It's important that incidents of HSB are not ignored and that they are responded to in a timely and consistent manner. Early intervention in cases of HSB can enable children to adopt healthy development pathways. The Academy will always ensure that the victim is fully supported. It will also safeguard pupils who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviours, to ensure that they understand what acceptable behaviour is and what it is not.

### **3.0 The Curriculum and Harmful Sexual Behaviours**

The Academy delivers a broad and diverse PSHE/RSHE curriculum (under PDE) and HSB features within this. We cover a variety of topics specific to each year group and these include but are not limited to:

- Friendship.
- Positive relationships.
- Consent.
- Relationship Boundaries.
- Peer Pressure.
- Managing romantic relationships.
- Sexual Orientation.
- Sexuality.
- Diversity.
- Online safety.
- Abuse.
- When to report, and the variety of ways they can report.

The PDE curriculum has been designed to meet both the statutory requirements and the needs specific to the local community.

## **4.0 Related Policies and Documents**

Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Equality Policy

Exclusion Policy

Keeping Children Safe from Harm - Advice to Parents

KCSIE 2021

Mental Wellbeing Policy

Online Safety Policy

Personal Development and Enrichment (PDE) Policy

PSHE and RSHE Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Sexting

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Children 2018

Whistleblowing Policy

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

## Appendix 1 – Hackett’s Continuum of Sexual Behaviours

### A continuum of behaviours

It is vital for professionals to distinguish normal from abnormal sexual behaviours. Chaffin, Letourneau and Silovsky (2002, p208) suggest a child’s sexual behaviour should be considered abnormal if it:

- occurs at a frequency greater than would be developmentally expected
- interferes with the child’s development
- occurs with coercion, intimidation, or force
- is associated with emotional distress
- occurs between children of divergent ages or developmental abilities
- repeatedly recurs in secrecy after intervention by caregivers.

**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:**

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally expected</li> <li>• Socially acceptable</li> <li>• Consensual, mutual, reciprocal</li> <li>• Shared decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group</li> <li>• Context for behaviour may be inappropriate</li> <li>• Generally consensual and reciprocal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problematic and concerning behaviours</li> <li>• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected</li> <li>• No overt elements of victimisation</li> <li>• Consent issues may be unclear</li> <li>• May lack reciprocity or equal power</li> <li>• May include levels of compulsivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victimising intent or outcome</li> <li>• Includes misuse of power</li> <li>• Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance</li> <li>• Intrusive</li> <li>• Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim</li> <li>• May include elements of expressive violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically violent sexual abuse</li> <li>• Highly intrusive</li> <li>• Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator</li> <li>• Sadism</li> </ul>