

WeST Guidance on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Introduction

The findings of the [Ofsted Review into Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#), partly published in response to the Everyone's Invited website, were shockingly clear that at a national level pupils, and girls in particular, are subject to sexual harassment on all too frequent basis both in the community and in their education settings. WeST encourages all staff to act as if "*it could happen here*" in all safeguarding matters and accepts that the behaviours described in the Ofsted review will be happening in our settings, whether reported or not. WeST is committed to improving the experiences of all staff, adult learners and pupils such that they feel safe, respected and able to perform effectively.

The Trust-wide [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#), and the local adaptations of this in each of our settings, alongside the [Staff Code of Conduct](#) set out the framework within which staff should operate. These policies are already aligned with the following key documents. WeST will ensure that any future revisions to these are reflected in updated policies and procedures:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

Note on Terminology

WeST recognises that the language which children and young people use to describe their lived experiences both changes rapidly and can be different from that used by professionals. For example, the term 'sexting' to describe youth-produced sexual imagery is rarely used by teenagers, who are more likely to refer to 'nudes', 'dick pics' or just 'pics'. WeST recognises that it can be challenging for front line staff to stay up to date with the terminology used by pupils, but all staff should take reasonable steps to ensure that they understand what a child is saying. This can be done by using the TED approach, encouraging children to Tell, Explain and Describe using appropriate language.

Developing a Positive Culture

All staff, regardless of role or experience, have a part to play in developing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment across our schools and business units. As outlined in the [safeguarding policy](#) there is no place for sexual harassment or discrimination of any form in WeST. This document is not intended to set out in detail a definition of sexual violence and sexual harassment but WeST condemns any behaviour that could be construed as such. Working definitions can be found in [KCSiE 2021](#), pp 92-94.

All staff have a role in ensuring that derogatory behaviour is not passed off as 'banter', 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing-up' and should challenge any comments or behaviours that they deem to be a form of harassment. If a member of staff feels unable to intervene immediately it is imperative that they seek advice as soon as possible. If the incident involves a child, they should seek support from a member of their safeguarding team. If the incident is between staff members, they should discuss this with their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team.

School leaders should ensure that there is a positive, open environment in WeST schools in which all staff can discuss the range of behaviours that may be encountered between pupils and staff. In developing an approach consideration should be given to the concept of a continuum of sexual behaviours¹ and how these behaviours change as a child develops and may be affected by the wider context of the child. Staff training should include the discussion of age-appropriate scenarios to help staff engage with this topic and help ensure a consistency of approach. Establishing clarity about what is not acceptable behaviour is crucial. WeST will provide ongoing support to Designated Safeguarding Leads to equip them in this area.

WeST is committed to understanding the 'lived experiences' of pupils, adult learners, parents and staff across its settings. Leaders recognise that there is work to do in this area, as set out in the WeST Strategic Plan for Inclusion,

¹ The work of [Simon Hackett](#), the [Brooks Traffic Lighting Tool](#) and the [NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviours Framework](#) are useful starting points.

“Safe, Present and Included.” In developing its approach, the Trust will give consideration to the work of the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#), in particular the [‘Beyond Referrals’](#) toolkit.

The Role of the Curriculum

All WeST schools are responsible for ensuring that they implement the [DfE Guidance on Relationship, Sex and Health Education](#) at a local level. WeST primary schools structure their curriculum around that provided by [Jigsaw PSHE](#). The Director of Inclusion will work alongside other members of the Executive Leadership team to support the development of a well-structured and sequenced RSHE curriculum that is responsive to the needs identified in individual settings.

The role of the curriculum in promoting a respectful, tolerant and inclusive culture across WeST is wider than the specialist RSHE curriculum. Subject Leaders in all areas should give due consideration to how the materials and examples used when delivering the curriculum can promote an understanding of diversity, equality and inclusion. Thought should be given to include materials that will engage learners with a wide variety of cultures and viewpoints, including those of minority groups.

Responding to Concerns

Leaders should ensure that all staff *and pupils* are familiar with how to report concerns. Local procedures in WeST schools and business units will vary according to context, as set out in the local Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. In developing their approach leaders should ensure that staff who are responding to concerns give due consideration to:

- the barriers that may prevent a child talking to an adult, e.g. if a member of staff has a dual role as part of the safeguarding team but is also responsible for behaviour;
- the need for a child to understand what will happen next, and the anxiety that can be caused when staff are unable to give detailed responses due to ongoing investigations;
- how to support the well-being of both victims and perpetrators;
- how some, well-intentioned responses to concerns, e.g. assemblies or removing a child from a lesson to be interviewed, can have un-intended consequences such as starting a ‘rumour mill’.

Monitoring Trends and the Role of Governance

All WeST schools use CPOMS to record safeguarding concerns. From September 2021 all schools will be moving to a common set of categories. This will enable more accurate, Trust-wide reporting of safeguarding trends including incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is anticipated that safeguarding teams will meet on a termly basis (3 times a year) to discuss these trends and identify actions that need to be taken. The record of these meetings will form the basis of reporting to local governing bodies and to the Director of Inclusion. The Director of Inclusion will summarise the key information and report this to the Trust board.