

Dear Headteacher and DSL

Following the publication of the Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges, the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership and its three statutory partners would like to take this opportunity to assure you of our continued support and to stress the importance of collaboration and co-operation on the matters that were raised as part of the review. We know you will be doing all you can to ensure that children feel safe and confident enough to raise these issues. Please accept our apologies for the delay in issuing this letter which was due to our October LIG meeting having to be postponed.

As a reminder, these were the main findings from the Ofsted Review of visits to 32 schools and colleges where they spoke to over 900 children and young people as well as school leaders, teachers, governors, safeguarding partnerships, parents, and stakeholders.

- Children and young people said that sexual harassment occurs so frequently it has become 'common place'.
- Children and young people felt that the RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) curriculum was too little too late and that it didn't equip them to navigate the reality of their lives.
- Some teachers and leaders underestimated the scale of the problem, either not identifying sexual harassment and sexualised language as problematic or were unaware they were happening and consistently underestimated the prevalence of online sexual abuse.
- Current guidance on sexual harassment and sexual abuse is insufficient in supporting schools and colleges.
- The safeguarding partnerships spoken to, had varying levels of oversight, and understanding of the issues for children and young people in their area.
- The Ofsted and Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) frameworks found that although safeguarding is generally well covered on Inspection, that inspectors are prepared and that complaints are generally dealt with, there is still room for improvement.

To help you to support children and families in this area of safeguarding we would like to suggest the following resources:

- The Lucy Faithful Foundation Harmful Sexual Behaviour Prevention Toolkit [Toolkit](#)
- The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Report Abuse Helpline. Tel: 0800 136 663
- [DfE Guidance on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#)
- The Sexual Assault Referral Centre [The Ferns](#)
- The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officers) procedure [LADO](#)
- The Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team

All of the above resources can be found on the Education page of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website. Link below.

[Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Website Education Page](#)

We would like schools and colleges in Suffolk to consider addressing the following points if you have not already done so.

- A review of internal policies and procedures and ensure that the safeguarding policy includes a section on peer-on-peer abuse. Please refer to the model safeguarding policy on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website.
- Recommendation that schools continue to refer to Part 5 (child sexual violence and sexual harassment) of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the school/college's procedure for dealing with peer-on-peer abuse and child on child sexual violence and know how to recognise potential indicators of abuse.
- Ensure that parents and children are to access the policy and procedure and know who they should go to in the school for help.
- Ensure training on harmful sexual behaviours is delivered to all school staff and/or a refresher session.
- Ensure children and young people know how to raise concerns about themselves and their peers and feel confident to do so.
- Ensure there are opportunities in place for children and young people to discuss and contribute to improving aspects of school life.
- Ensure there is ongoing dialogue and parental engagement in relation to these issues.
- Ensure schools keep data on the number of incidents related to peer-on-peer abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Ensure that continual challenge of sexual harassment between children and young people take place.
- Evaluation of whether any sanctions and interventions that are in place for children/young people who have perpetrated harmful sexual behaviour are effective.

These points will also be addressed within next year's Section 157/175 safeguarding audit. The Suffolk County Council Education Team and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership are in the process of planning a conference for all schools and colleges in Suffolk. There will be opportunity at this conference to discuss the review and approaches to address the findings.

If you would like to discuss any of the above or any further ideas and support needed, please contact the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership via the enquiry's inbox at enquiries@suffolksp.org.uk or by telephone on 01473 265500.

Yours faithfully



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