



# Parent Safeguarding Newsletter

Date: 25.03.22

## **Sexual Harassment in Schools**

Last year, OFSTED completed an investigation into sexual harassment in schools and colleges.

After speaking to over 900 pupils of all ages, the review revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. The report said that for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them. Girls told OFSTED that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, such as being sent unsolicited explicit sexual material and being pressured to send nude pictures ('nudes'), are much more prevalent than adults realise. For example, nearly 90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers. The full report can be read here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

### **What is sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment in general is any unwanted sexual attention that can cause physical, emotional, mental, psychological or economic harm to the victim. It can happen both online or offline.

### **Does this happen in primary schools?**

Boys and girls mix together in every social environment, at every age and many children will never experience sexism, harassment or abuse based on gender. It is important that we teach all children (both boys and girls), of all ages, what is acceptable interaction and what is not, and then what they must do if any unwanted attention happens to them. The report recommended that school leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, where they identify issues and intervene early to protect children and young people.

### **What do we do at St Edward's Primary School?**

At school we encourage children to be open about their experiences so that they know it is always safe to disclose concerns with a trusted adult. We aim to create an environment that teaches boys and girls how to behave respectfully towards each other and how to respect personal and physical boundaries. Through our lessons, we ensure the children develop an age appropriate awareness of this theme, including understanding how to show respect to themselves and others. If children understand their own bodies, the terminology to use and why certain words are not appropriate, they will speak more knowledgeably and respectfully to each other.

## **Safeguarding Link Governor**

Our Safeguarding Governor at St Edward's Catholic Primary School is Ms M Jones. The safeguarding governor's responsibilities include:

- Behaviour and recruitment of both staff and volunteers
- Ensuring the school is following safe recruitment procedures and reviewing all activity and policy relating to the physical and emotional well-being of all children
- Seeking improvement to ensure the school follows best practice in creating a productive and safe environment for all

## **Operation Encompass**

*Our school participates in a national scheme called 'Operation Encompass', which is a joint partnership between the police and schools. One of the principles of Operation Encompass is that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools, not just those where an offence can be identified.*

*This system has been established to help schools provide in-school support to children who have been present at, exposed to or involved in any domestic abuse incident. We know that children can be significantly harmed, physically and/or emotionally, during these situations, and that it also negatively affects their learning and behaviour. Therefore, as part of the Operation Encompass procedure, and to help mitigate the resulting negative impact, the school receives an email from police the morning after a child has been witness to, or involved in, any reported domestic abuse incident.*

*We are then able to use this information to provide the right support to any child and their family as and when it is needed.*

## **Children's Safeguarding Policy**

Please note that there is a child friendly version of our safeguarding policy on the school website should you wish to have a look or discuss it with your children at home. The link to this page on the website is as follows:

<https://www.st-edwards.newham.sch.uk/assets/Parent-Information/Safeguarding/Childrens-Safeguarding-Policy-2022.pdf>