PSHE
Association

Addressing sexual harassment through PSHE education

Lydia Stober - Subject Specialist

www.pshe-association.org.uk

In this session we will explore:

1. Understanding the issue: What is the nature of sexual harassment in schools?

2. PSHE education planning: How can schools address sexual harassment in the curriculum?

3. Evidencing our work: How can schools demonstrate their approach?

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE
Association

What is sexual harassment?

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples of behaviours include:
- Sexist or sexual name-calling
- Non-consensual sharing of images
- Forced viewing of pornography
- Objectifying behaviour e.g. ratings
- Uninvited sexual touch, gestures or noises
- Pressurising someone for sexual contact
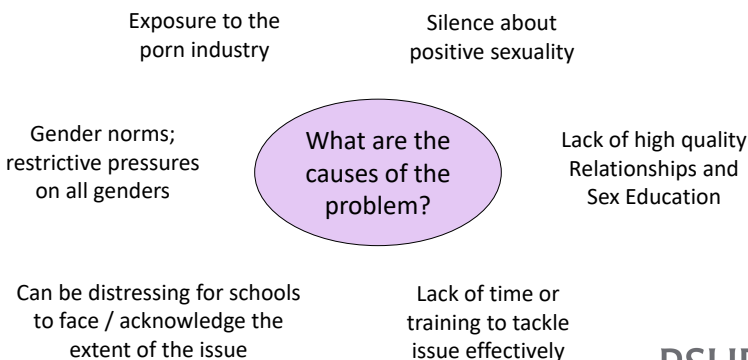- Sexual jokes or innuendo (disguised as banter)

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE
Association

Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Ofsted review - June 2021

- This review has revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. It is concerning that for some children, **incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them**.
- **92%** of girls and **74%** of boys, said sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers.
- 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
- However, professionals **consistently underestimated** the prevalence of online sexual abuse, even when there was a proactive whole school approach to tackling sexual harassment and violence.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE
Association

Exposure to the porn industry

Silence about positive sexuality

Gender norms; restrictive pressures on all genders

What are the causes of the problem?

Lack of high quality Relationships and Sex Education

Can be distressing for schools to face / acknowledge the extent of the issue

Lack of time or training to tackle issue effectively

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE
Association

What prevents pupils from reporting?

- worry that what happened next would be out of their control
- worry that they would be branded by their peers as a 'snitch' who got a peer into trouble
- worry that they would be ostracised from friendship groups
- worry that there would be damage to their reputation, for example through sexual rumours being circulated about them
- feeling embarrassment and shame when talking to someone from a different generation about sex
- feeling that they might be blamed for doing things they were told not to do, for example sending nudes, even if they were pressured to do so
- feeling that things were so commonplace 'there's no point' in raising it
- feeling that they would not be believed
- feeling that nothing would be done

PSHE
Association

Potential obstacles for pupils with SEND

May find it difficult to report sexual harassment because of communication difficulties

Taught to comply with instructions which may make it more difficult for them to recognise harassment

May be a target because of difference in cognitive functioning

May find it difficult to differentiate between appropriate/ inappropriate/ necessary touch

May not be believed/ understood if they report sexual harassment

Tolerating unkind/inappropriate behavior to 'keep' a friendship, not feel lonely… or think it is 'ok' behaviour

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

What might schools do to tackle these barriers?
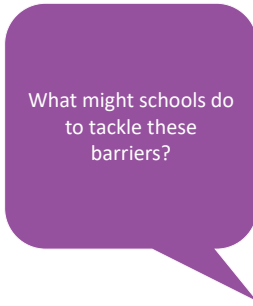
www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

A whole school approach

- PSHE education is one preventative measure, but not the whole solution!
- A whole school approach is needed, including:
  - See and name the problem – this is everyone's responsibility. (Define/map/assess/understand)
  - Tackle low-level behaviour that contributes to the culture
  - Deter behaviours through sanctions and new narratives
  - Support those affected, including by reviewing current reporting systems

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads

May 2018

NAHT
FOR LEADERS, FOR LEARNERS

BEYOND

www.pshe-association.org.uk

IASR

PSHE Association

Planning to address sexual harassment in PSHE

- Ensure input does not attempt to shock or shame pupils
- Lessons must allow pupils to ask questions and explore issues sensitively and respectfully
- Avoid knee-jerk reactions which are seen to link to particular incidents and side-line planned curriculum provision
- Use a spiral approach that revisits topics, focusing on positive aspects of human relationships and sexuality
- Promote a culture of 'telling' and help-seeking, for self and others

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Laying the foundations at key stage 1-2

The foundation for this learning should be introduced from KS1 to include, for example, learning about:
- Asking, giving and not giving permission (consent)
- What makes a good friend
- Boundaries and privacy
- About body parts that are private
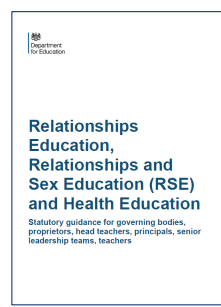- About appropriate and inappropriate touch

This understanding will support primary pupils' current safety, while preparing them for specific learning about sexual violence and sexual harassment in the secondary phase.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

RSHE guidance

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers
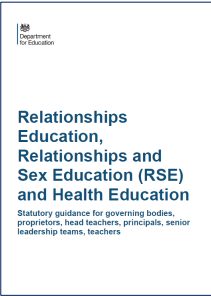
By the end of primary school, pupils should know:

- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers….
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

RSHE guidance

Department for Education

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers

By the end of secondary school, pupils should know:

- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

R25. recognise different types of physical contact; what is acceptable and unacceptable; strategies to respond to unwanted physical contact

R29. where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety

R19. about the impact of bullying, including offline and online, and the consequences of hurtful behaviour

R16. about how to respond if physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe

R22. about how to treat themselves and others with respect

R10. that bodies and feelings can be hurt by words and actions; that people can say hurtful things online

R22. about privacy and personal boundaries; what is appropriate in friendships and wider relationships

R30. that personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online

R21. about discrimination: what it means and how to challenge it

R26. about seeking and giving permission (consent) in different situations

R13. to recognise that some things are private and the importance of respecting privacy; that parts of their body covered by underwear are private

R17. about knowing there are situations when they should ask for permission and also when their permission should be sought

---
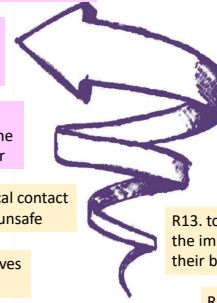
Quality assured resources

www.pshe-association.org.uk

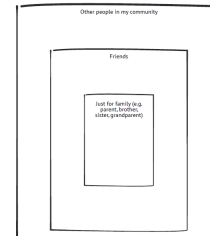**PSHE Association**

Exploring activities

I have to ask permission when _____

? To ask permission, I can say _____

✓ If I want to give permission, I can say _____

✗ If I don't want to give permission, I can say _____

Pupils complete a learning summary to show how much they have learnt and understood about permission seeking.

Other people in my community

Friends

Just for family (e.g. parent, brother, sister, grandparent)

Pupils work in groups to sort different boundaries onto this grid and share their ideas with the class.

In groups, pupils offer advice to each character about what they could do.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

R29. the law relating to abuse in relationships, including coercive control and online harassment

R19. about the impact of attitudes towards sexual assault and to challenge victim-blaming, including when abuse occurs online

R5. the legal rights, responsibilities and protections provided by the Equality Act

R39. the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination on individuals and relationships

R30. how to manage any request or pressure to share an image of themselves or others, and how to get help

R11. to evaluate expectations about gender roles, behaviour and intimacy within romantic relationships

R8. to understand the potential impact of the portrayal of sex in pornography and other media, including on sexual attitudes, expectations and behaviour

R16. to recognise unwanted attention (such as harassment and stalking including online), ways to respond and how to seek help

R3. to respond appropriately to indicators of unhealthy relationships, including seeking help where necessary

R25. about the law relating to sexual consent

R42. to recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online

R8. that the portrayal of sex in the media and social media (including pornography) can affect people's expectations of relationships and sex

---

Exploring activities

Ask students to prioritise these strategies for starting a difficult conversation, according to which they think would be most helpful.

In pairs, students discuss how far they agree or disagree with each of the character's statements.

Rehearse what to say in the mirror	Look up advice online from other people who've been through something similar	Organise a time and date in advance with the person
Practise what to say with an online counselling service, for example Childline	Plan out what to say and make notes	Write it out in a letter and send it to the person
Choose a quiet place without distractions and time to talk before telling someone	Take slow, deep breaths and count to 10 before starting the conversation	Try expressing feelings creatively first, for example painting, drawing, poetry

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3	**Friendships:** Making and maintaining healthy friendships; Similarities and differences	**Emotional wellbeing:** Expressing and managing every day feelings; Seeking support for self or others	**Staying safe:** Trusted people and feeling safe; Keeping secrets and when to break confidentiality; Recognising and reporting feeling unsafe	**Economic wellbeing:** Attitudes and ideas about spending, saving and giving money; Keeping money safe	**Physical health:** Healthy lifestyles; Physical exercise and its impact on mental wellbeing; Balanced diets and making choices; Sun safety	**Shared responsibilities:** Rights and responsibilities; Why we have rules; Responsibility for the local environment; Sustainability; Safety in different environments; Safety at home
Year 4	**Friendships:** Managing conflict and repairing friendships; Feeling lonely; Friendship skills, including communicating safely online; Listening and responding; Respecting self and others	**Communities:** What makes a community; Diversity; Freedom of expression; Online communities; Identifying and responding to prejudice	**Economic wellbeing:** Budgeting; Saving; Spending decisions; How managing money makes us feel; How spending choices affect others	**Families:** Different types of relationships; Characteristics of healthy family relationships; Feeling safe and cared for	**Growing and changing:** Growing up; Puberty, including periods and wet dreams; Sleep	**Staying healthy:** Dental health; Hygiene; germs; Basic first aid; Early signs of illness and seeking help
Year 5	**Respect and bullying:** Mutual respect; Sharing points of view; Stereotypes; Types of bullying and how to get help; Discrimination	**Mental wellbeing:** Taking care of mental health and emotional wellbeing; Managing challenges; Seeking support for themselves and others	**Staying safe:** Privacy and personal boundaries; Acceptable and unacceptable contact; Permission-seeking and giving; Personal safety, including FGM	**Careers:** Career types; challenging career stereotypes; Enterprise project — CROSS-YEAR, GROUP WITH Y7	**Substances:** Drugs common to everyday life; Risks and effects of alcohol and smoking; Rules and laws	**Keeping active:** Benefits of a balanced lifestyle; Balancing internet use; How physical activity affects wellbeing
Year 6	**Personal Identity:** What contributes to who we are; Personal strengths; Interests; Setting goals; Managing setbacks; New opportunities and responsibilities	**Puberty and reproduction:** Menstrual wellbeing; Managing the changes of puberty; Developing independence; How a baby is made	**Health and hygiene:** Making informed choices regarding a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition; Hygiene and bacteria and viruses; Allergies and getting help in an emergency; Vaccination and immunisation	**Managing change:** Developing friendship skills; Changing and ending friendships; Managing change, loss and bereavement; Sources of support	**Media literacy:** How data is shared and used online; Evaluating reliability of sources; Misinformation and targeted information; Choosing age-appropriate TV, games and online content; Influences relating to gambling	**Friendships and staying safe:** Opportunities to connect online; The nature of online-only friendships; Reporting harmful content and contact; Staying safe online
Year 7	**Economic wellbeing:** Evaluating value for money; Debt, fraud and personal values around finance; Financial exploitation	**Friendships and managing influences:** Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles; Healthy sleep habits; Dental health; Managing stress; Accessing health services	**Substances:** Social norms regarding drugs, alcohol and tobacco; Myths and misconceptions; Influence and risks relating to substance use	**Careers:** Developing enterprise skills; The world of work and young people's employment rights; Enterprise project — CROSS-YEAR, GROUP WITH Y5	**Relationships:** Healthy and positive relationships, including intimate relationships; Expectations and stereotypes in relationships; Managing strong feelings; concept of consent	**Friendships and diversity:** Respectful relationships and conflict resolution, including online; Equality, diversity and tackling prejudice; Bullying, including online
Year 8	**Careers:** Life and career aspirations; Personal strengths and skills for employment; Stereotypes; Routes into careers; Progression routes; Online presence	**Friendships and managing influences:** Managing social influence, peer pressure and peer approval; Strategies to manage pressure to conform within a group and in relation to substance use	**Relationships:** Stereotypes and expectations of gender roles, behaviour and intimacy; Consent in intimate situations; Introduction to contraception and sexual health	**First aid and keeping safe:** First aid including CPR and defibrillator use; Personal safety including travel safety	**Mental health and wellbeing:** Attitudes to mental health and emotional wellbeing; Digital resilience; Body image; Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies; Seeking support for themselves and others	**Moving forward:** Personal strengths, celebrating successes and setting goals; Moving on to a new school; Managing change

"Central to this should be a carefully planned and implemented RSHE curriculum"
- Ofsted 2021

PSHE Association

How can schools demonstrate their response?

✓ Through the reporting and logging of incidents, including how these are dealt with – expect reports to increase!

✓ Through the PSHE/RSHE curriculum; demonstrating what is taught where and how it contributes to young people's understanding of sexual harassment

✓ Through parent consultation and engagement

✓ Through pupil voice

✓ Through pupil work and assessment

"This review… recommends that schools, colleges and multi-agency partners act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports."
- Ofsted 2021

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence[21]

- As part of assessing safeguarding, inspectors will consider how the school handles allegations and instances of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence. This includes checking:
  - that the school has appropriate **school-wide policies in place** that make it clear that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) is unacceptable, with appropriate sanctions in place
  - that the **school's policies are reflected in its curriculum**, which specifically addresses sexual harassment, online abuse, sexual violence and issues of consent
  - that all **pupils are supported to report concerns** about harmful sexual behaviour freely
  - that concerns are **taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately**, and pupils are confident that this is case
  - that **comprehensive records** of all allegations are kept
- Inspectors will also look at how schools work to prevent sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence through a whole-school approach that includes an effective **behaviour policy, pastoral support and a carefully planned relationships, sex and health education curriculum.**

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

"The school/college will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school/college life. These will be underpinned by the school/college's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a **planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons** and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

Such a programme should be **fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate** (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities)."

Keeping Children Safe In Education, 2022:33

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Parent and pupil engagement

RESOURCE 1 Top ten card sort

GATHERING STUDENTS' VIEW LESSON PLAN   **KS3-4**

Student voice activity for Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education

A lesson can be a powerful way to engage all students in a student voice activity. This lesson has been designed to be suitable for both key stages 3 and 4 students, and can be adapted to suit either a 30 minute or a 60 minute lesson. With the relationships, sex and health education elements of PSHE education now statutory, the lesson invites feedback on PSHE education generally with some activities more focused towards Relationships, Sex and Health education, to support your implementation of the statutory requirements.

You may also wish to ask pupils to complete the student questionnaire on PSHE education here.

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Overcoming barriers

- Are there any barriers for this learning being effective in your setting? For example:
  - School ethos around this issue
  - Attitudes towards PSHE education
  - Lesson delivery
  - Pupil perceptions of staff/peers'/parents' likely responses
  - Behavioural/emotional responses to lesson content

- How could those barriers be planned for or overcome?

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Discussing sexual harassment: top tips

Clearly define what 'sexual harassment' is	Avoid over simplistic focus on consent	Avoid teaching that alienates or is perceived to be blaming boys	Consider use of language – describe sexual harassment as 'weak', 'shocking', 'disappointing', 'intrusive', 'violating', 'ugly' - instead of 'banter', 'joking', 'boys will be boys'
Avoid blaming messages towards victims	Ensure discussion of healthy sexual relationships, beyond clinical 'matter of fact' learning	Include the positive, such as learning about positive relationships, values and autonomy	

www.pshe-association.org.uk

PSHE Association

Thank you for being here today!

www.pshe-association.org.uk

info@pshe-association.org.uk

@PSHEAssociation
@PsheSpecialists

PSHE HERO!

PSHE Association