

# BEYOND REFERRALS

## **Beyond Referrals:** Levers for addressing harmful sexual behaviour in schools

A SELF-ASSESSMENT RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

Dr Jenny Lloyd, Joanne Walker and Vanessa Bradbury



University of  
Bedfordshire



Contextual  
Safeguarding  
Network

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE  
RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,  
VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING



## BACKGROUND

---

Young people report that schools are locations where students can encounter sexual harm from other young people. This involves a range of harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) from name-calling and sexual bullying to sexual assault. Schools are also places that can provide safety to young people and promote positive ideas about gender and relationships.

Research indicates that schools need whole-school approaches to preventing HSB. This requires schools to develop interventions beyond solely making referrals to designated safeguarding leads or social care services. To do so, schools, multi-agency partners and inspectorates must understand the levers for preventing and intervening in contexts of harm.

When instances of HSB occur, schools and colleges may be involved at various stages – prevention and early response, making a referral into multi-agency processes, and providing support for young people and their families. Without clear guidance and multi-agency support, schools struggle to establish thresholds to identify cases of HSB as well as ways to manage and support all the individuals involved.

*'I think it sort of gets a bit confusing because, obviously, in some scenarios people say, 'Oh, a boy can't physically force you' but then when they're pressuring you to that extent over and over again, you do, sort of, feel forced in a way. Because it's normalised people say 'Ah, it's not that deep' so you're almost made to feel crazy for thinking, 'Oh, it shouldn't be like that.'*

(Student, 14)

*People will just walk past you and touch you. There's other stuff that also happens, just outside of school as well. People think that it's okay, that the girl is not going to take it seriously, but it is serious.*

(Student, 15)

## THE BEYOND REFERRALS TOOLKIT

The Beyond Referrals self-assessment toolkit is intended to support schools to identify and assess the factors that contribute to addressing HSB in schools. The Beyond Referrals project launched the toolkit in 2018, following research in schools. This new updated version includes new levers and guidance on carrying out the self-assessment. The toolkit is supported by online tutorials available on the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#).

The toolkit includes this guidance and a free online toolkit. This guidance includes:

- A traffic light tool which forms the basis of the self-assessment
- An example completed assessment (Appendix A) to help schools to score themselves using the tool
- A blank assessment self-assessment template (Appendix B) which can be printed or completed online

This guidance is supported by an online toolkit that can be accessed [here](#) and includes:

- Online versions of the traffic light tool and templates
- Self-assessment method guides
- Scoring template to enter your scores

**BEYOND**  
REFERRALS





# SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR SCHOOLS

Schools and colleges can use the Beyond Referrals self-assessment tool to assess the extent to which they enable effective responses to HSB in their school. There are five categories of self-assessment:



## SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES



## PREVENTION



## IDENTIFICATION



## RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION



## CULTURAL CONTEXT

Each category represents a 'Lever' for preventing and addressing HSB within schools. Each lever has a number of components against which a school can assess itself.

### How to use the audit tool

This is a strengths-based tool – it focuses on stating what schools do rather than what they do not do. When completing it, schools should consider the green column first. If they are unable to evidence that they meet the requirements of the green column, they move across to the amber column and assess whether they meet these requirements. If schools believe that they do not meet the requirements in either the green or amber column, they should mark themselves red.

Before starting the assessment, schools should spend some time reading the tool and the example completed template (Appendix A). The completed template gives examples of what methods to use for each section and some examples of how a school may score itself.

Appendix B is a blank template for schools to use to conduct their own self-assessment.

### Scoring

Using the tool, calculate your score for each of the levers. Points are allocated as follows:

- Green – 2
- Amber – 1
- Red – 0

Working down each row, allocate points per row and enter these into the scoring spreadsheet. Once the total scores are calculated, schools will be able to map their progress visually on six separate radar charts.

A scoring spreadsheet can be accessed [here](#) and a separate version of Appendix B can be accessed [here](#).

### Self-assessment methods

A range of evidence is required to complete the self-assessment. Some of this will be readily available, whereas other information may need to be collected specially. The methods used to gather evidence will vary between schools but could include:

- **Student engagement session** to provide a safe space for groups of young people to freely discuss their thoughts about HSB and the current school's response
- **Staff engagement sessions** to provide an opportunity for staff across a range of roles to discuss their thoughts on the school's response to HSB and to highlight good practice and raise any concerns
- **Review of behaviour or safeguarding logs** to understand how incidents of HSB are being recorded by staff
- **Interview with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)** or team to discuss internal HSB referrals within school, referral processes to the multi-agency safeguarding partnership and the school's relationship with the wider safeguarding and child protection processes
- **Student survey** to gain insight into students' thoughts about HSB within a class, year group or the whole student body and to provide an opportunity for students to provide anonymous feedback to the school
- **Parent survey** to gain an insight into parents' thoughts about HSB and the school's response
- **Review of policies and procedures** relating to safeguarding and behaviour, peer-on-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.

[Detailed guidance](#) is available on each of the methods, including session plans, consent forms, templates and guidance. Different methods will help you complete different parts of the assessment. Appendix B gives an overview of some of the methods you could use for each section.

## DEFINITIONS

**Schools:** the term 'schools' is used for ease but it refers to a range of secondary education settings, including further education colleges.

**Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):** is an umbrella term that describes a range of sexual behaviours. Hackett *et al.* (2016; p.12)<sup>1</sup> define HSB as "sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, that may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult". This definition captures a range of behaviours, both offline and online, such as sexualised, gendered or sexist name calling, sexual image sharing without consent, unwanted sexual touching, sexual assault and rape.

Sexual behaviours are seen across a continuum ranging from normal and appropriate sexual behaviours that are expected from people of a certain developmental age through to sexual behaviours that are inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent.

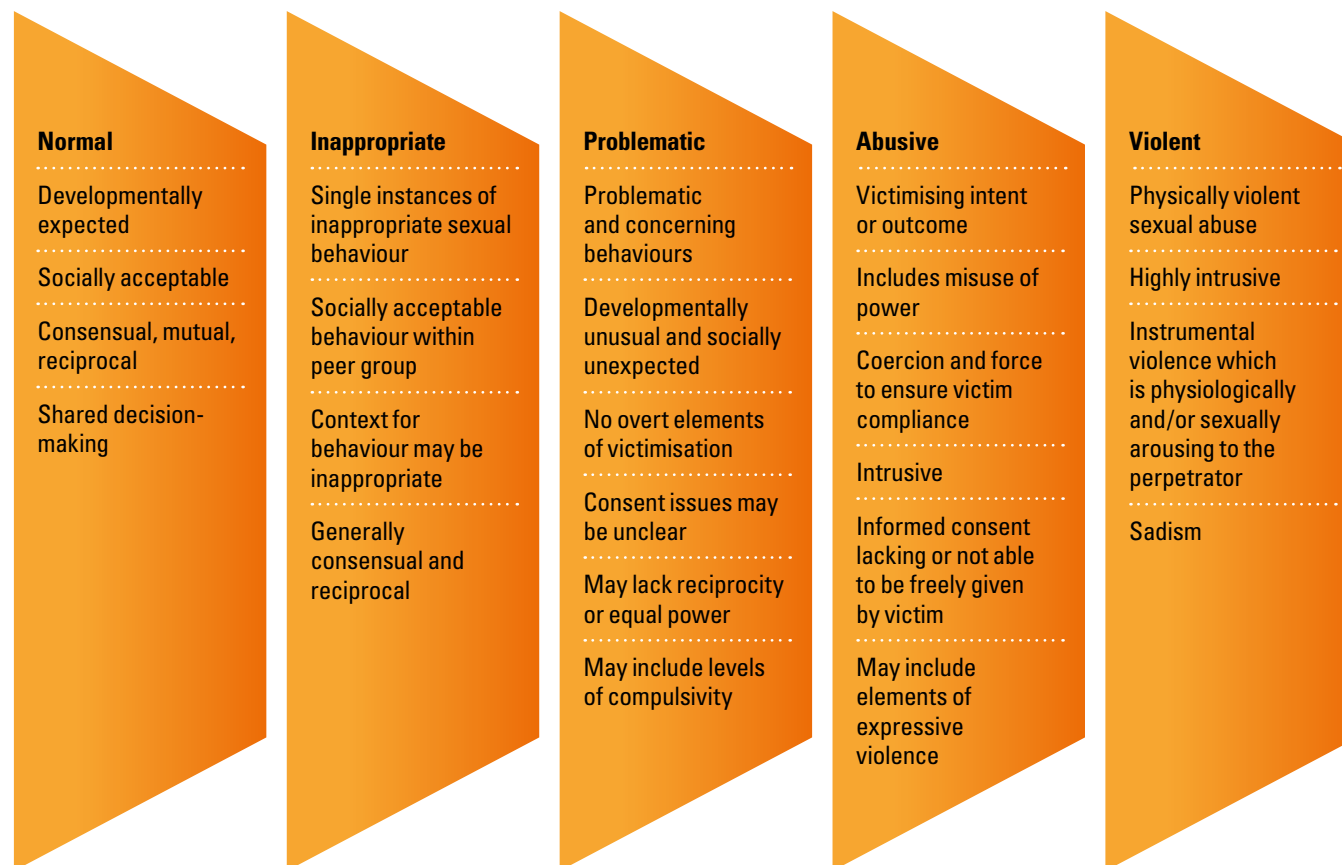
The toolkit uses Hackett's (2010) continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviour<sup>2</sup>.

**Peer-on-peer abuse:** Physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised within young people's relationships. It may include, for instance, child sexual or criminal exploitation, bullying, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence.

**Hotspot Mapping:** is a way to identify physical spaces where there are concerns related to harmful sexual behaviour and spaces that students feel safe.

**Bystander Approach:** a bystander approach concentrates on the role of peers as empowered bystanders in schools, groups and other social units who can safely look out for other young people and positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of their peers.

A continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviours  
(Hackett, 2010)



1 Hackett, S., Holmes, D., & Branigan, P. (2016). *Operational framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviors*. London, NSPCC.

2 Hackett, Simon. 2010. "Children, Young People and Sexual Violence." In *Children Behaving Badly?: Peer Violence Between Children and Young People*, edited by Christine Barter, and David Berridge, 121-136. London: John Wiley & Sons.

## Beyond Referrals: Levers for addressing HSB in schools


KEY	
<b>DSL</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>HSB</b>	Harmful Sexual Behaviours
<b>MA</b>	Multi-agency
<b>PSHE</b>	Personal, Social and Health Education
<b>RSE</b>	Relationships and Sex Education

### THE BEYOND REFERRALS TRAFFIC LIGHT TOOL



#### SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Staffing capacity related to safeguarding within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully protected DSL role or safeguarding team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some protected time for DSL role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSL role additional to teaching/ other core responsibilities without protected time.</li> </ul>
<b>Recording and referral pathways internally within school</b>	Referral pathways available for staff to internally record and refer incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff record all incidents of HSB, using either behaviour or safeguarding logs, including those that are deemed 'low level' incidents, up to those that are abusive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear referral and recording pathways are in place, however staff record incidents on an ad-hoc basis, or only record those deemed serious incidents (e.g. problematic, abusive or violent behaviours).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral and recording pathways are yet to be established for HSB incidents.</li> </ul>
<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy</b>	HSB or peer-on-peer abuse policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school's strategic response to HSB is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly outlined in a standalone HSB/peer-on-peer abuse safeguarding policy or explicitly integrated into a broader safeguarding policy</li> <li>linked to national and local MA HSB procedures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school's strategic response to HSB is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>embedded within behaviour and/or exclusions policy</li> <li>or</li> <li>has been developed without reference to local or national guidance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has yet to develop a strategic response to HSB.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement in local context</b>	Response to emerging concerns in the local environment outside the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school takes proactive steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership prior to incidents occurring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school takes steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership once they affect their students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is not aware of trends identified by the local MA partnership which may affect their students.</li> </ul>

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Partnership input</b>	Level of external input from partnership to develop the school's response to HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school draws upon resources, information, training and guidance available within the local partnership to develop their procedures and approach for responding to (and preventing) HSB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school receives partial input from partners to develop their response to HSB.</li> <li>The school draws upon partners to inform the development of their referral pathway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy, procedures and approaches to responding to HSB, if available, have been developed independently of resources and pathways within the local partnership.</li> </ul>
<b>Parental engagement</b>	Procedure adopted for engaging parents in relation to the school's approach to HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school proactively engages parents through preventative activity to raise awareness of HSB and encourages them to report any emerging concerns.</li> <li>This wider awareness is drawn upon following incidents of HSB to ensure parents are kept updated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school proactively engages parents following HSB incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are engaged in response to HSB incidents when there is evidence of parental anxiety.</li> </ul>
 <b>PREVENTION</b>				
<b>Training</b>	Good quality staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All school staff receive regular training specifically on HSB, in addition to training on safeguarding processes and issues generally, informed by national and local evidence.</li> <li>Staff are provided with updates more than annually on relevant issues to HSB.</li> <li>Staff receive training on teaching RSE in a safe and effective way for all pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSLs receive training relevant to HSB and disseminate to school staff. Or</li> <li>HSB training that is delivered to all school staff is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or</li> <li>HSB training for all school staff is delivered on a less than annual basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School staff do not receive training relevant to HSB. Or</li> <li>Training delivered to the DSL is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or</li> <li>Training is delivered on a less than annual basis to the DSL for the purposes of dissemination to other staff.</li> </ul>

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Relationships and sex education</b>	Relationships and sex education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RSE curriculum is delivered to all year groups, and learning is embedded and consistent (i.e. RSE has a regular slot in the timetable).</li> <li>The RSE curriculum recognises the gendered nature of HSB, takes steps to tackle victim-blaming, engages an equalities approach (e.g. that recognises the intersection of gender, disability, and ethnicity); and ensures students are involved in curriculum development.</li> <li>Teaching about HSB in RSE lessons supports students to feel confident about options for disclosure and the school's referral pathways.</li> <li>The RSE curriculum is taught in line with safe and effective principles of PSHE pedagogy (e.g. establishing a safe classroom environment by setting ground rules and is age appropriateness).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RSE curriculum is delivered to all year groups, however the focus is on laws and the negative consequences of sexual behaviour.</li> <li>RSE is delivered through drop down days but is not embedded in student timetables.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSE education is delivered to a limited number of students/year groups. Or</li> <li>RSE is delivered without reference to national guidance or local expertise.</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention and incident management</b>	Actions taken by the school following incidents and the prevention of further incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swift action taken by the school following incidents set a tone and expectation for the wider student body that contribute to the prevention of further incidents.</li> <li>Students and staff perceive that issues associated with HSB are addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swift actions are taken by the school following incidents of HSB. However, students do not perceive that all incidents are responded to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions to incidents are limited – for example, only contact incidents such as sexual assault, but not online sexual harassment are responded to – which sets the tone to the wider student body that such behaviours may not be addressed and thus become normalised.</li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="114 1050 197 1129"></div> <b>IDENTIFICATION</b>				
<b>Definition</b>	The school has a definition for HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB, which is drawn from the HSB definition used in the MA partnership. The definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB. The HSB definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation.</li> <li>The HSB definition used in the school is not aligned with the HSB definition used in the MA partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A definition for HSB is not yet used within the school And/or</li> <li>The HSB definition is not referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation.</li> </ul>



LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>HSB recording and tracking</b>	The school has safeguarding and behaviour log recording systems that allow for flagging or marking cases as HSB, or a related term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school uses their safeguarding or behaviour log systems to flag or mark cases as HSB, or a related term.</li> <li>The school uses these systems to log details of locations and peers linked to incidents.</li> <li>The school uses data to identify trends associated with HSB; for example, chronologies are used to contextualise incidents that have occurred and peer-group mapping exercises are used to support prevention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School staff have an awareness of HSB trends informally.</li> <li>Systems to formally record or track HSB, such as HSB flags, are not yet fully in place within the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systems to record or track HSB, for example HSB flags, are not yet in place at the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Awareness of, and access to, resources to assist identification of HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff at all levels are aware of, and have access to, up-to-date HSB resources that facilitate understanding of thresholds and identification of harm. For example, school staff use the Brook traffic light system.</li> <li>HSB resources used by the school are aligned with those used by the MA partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DSL has access to, and understanding of, HSB resources to assist identification.</li> <li>The staff rely on a referral to the DSL to ascertain level of harm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DSL and school staff do not have access to HSB resources to assist identification, resulting in some forms of HSB being undetected or not recognised as harmful.</li> </ul>
<b>Disclosure options</b>	The safeguarding process is transparent and available to the whole student body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are offered a variety of mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB. For example, there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multiple trusted individuals within school to disclose to</li> <li>and</li> <li>safe spaces in which to access staff</li> <li>and</li> <li>a variety of mechanisms for disclosure; for example, online reporting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes is made available to students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are offered mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB, for example there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trusted individuals to disclose to</li> <li>or</li> <li>a safe space in which to access staff</li> <li>or</li> <li>a variety of mechanisms for disclosure for example online reporting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes is made available to students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanisms for disclosure of HSB concerns are not apparent. Or</li> <li>Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes are not yet made available to students.</li> </ul>



## RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Staff motivation</b>	Staff motivation to intervene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff feel empowered and motivated to intervene to prevent or respond to instances of HSB.</li> <li>• School staff are encouraged and supported to do so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff identify the need to address HSB and want to intervene to prevent or respond to incidents.</li> <li>• Some school staff feel motivated to do so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff have accepted at least some forms of HSB as an inevitable aspect of the school environment.</li> <li>• School staff are not encouraged or supported to take action to prevent or to intervene in HSB incidents.</li> </ul>
<b>Thresholds</b>	Understanding and application of HSB continuum thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff understand which behaviours fall across an HSB continuum.</li> <li>• Responses are proportionate and consistent.</li> <li>• Thresholds used in the school are consistent with those used in the wider MA partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DSL and some staff understand which behaviours fall across an HSB continuum.</li> <li>• There is inconsistency across staff about what behaviours are considered developmentally normal and those which are harmful.</li> <li>• The school's understanding of thresholds is consistent with that used in the wider MA partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is varied understanding and application of thresholds for incidents of HSB across school staff.</li> <li>• Incidents are inconsistently referred internally by staff members, and responses are not always proportionate or consistent.</li> <li>• The school's understanding of thresholds is inconsistent with that used in the wider MA partnership.</li> </ul>
<b>Response to incidents</b>	Response to young people involved in incidents that are abusive, violent or escalating in nature and the wellbeing of students involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to HSB incidents consider, and take steps to, safeguard all students who were involved, both those who harmed and those who were harmed.</li> <li>• The school supports the ongoing welfare of the wider student body and has multiple resources that prioritise student mental health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to HSB incidents take steps to safeguard some students who were involved.</li> <li>• Responses to HSB incidents are largely characterised by the use of school sanctions.</li> <li>• Long-term safeguarding measures are allocated to social care professionals alone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses are focused on changing the behaviour of those who were harmed rather than those who harmed them.</li> <li>• Responses feature victim-blaming language.</li> </ul>

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Physical environment</b>	Assessment of physical environments following incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is recognised, risk assessed and, where necessary, intervention is taken to prevent future incidents.</li> <li>The school undertakes proactive assessments of locations where HSB occurs through mapping exercises with students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is logged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions following HSB incidents are focused solely on individuals involved, and do not include the physical location where they took place.</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-agency/ External incident referral</b>	External referral of abusive, violent or reoccurring HSB incidents and partnership inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School refers HSB incidents to social care services.</li> <li>Active facilitation of a partnership response to the incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School refers HSB incidents to social care services.</li> <li>School intervention ceases following referral.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent referral to the partnership following HSB incidents.</li> </ul>



## CULTURAL CONTEXT

<b>Prevalence</b>	Nature and extent of HSB within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school proactively takes steps to identify the nature and extent of HSB in the school drawing on a variety of data capture mechanisms, such as incident records, staff engagement activities and student disclosures.</li> <li>Prevalence data is informed by the student voice through student engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school proactively takes steps to identify the nature and extent of HSB in the school by drawing on a variety of data capture mechanisms, such as incident records, staff and parent engagement activities and student disclosures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence data is solely informed by student disclosures.</li> </ul>
<b>Student disclosure</b>	Students' use of disclosure options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have a clear understanding of the safeguarding processes in the school and information sharing process within these, including whether and at what point disclosures would be shared with others.</li> <li>School takes steps to understand what barriers exist to student disclosure and attempts to address these. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum specifically addresses the culture of 'snitching'.</li> <li>The school understands and draws upon the importance of friendships, and takes steps to support disclosures through this process.</li> <li>School staff are discreet, understand confidentiality, and are comfortable when receiving a disclosure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not all students are aware of the safeguarding process in the school, and if they were to make a disclosure, whether and at what point information would be shared with others.</li> <li>The school takes steps to understand what barriers exist for student disclosure but steps are not always taken to address these barriers.</li> <li>Young people disclose to their peers, but peers are not supported to manage disclosures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are not aware of the safeguarding process in the school, and if they were to make a disclosure, whether and at what point information would be shared with others.</li> <li>The students are not given opportunities to share what barriers there are to disclosing.</li> <li>Some staff may informally be aware of the barriers to disclosure, such as 'snitching', but these barriers are accepted as inevitable or not possible to change.</li> <li>Measures are not taken to address these barriers to disclosure.</li> </ul>



LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<b>Peer support</b>	Mechanisms of peer support in the school and understanding of peer influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school empowers young people to support each other as part of the response to HSB incidents.</li> <li>Resources are in place to support positive peer influence associated with HSB incidents, e.g. via bystander approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of negative peer influence associated with HSB incidents is recognised and addressed by the school, but there may be inconsistency in the application of this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following HSB incidents young people intervene in sometimes problematic or harmful ways, such as threats or use of violence or shame to discourage disclosure, which are not recognised or addressed by school staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Ethos</b>	School ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school actively promotes healthy and positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference.</li> <li>Students and staff recognise, welcome and participate in this ethos.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School has taken some steps to promote positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference, but these are not fully embedded within the school ethos.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dominant culture amongst students and staff features evidence of harmful and unhealthy attitudes towards relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference, and the school is yet to take effective steps to address this.</li> </ul>
<b>Language and challenging normalisation</b>	Language used within the school to describe HSB and the way the school challenges harmful attitudes and behaviours related to HSB within the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language used by staff and students to describe HSB within the school recognises the spectrum of behaviours, the harm these can cause and the context in which the harm occurred.</li> <li>Staff and students challenge a range of HSBs within the school that recognise a spectrum of behaviours.</li> <li>Language used by staff and students understands harm in context (i.e. does not victim-blame, and recognises the influence of power, trauma and gender).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School staff challenge victim-blaming language or gendered language used in association with HSB.</li> <li>Students normalise abusive social norms, identified through the use of victim-blaming or gendered language, or the acceptance that some behaviours are just 'banter', or expected.</li> <li>Staff challenge a range of HSBs. Staff recognise the underpinning gendered and trauma-informed dynamics of incidents of HSB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some staff and students use victim-blaming or gendered language, identified in assessments, case notes or interactions with staff and students. These go unchallenged.</li> <li>Staff and students accept some forms of harmful sexual behaviour as expected or normal.</li> <li>Inappropriate and problematic incidents of HSB – such as calling someone a 'slag' – are responded to as behavioural issues akin to swearing.</li> <li>There is an acceptance by students that some behaviours are just 'banter', or expected.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT



### SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>		<b>Interview with DSL(s) or team</b> to understand the DSL role.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where one member of staff had their time fully protected with no additional responsibilities (i.e. teaching).</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where a DSL had teaching responsibilities but some protected time.</p>
<b>Recording and referral pathways internally within school</b>		<p><b>Student engagement sessions and review of safeguarding and behaviour logs</b> to compare student reports on the frequency of HSB in school with incidents recorded on the school systems.</p> <p><b>Staff engagement session</b> to understand whether staff have access to and use recording systems.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where following an instance of homophobic or sexualised name calling in class, the majority of teachers in the school would have access to, and would record, the incident on an electronic safeguarding log, even if it was deemed as a 'one-off' event.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where they had an electronic safeguarding system in place that all staff can access, however staff would predominantly record inappropriate touching (such as touching bums), or the distribution of sexual images, but not sexist or homophobic name calling.</p>
<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy</b>		<b>Review school policies</b> including the safeguarding, behaviour and other relevant policies	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where they had a sexual harassment and sexual violence policy that makes explicit reference to HSB (for example, sexual harassment, sexual violence, non-consensual/indecent sexual imagery and online abuse) and is in accordance with statutory guidance and local MA advice on sexual violence in schools.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where types of HSB (for example sexual assault or 'sexting') are only referenced within the behaviour policy.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where there is no reference to types of HSB in any policy.</p>

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Engagement in local context</b>		<b>Interview DSL</b> about the meetings they attend in the MA partnership and how they act on information gained in these meetings.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where, following a MA meeting in which concerns are raised about a new social media platform (for example where a young person's location may be known) an assembly is held within the school for students, and/or parents are notified.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where, following a MA meeting where concerns are raised about sexual harassment in a park by students of another school, the school only acts once this affects their own students.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if it does not attend any local meetings such as DSL networks.</p>
<b>Partnership input</b>		<b>Student engagement sessions and surveys and interview with DSL.</b> Speak to students about PSHE/RSE and any sessions conducted by external organisations on topics related to HSB and ask how relevant these are for them. Speak to the DSL about local agencies they work with and evidence of MA resources that they draw upon to inform the school's response.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it regularly brings in external partners (for example a voluntary organisation for victims of child sexual exploitation) to inform their approaches and works with the MA partnership when reviewing and adapting policies.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where it delivers PSHE on healthy relationships but develops this with limited reference to evidence or national or local resources.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if it does not engage a local LGBTQ+ organisation for fear of parental backlash.</p>
<b>Parental engagement</b>		<b>Parent survey and interview with DSL.</b> Survey questions ask about the level of communication and relationship parents have with the school on HSB.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it delivers tailored emails or learning and/or delivers surveys to parents to gauge their perspective on HSB.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> if it consistently contacts/informs parents after incidents of HSB, but has minimal engagement through raising awareness, surveys, or communication on HSB outside of incidents.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if it doesn't speak to parents about HSB, except following incidents when they are required to do so, because of fears that parents may be resistant to school policies.</p>





## PREVENTION

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Training</b>		<b>Staff engagement sessions</b> to discuss how confident staff feel to respond to HSB, and whether the training provides them with enough information on school-specific approaches to HSB.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it provides training on safeguarding which includes topics related to HSB, and also provides regular updates, bulletins and resources for staff specific to HSB.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> if it provides annual training on safeguarding which includes topics related to HSB.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where the DSL receives less-than annual training relevant to HSB, and the training is not disseminated to school staff.</p>
<b>Relationships and sex education</b>		<b>Student engagement sessions</b> (focus groups or surveys) to ask students whether the education they receive on relationships and sex education matches the reality of their lives and to gain their thoughts on the education and how it could be improved.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where lessons on sexting prioritise education on coercion and imbalances of power, with a focus on problematic onward sharing, but also recognise the range of ways that young people share images that are not sexual, and that some forms of image sharing are consensual for some age groups.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where all year groups are taught about sexting, but with a focus predominantly on the law and an emphasis on not sending the images in the first place.</p>
<b>Prevention and incident management</b>		<b>Student engagement sessions</b> to speak with students about what types of sexual harm happens at school, and how they think the school would respond to each of these harms	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where students and staff perceive that issues associated with HSB are addressed; for example a swift response to an allegation of online sexual harassment demonstrates to students that such behaviours are unacceptable and will not be tolerated, and that complaints will be taken seriously.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where swift action is taken in response to all incidents, but students only perceive that certain harmful behaviours are responded to, for example, contact offences but not those occurring online.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where action is only taken to respond to contact incidents such as sexual assault, but not to online sexual harassment, which therefore normalises such behaviours.</p>



## IDENTIFICATION

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Definition</b>		<p><b>Staff engagement sessions</b> sessions to speak with staff and ask them what HSB is and what types of behaviours fall under this term.</p> <p><b>Review school policies</b> including the safeguarding, behaviour and other relevant policies.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where its safeguarding policy makes reference to either HSB or peer-on-peer abuse and outlines a range of behaviours that fall within this – for example, sexual harassment and sexual violence. This is the same definition as used by the MA partnership. When asked, staff understand the range of behaviours that fall within the definition.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> if some school staff, when asked, are unable to describe what would constitute HSB or would consider some types of HSB (for example, child sexual exploitation) to be HSB but not others (for example, sexist name calling).</p>
<b>HSB recording and tracking</b>		<p><b>Review school safeguarding and behaviour logs</b> to understand how HSB is recorded by different staff members and to identify the use of HSB flags.</p> <p><b>Interview with DSL(s) or team</b> to understand how trends in HSB are mapped in the school.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it had recording systems in place to flag HSB and there is evidence of different teachers using the HSB flag for incidents even if they were deemed as a ‘one-off’ incident (e.g., an incident of bra pinging). The DSL would recognise growing trends of behaviours to create a chronology that is used to contextualise incidents, using key-terms so that the records are easily searchable.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where staff, when asked, were able to discuss HSB trends (e.g., bra-pinging is an issue in school), but these behaviours and trends are not recorded or do not allow for the easy searching of HSB, using a key-term search.</p>
<b>Resources</b>		<p><b>Interview with DSL(s) or team</b> to understand resources available to support the identification of HSB and how regularly these resources are updated.</p> <p><b>Staff engagement session</b> to explore staff knowledge of resources and confidence in using these.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where there are resources for staff to draw upon to support their identification of HSB and where the DSL would frequently (more than three times a year) receive updates on HSB resources and support staff to use these resources.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where a student with special educational needs is consistently sexually touching other students, but the DSL does not respond to this behaviour, based on the assumption that this behaviour is related to that individual’s learning needs. The DSL does not draw on any specialist resources on young people with learning needs to make this decision.</p>

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Disclosure options</b>		<p><b>Student engagement session</b> to explore students' awareness and perception of disclosure options in the school.</p> <p><b>Staff engagement session</b> to explore staff knowledge of disclosure options, confidence in managing a disclosure and knowledge of the school's safeguarding process.</p> <p><b>Review school policies</b> including the safeguarding, behaviour and other relevant policies.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where there is evidence of trusted relationships between students and individuals; for example students may have trusted relationships with a pastoral tutor, a mentor, or a teacher. The school would also have safe and private space (e.g., a therapeutic space) where students could discuss concerns. The school may allow for anonymous reporting, for example through an app or post boxes, but this approach is well supported through trusted adults and a safeguarding policy that is transparent and available to the whole student body. For example, a student that reports being raped by a student from another school already knows that after disclosing to a trusted member of staff, that the staff member will have to report this to the DSL and their parents, and how and when their parents will be informed.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where students are expected to disclose to staff members, but there is no designated space or time to do so or this space is not private and staff other than the DSL are not trained or prepared to take disclosures.</p>



## RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION

### Staff motivation

**Staff engagement and interview with DSL** to ask staff questions on the level of support they receive and if there are variations between staff responses. Explore where these differences lie in the workforce.

*For example:*


A school would score **green** if following an incident of HSB, staff members are provided with a regular form of supervision to discuss cases and where staff feel supported by colleagues to respond. In such a school, when a female staff member challenges sexist language she will be confident that her male colleagues will support her to do so.

A school would score **amber** where some staff recognise HSB as a problem, but feel they would not be supported to tackle this because other staff see these behaviours as 'banter' or 'boys being boys'.

A school would score **red** where, while staff understand that some forms of HSB are abusive, staff accept this as part of youth culture and take limited steps to respond or where staff feel if they were to raise concerns, they would not be taken seriously/a response wouldn't be put in place.



LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Thresholds</b>		<p><b>Staff and student engagement and interview with DSL.</b> Ask students how school staff respond to different cases (for example consensual and non-consensual image sharing). Ask staff about their responses to different cases of HSB and what thresholds they use to make these decisions.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would be <b>green</b> where there is recognition that individual case management can affect school-wide culture, peer response and all children's ability to speak out. Such a school would have an internal threshold document that allows all staff to identify where different behaviours fall on an HSB continuum – ranging from developmentally normal sexual behaviour to abusive and violent behaviours – which allows staff to respond proportionately. For example in a case where two 16 year olds have been found to share sexual images consensually with each other, the school and staff manage this internally (with an understanding of adolescent sexual development) whilst still recognising the legal implications. While an incident of non-consensual image sharing would be referred to social care services, and understood as abusive.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where both examples would be considered abusive and result in the same response; the consensual and non-consensual elements not being recognised as requiring a different response.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where staff are unsure what behaviours require a response, and have no access to guidance to make these decisions. This might be characterised by very few referrals to the MA partnership for HSB, with the school focusing instead on abuse of children by adults.</p>
<b>Response to incidents</b>		<p><b>Reviewing safeguarding logs, staff and student engagement</b> to identify evidence of victim-blaming language, consistency within responses, and actions and interventions following incidents.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> where, following an incident where a student is sexually assaulted while meeting up with other students in a park, the victims and instigators (and any witnesses) receive welfare support (and sanctions where appropriate). Friends and peers are also part of this response, and the wellbeing of all students involved is prioritised. Interventions focus on understanding the instigators' behaviour.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where the instigators receive a fixed-term exclusion, and on return are kept separate from the victims but receive no welfare support.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if the victims receive welfare support, but are seen to be blamed for the harm they experience, for example by staff using terminology such as 'students putting themselves at risk' and interventions focus on changing the victim's behaviour – such as, monitoring social media, changing their timetable, or providing healthy relationships guidance/support to the victim with limited interventions to the instigators.</p>

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Physical environment</b>		<b>Reviewing safeguarding logs</b> to identify whether staff record locations of HSB incidents, and <b>student engagement sessions</b> to understand any spaces where students feel safe or unsafe, how locations can be made safer and perceptions of any changes that need to be or have been made to unsafe locations.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> when, following an incident of unwanted touching in the drama theatre, the school conducts a location assessment to consider the supervision, lighting, and students' experience of that location, and takes steps to prevent further harm. The school routinely uses hotspot mapping to assess the broader school environment.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> when, in this instance, the drama theatre is noted on the recording system, but the environment is not changed in any way.</p>
<b>Multi-agency / External incident referral</b>		<b>Reviewing safeguarding logs</b> to identify actions taken and <b>engagement with students and staff</b> to understand responses to incidents.	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> when, following an incident of sexual assault by multiple students in the school, referrals are made to social care services. Social care then provide support to the young people involved. There would be an emphasis on how schools work within a child protection system that relies on strategic and operational alignment for effectiveness. Staff from the school attend relevant meetings, and work alongside social care services to tackle ongoing harm within the school.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where, following an incident of 'revengeful' sexual image sharing after a break-up, the school does not refer the case to social care or the police.</p>
 <b>CULTURAL CONTEXT</b>			
<b>Prevalence</b>		<p><b>Student engagement sessions</b> to identify types of harm happening in the school and where these occur.</p> <p><b>Staff engagement session, interview with DSL, review of safeguarding logs and behaviour logs</b> to identify incidents.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> if data captured on the scale of HSB in schools is based on student disclosure and staff awareness, but no attempt is made to gain students' perspectives.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if the school's data on prevalence is based only on disclosure by students.</p>

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Student disclosure</b>		<p><b>Student engagement session</b> (focus group or survey) to explore students' awareness and perception of disclosure options in the school and barriers to disclosure.</p> <p><b>Staff engagement session</b> to explore staff knowledge of disclosure options, confidence in managing a disclosure and knowledge of the school's safeguarding process and barriers to disclosure.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it takes time to ask students (through surveys/focus groups) about what HSB occurs in school, and if students would disclose. Following the session the school would proactively address any barriers identified. For example, if a student stated that sexual image sharing happens without consent and that students would not disclose this because of a fear of being blamed or socially isolated, the school would update the curriculum to specifically address cultures of 'snitching' and ensure that non-consensual image sharing is understood not to be the victim's fault.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> if it takes steps to understand what barriers exist but does not attempt to address them.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if any of the following circumstances are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture of snitching and fear of social isolation exist in the school and the school accepts this as inevitable</li> <li>• Students fear that the school will take punitive, sanctions-based response to the instigator if they disclose HSB, and the school continues to use a zero-tolerance based approach</li> <li>• Students have concerns that staff lack discretion and discuss cases of HSB with other staff members outside of safeguarding processes</li> <li>• Students fear that the school does not, and will not, respond to all forms of HSB, or responses are not perceived to be effective/visible to all students.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer support</b>		<p><b>Student and staff engagement sessions</b> to understand the role of friendships and peer influence, how students are currently managing disclosures or responding to incidents and what support students would need to manage a disclosure.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if, in response to an incident of a sexual assault within a relationship, peers socially isolate and blame the victim, the school proactively prevents harm through peer intervention approaches, such as bystander approaches, that challenge these negative behaviours.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where, following a sexual assault within a relationship, peers in the school socially isolate the victim and victim-blame and the school takes no action to challenge this.</p>

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	EXAMPLE METHODS THAT COULD BE USED	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from focus groups) See the <b>Beyond Referrals traffic light tool</b> for further reference on rating guidance
<b>Ethos</b>		<p><b>Student and staff engagement sessions</b> to identify attitudes amongst students and staff in relation to equality, LGBTQ rights and difference and students' perception of the school's ethos on these issues.</p> <p><b>Review school policies</b> including the safeguarding, behaviour and other relevant policies.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if it takes a proactive stance on issues such as LGBTQ+ rights. When homophobic slurs are used, students and staff challenge this.</p> <p>A school would score <b>amber</b> where it takes steps to promote LGBTQ+ rights but does not engage students within this.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> where LGBTQ+ rights are not promoted within the school, and when an incident of sexual assault occurs between two boys, it is not recognised as HSB.</p>
<b>Language and challenging normalisation</b>		<p><b>Student and staff engagement sessions</b> to identify attitudes and norms amongst students and staff in relation to HSB and related issues.</p> <p><b>Observations of the school environment</b> (including classes) to identify interactions between students and between students and staff.</p> <p><b>Review of safeguarding logs and behaviour logs</b> to review language used by staff.</p> <p><b>Review school policies</b> including the safeguarding, behaviour and other relevant policies.</p>	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p>A school would score <b>green</b> if the student body support a student whose personal messages of sexual communication are shared without consent and condemn the student who shared the messages without consent, recognising the influence of coercion and power to send sexual messages.</p> <p>A school would score <b>red</b> if a student calling another student a 'slag' in class is laughed at by students who witnessed it and dismissed or unchallenged by the teacher.</p>


## APPENDIX B: SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE





### SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES


LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	METHODS USED (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
Designated Safeguarding Lead			
Recording and referral pathways internally within school			
Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy			
Engagement in local context			



LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	METHODS USED (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
Partnership input			
Parental engagement			
 <b>PREVENTION</b>			
Training			
Relationships and sex education			

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	METHODS USED (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
Prevention and incident management			
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <span style="margin-left: 10px;"><b>IDENTIFICATION</b></span> </div>			
Definition			
Harmful Sexual Behaviour recording and tracking			
Resources			

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	METHODS USED (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
Disclosure options			
 <b>RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION</b>			
Staff motivation			
Thresholds			
Response to incidents			

LEVER	RATING (green, amber or red)	METHODS USED (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	REASON FOR RATING (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
Physical environment			
Multi-agency / External incident referral			
 <b>CULTURAL CONTEXT</b>			
Prevalence			
Student disclosure			

<b>LEVER</b>	<b>RATING</b> (green, amber or red)	<b>METHODS USED</b> (bullet point which methods were used i.e. focus groups, surveys etc.)	<b>REASON FOR RATING</b> (strengths and gaps identified, quotes or evidence from from surveys or focus groups)
<b>Peer support</b>			
<b>Ethos</b>			
<b>Language and challenging normalisation</b>			





THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE  
RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,  
VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

With thanks to our funder



Copyright © University of Bedfordshire  
Website: [www.beds.ac.uk/ic](http://www.beds.ac.uk/ic)  
Twitter: @uniofbedsCSE  
For further information please contact  
[jenny.lloyd@beds.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.lloyd@beds.ac.uk)