

National guidance documents and resources for schools

Welsh Government guidance

[Guidance for education settings on peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour 2020 \(Welsh Government, 2020a\)](#)

This guidance provides education settings with practical tools to prevent and respond to instances of peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school. This includes digital abuse and exploitation. The Welsh Government advises education settings to use this guidance to put in place clear policies to prevent and respond to instances of peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour, so that all children who attend their setting can realise their right to be safe and their right to an education

The guidance gives examples of what sexual harassment and digital sexual abuse and harassment may look like in practice. It describes how education settings have a statutory duty to safeguard children and young people, promote their welfare and uphold their rights. The guidance highlights the importance of remembering that both boys and girls can display harmful sexual behaviour. Evidence suggests that welfare responses tend to be given to girls, whereas boys' harmful sexual behaviour is seen as a criminal justice issue. Children who have experienced peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour should be supported to speak out, listened to and able to access the help they need, both in and out of education settings.

The guidance shares advice about how to implement a whole school approach in relation to sexual harassment and abuse and how to engage with parents.

It includes key features of a successful multi agency approach in responding to peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour.

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: Responding to incidents and safeguarding children and young people - Keeping safe online - Hwb](#)

[\(gov.wales\) \(Welsh Government, 2020b\)](#)

This is a Welsh Government document specifically written for headteachers, safeguarding leaders and senior leadership teams in education settings. There is also a practitioner guide available for teachers. The guidance aims to support schools and further education colleges in responding to incidents of sharing nudes or semi-nudes (previously referred to as 'sexting' and encompasses all types of image sharing incidents) and ensuring their response is part of their safeguarding arrangements.

The guidance states the importance of not criminalising children unnecessarily. Young children creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes may be putting themselves and others at risk, but it is often the result of natural curiosity about sex and their exploration of relationships. The guidance stresses the importance of considering incidences on a case-by-case basis.

The report shares guidance on the use of assessment tools such as Hackett's 'Continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviour model'. It also includes a handling responses flow chart to guide school staff when they deal with incidents. There is guidance for teachers on how to approach this safely – considering safeguarding issues, the perspective of the child/young person, promoting dialogue and empowering them. It makes clear that external practitioners should only be used to enhance an education setting's provision, and not to provide stand-alone sessions in isolation.

[Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: guidance for governors | GOV.WALES \(2016\) \(Welsh Government, 2016b\)](#)

This Welsh Government guidance informs school governors of the issues surrounding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and the need to have an appropriate policy in place to help staff to recognise the signs of abuse and how to get help for themselves, to assist their colleagues and the young people in their school. The guide contains a number of actions that governors can take to make their school safer. There is a checklist to enable governors to determine how well their school is equipped to support children and young people on issues of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015 sets out an expectation that school staff receive

relevant training to help them identify and understand violence against women.

The Welsh Government five-year [Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: National Strategy 2016-2021](#) (Welsh Government, 2016c) is currently being reviewed, and issues relating to young people have been considered throughout. A public consultation on a draft new strategy is planned for later in 2021.

The VAWDASV group in Welsh Government continues to fund Hafan Cymru's (2021) Spectrum project, which promotes the importance of healthy relationships and raises awareness of VAWDASV. Spectrum also delivers training for school staff and governors about understanding the impact of domestic abuse on a child and promotes a whole school approach to tackling domestic abuse.

[National-action-plan-preventing-and-responding-to-child-sexual-abuse.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#) (Welsh Government, 2019)

This Welsh Government document on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse was published in July 2019. Objective 2 is 'Increased awareness in children of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong' (Welsh Government, 2019, p.6). It includes a section on peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviour. There are four actions in total to achieve Objective 2. The first two are for Welsh Government and the latter are for Safeguarding Boards (Welsh Government, 2019, p.8):

- Issue Relationships and Sexuality Education in Schools Guidance
- Develop a poster campaign on unsafe and unhealthy relationships for children and parents/carers
- Promote information to children and parent/carers on healthy/unhealthy relationships
- Develop a clear referral pathway for children who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour to receive and early help assessment

The document clarifies why early intervention and support is important to prevent harm to both victims and perpetrators and to protect them from further harm or abuse of other children.

[Enhancing digital resilience in education: An action plan to protect children and young people online](#) (Welsh Government, 2020)

Originally published as the Online safety action plan for children and young people in Wales in July 2018, the action plan set out the Welsh Government's commitment to working with a range of partner organisations to enhance online safety provision, policy and practice across Wales. In 2020, the action plan evolved to reflect the important role cyber resilience and data security has in ensuring children and young people are safe and secure online. Providing a progress update on the original actions, it sets out the details of 71 actions, including 26 new workstreams, which are being taken forward by Welsh Government to enhance digital resilience provision, policy and practice across Wales.

Particularly relevant actions include the work with partners such as NCA-CEOP (action 2.19), Common Sense Education (6.10) and Childnet (action 6.11), to make bilingual online safety education resources available to schools in Wales on Hwb. These resources can support practitioners to address the issue of online sexual harassment, including the sharing of nude images, and discuss healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours with their learners. (See [Online sexual harassment](#), [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes](#), [Online relationships](#) and [Online bullying](#) issue pages on the [Keeping safe online](#) area of Hwb)

[Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#) (Welsh Government, 2016a)

Comprehensive guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children

Resources and toolkits

These useful resources and toolkits that are available, free of charge, to schools to support their relationships and sexuality education programme.

Agenda (n.d.) – Supporting children and young people in making positive relationships matter

Agenda is a resource for educational practitioners who want to support children and young people aged 7-18 to make positive relationships matter in their school

and community. This free and downloadable resource has been co-created by Cardiff University, NSPCC Cymru/Wales, Welsh Women's Aid and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. It is suitable for secondary schools and covers a broad range of relevant topics.

A further resource for schools, [Crush](#) (Agenda, n.d.) has now been developed and is specifically designed to help schools develop their RSE programme.

Violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence toolkit for schools and FE colleges:

[Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence \(VAWDASV\) educational toolkit | GOV.WALES \(Welsh Government, 2016b\)](#)

Childnet International (2018a) [Step up, speak up: Teaching Toolkit](#): a series of lesson plans and activities for 13-17-year-old pupils that address online sexual harassment amongst young people:

How to respond to incidences of pupils sharing nudes toolkit:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/6ad01b82-3a2c-4bf4-bd21-f5bac42655a4/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-guidance-for-education-settings-in-wales-final-english-011220.pdf> (Welsh Government, 2020b)

Peer-on-peer abuse toolkit:

[farrer--co-safeguarding-peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit-2019.pdf](#) (Farrer & Co, 2019)

NSPCC Resources on peer-on-peer sexual abuse in education and healthy relationships 2021:

[Resources on peer-on-peer sexual abuse in education and healthy relationships | NSPCC Learning \(NSPCC, 2021a\)](#)

Step up, speak up Toolkit (13-17-year-olds) Resources on peer-on-peer sexual

abuse in education and healthy relationships 2021:

[Repository - Keeping safe online - Hwb \(gov. wales\) \(Hwb, n.d.\)](#)

Guidance and training for schools to deal with online harmful sexual behaviour:

[Supporting children who display harmful sexual behaviour online - Childnet \(Childnet International, 2018b\)](#)

[An evidence-informed framework for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours NSPCC:](#)

[Harmful sexual behaviour framework | NSPCC Learning \(NSPCC, 2019\)](#)

[This framework includes a helpful assessment tool for education professionals to use to assess the level of appropriateness of children and young people's sexual behaviour](#)

Services from external agencies available to schools

[Welsh Women's Aid Children Matter project](#) (Welsh Women's Aid, 2021a)

This project works to ensure the needs and experiences of children and young people impacted by domestic abuse are identified and met. Welsh Women's Aid aims to make sure that all children and young people understand domestic abuse and the help available, and that those affected by domestic abuse are identified, supported and protected, have access to high-quality specialist services in every area, and are supported to recover from the abuse to develop their full potential. The organisation does this by promoting education and community approaches to prevention and early intervention, challenging inequality between girls and boys, improving safety and minimising the immediate and future impact on children and young people of witnessing or experiencing violence and abuse.

Their work includes prevention work in schools and communities to minimise adverse childhood experiences.

NSPCC Learning ‘Speak out Stay Safe’ Online programme for primary school pupils (NSPCC, 2021b)

The [Speak out Stay safe programme | NSPCC Learning](#) is an online safeguarding programme for primary aged children but could also be used with Year 7 pupils.

The Childline Remove Photo Service (Childline, n.d.)

This is a helpful advice document and [toolkit](#) to help young people and schools to remove from the internet any nude images or videos that have been shared online

Estyn reports

[Healthy and Happy](#) (Estyn, 2019) – School impact on pupils’ health and wellbeing.

[A review of healthy relationships education](#) (Estyn, 2017)

[Celebrating Diversity and promoting inclusion](#) (Estyn, 2020) (Good practice in supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender learners in schools and colleges)

[Involving Parents](#) (Estyn, 2018) – Communication between schools and parents of school-aged children