

# Full findings from the pupil questionnaire

## Online questionnaire

At the end of the focus group sessions, pupils were invited to take part in an anonymous online questionnaire. We received approximately 1,250 responses. However, around a hundred of these were partial responses therefore they aren't included in this analysis. The survey focused on pupils' personal experience of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and seeing others experience it. We asked about sources of support if pupils had experienced peer-on-peer sexual harassment or if they were to hypothetically experience it. We asked pupils' opinion about when school should start discussing issues around peer-on-peer sexual harassment and for suggestions of what more could schools do to deal with the issue.

**Table 1: Survey respondents by year group**

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Year 7	*	*
Year 8	241	21.9%
Year 9	230	20.9%
Year 10	220	20.0%
Year 11	273	24.8%
Year 12	75	6.8%
Year 13	61	5.5%
No answer	*	*

\* Number greater than zero but less than five.

Pupils were asked to complete contextual information but were not asked for their names or that of their school. Pupils were asked to choose their gender identity from a list and pupils could also tick a box if they preferred not to say and add a further description in a text box if they wished. We also asked pupils if they considered themselves to have a disability. Only 61 respondents of the survey said they had a disability. This is a very small sample size, so it is difficult to ascertain whether any minor differences between disabled pupils and the general population is due to a skewed sample or otherwise. There was an almost equal balance of male and female pupils. Only 66 pupils gave a different answer to

male or female and 14 preferred not to say. However, the differences in responses between this group and the general population was much larger than those with disabilities, but care should be taken when interpreting minor differences.

## Experience of peer-on-peer harassment

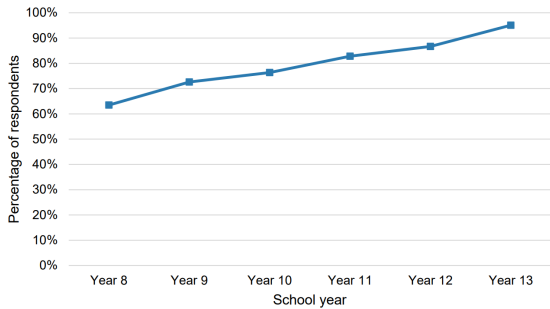
We asked pupils about their experience of peer-on-peer sexual harassment.

According to pupils, the most prevalent form of peer-on-peer sexual harassment amongst pupils happens online. Forty-six per cent of all pupils say they have personal experience of some form of sexual harassment while 76% report seeing others experience this. Pupils who did not identify as male or female report a higher rate of peer-on-peer harassment with 64% having personal experience of it.

A higher proportion of female pupils (61%) report personal experience of peer-on-peer harassment or seeing others experience this than male pupils (29%). Pupils who say they have a disability report slightly higher rates of experience of harassment (54%) compared to all pupils (46%), especially online, (39% vs 30%).

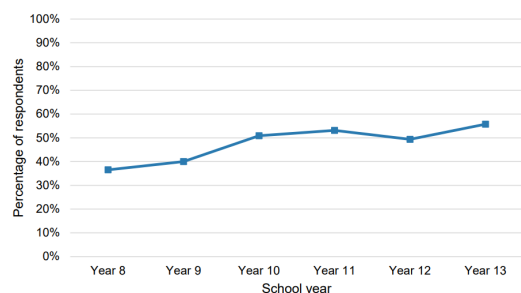
There is a clear trend for seeing others experience sexual harassment, with more pupils observing this as they get older (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Pupils who reported having seen others experience peer-on-peer sexual harassment, by school year



The trend for personal experience of sexual harassment is not as clear as that of seeing others experience it but still shows an increase as pupils get older. In general, pupils report more personal experience of sexual harassment from Year 10 onwards. Year 13 pupils in the survey reported the highest rate of personal experience at 56% (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Pupils who reported having personally experienced peer-on-peer sexual harassment, by school year



## Type of peer-on-peer sexual harassment

We asked pupils who answered that they had personally experienced peer-on-peer sexual harassment about the type of harassment they had experienced and also when this first happened. We listed the following types of harassment:

- Hurtful sexual comments remarks or jokes
- Hurtful comments about someone's body that cause distress
- Hurtful comments about someone's clothes or looks that cause distress
- Sending texts or social media messages containing sexual wording that cause distress
- Sharing a nude/semi-nude photographs or video without the consent of the person pictured
- Sending unwanted sexual/explicit or pornographic photographs/videos to someone
- Lifting up skirts or taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing

- Sexual assault such as forced kissing, unwanted sexual touching

Of those that reported personal experience, most pupils report that harassment started in secondary school than at primary school. Some forms of harassment involving social media, sending or sharing pictures, and explicit videos, occur more often outside of school than inside. Making hurtful comments is the most common form of sexual harassment.

In general, fewer male pupils who report having experience with sexual harassment report on each of the individual categories. This suggests that female pupils are more likely to experience multiple types of the sexual harassment and at a higher rate than male pupils. Male pupils, like female pupils, also report the harassment beginning in secondary school more than at primary school.

Those who did not select male or female who have personally experienced harassment report higher incidences of hurtful comments and sexual assault than pupils who selected a gender.

**Table 2: Responses to question “What kind of harassment or abuse have you personally experienced, and when did it first happen?”**

	At primary school		At secondary school		Outside school, whilst I was in primary School		Outside school, since I've been in secondary school	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>Hurtful sexual comments remarks or jokes</b>	20%	17%	61%	66%	15%	15%	52%	62%
<b>Hurtful comments about someone's body that cause distress</b>	24%	32%	61%	70%	16%	25%	47%	57%
<b>Hurtful comments about someone's clothes or looks that cause distress</b>	20%	29%	53%	64%	17%	22%	49%	53%

<b>Sending texts or social media messages containing sexual wording that cause distress</b>	4%	8%	38%	41%	9%	11%	52%	59%
<b>Sending unwanted sexual/explicit or pornographic photographs/videos to someone</b>	3%	6%	28%	29%	5%	7%	44%	51%
<b>Sharing a nude/semi-nude photographs or video without the consent of the person pictured</b>	3%	2%	22%	28%	4%	3%	29%	38%
<b>Lifting up skirts or taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing</b>	3%	4%	10%	22%	3%	2%	13%	14%
<b>Sexual assault such as forced kissing, unwanted sexual touching</b>	3%	8%	23%	26%	5%	7%	24%	36%

Pupils who say they have a disability are much more likely to have received hurtful comments that started outside school when they were in primary school than the general population.

Pupils were invited to provide additional comments if they wished to. Most comments relate to sending and sharing unwanted message and images online. The behaviour of boys is highlighted, along with the reaction of teachers when complaints of such behaviour are made. Both male and female pupils highlight the behaviour of boys, but more girls reference this than boys. Those that do not consider themselves either male or female also highlight the behaviour of boys in particular.

Additionally, only girls note the negative reaction of teachers in such situations. Girls more than boys note receiving unwanted messages, images and videos online that are of a sexual nature. Boys, girls and non-binary pupils all note receiving comments about their appearance. However, a higher percentage of male and non-binary pupils highlight this issue more in the comments box.

In terms of types of peer-on-peer sexual harassment pupils have seen other pupils experience, receiving hurtful comments is the most featured type. Most of the harassment is first seen in secondary school and a variety of sexual harassment categories are seen by pupils. Online harassment is most likely to be seen outside of school for secondary pupils.

In general, female pupils are more likely to see a wider variety of pupil harassment than male pupils. This is similarly true for those who have not selected male or female. Older pupils are more likely to have seen a wider variety of harassment inside and outside secondary school.

**Table 3: Responses to question “What kind of harassment or abuse have you seen others experience, and when did it first happen?”**

	At primary school		At secondary school		Outside school, whilst I was in primary School		Outside school, since I've been in secondary school	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>Hurtful sexual comments remarks or jokes</b>	19%	19%	64%	77%	14%	14%	55%	62%
<b>Hurtful comments about someone's body that cause distress</b>	23%	29%	61%	76%	17%	21%	49%	63%
<b>Hurtful comments about someone's clothes or looks that cause distress</b>	22%	30%	54%	72%	18%	20%	45%	61%
<b>Sending texts or social media messages containing sexual wording that cause distress</b>	6%	7%	46%	47%	7%	8%	49%	61%
<b>Sending unwanted sexual/explicit or pornographic photographs/videos to someone</b>	3%	3%	36%	38%	4%	3%	39%	53%
<b>Sharing a nude/semi-nude photographs or video without the consent of the person pictured</b>	3%	2%	30%	36%	4%	3%	36%	47%

<b>Lifting up skirts or taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing</b>	4%	5%	16%	25%	2%	2%	13%	23%
<b>Sexual assault such as forced kissing, unwanted sexual touching</b>	7%	8%	24%	36%	4%	6%	27%	39%

From pupils' comments, we can see that most pupils claim to have seen or heard of some form of sexual harassment or assault. For those referring to sexual assault, the majority stated that they did not understand that it was assault at the time. The behaviour of boys is highlighted as a particular issue here again. A higher percentage of girls than boys refer to the behaviour of boys when discussing the sexual harassment of others. This is also highlighted by non-binary participants. Interestingly, in the comments box, it is only girls who describe experiencing negative comments about appearance.

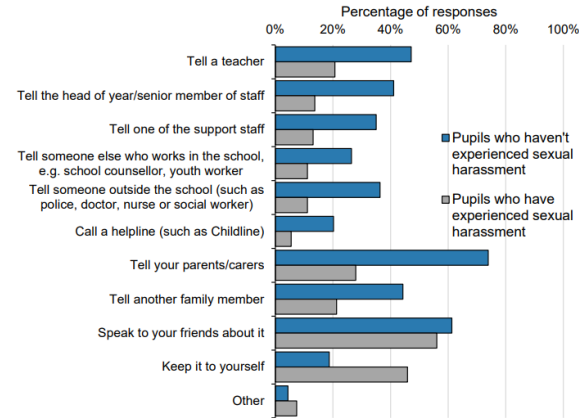
## Sources of support for pupils who have personal experience of peer-on-peer sexual harassment

Pupils were asked what they did when they experienced sexual harassment from their peers. They were able to select multiple answers if they wished. Forty-six per cent of pupils who had been sexually harassed reported that they kept sexual harassment to themselves. Girls are more likely to keep sexual harassment to themselves (49%) than male pupils (34%) and are less likely to tell an authority figure than boys. However, they are much more likely to tell their friends than male pupils (68% compared with 36%). Pupils who did not select male or female who said they had experienced peer-on-peer sexual harassment kept it to themselves more than other pupils. Sixty-three per cent kept it to themselves and 43% also spoke to their friends. Twenty-one per cent of all pupils told a teacher and 28% told their parents or carers. However, overall, the majority of pupils who had been sexually harassed had spoken to their friends about it.

In terms of individual pupil comments, a higher proportion of pupils felt more comfortable telling a friend about sexual harassment or abuse than telling a responsible adult. A few noted that they were too scared to tell anyone at all. The comments matched the qualitative data in that girls are more likely to either tell a friend or keep the incident to themselves, than to tell a responsible adult or family member. Most of the pupils who selected the gender demographic 'other' said that they had told a friend.

Pupils that haven't personally experienced harassment were automatically directed to a question asking them what they would do if they did experience it. These pupils say that they would tell someone about it more than pupils who have experienced harassment. Only 19% of pupils who haven't experienced harassment say they would keep it to themselves compared to 46% of those who have experienced harassment. Older pupils who haven't experienced sexual harassment are more likely to say they would keep it to themselves but are also more likely to talk to their friends. Girls who haven't experienced sexual harassment are more likely to keep it to themselves than boys (17% compared with 21%) and are less likely to tell a teacher (51% compared with 38%) when compared to boys. Of those who selected neither male or female and also said that they have not experienced sexual harassment, 28% said they would keep it to themselves and 72% would speak to their friends.

**Figure 3: Responses to question "How did / would you deal with sexual harassment?"**



For this question, there is interesting evidence from pupils' comments. Pupils who have not experienced sexual harassment believe that they would stand up to it if

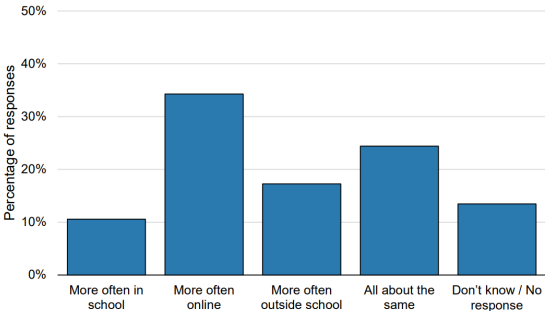


faced with the issue or tell a responsible adult. These results differ greatly from those who have experienced harassment. However, only male and non-binary pupils claim that they would stand up to sexual harassment. Female pupils are more likely to keep it to themselves than males. Non-binary pupils would either stand up to it, tell no one, or tell a friend.

## Where peer-on-peer sexual harassment happens most

Pupils were asked if harassment happened more often in school, online, outside school or all about the same. We also offered the possibility to pupils to tick a 'don't know' box. More pupils said that peer-on-peer sexual harassment happens most often online (34%) than anywhere else whilst 24% of all pupils noted that incidences were similar in all three places.

Figure 4: Responses to question "Where does pupil sexual harassment happen most often?"



## Harassment given by pupils to others

We asked pupils if they had been involved in sexually harassing others. Thirteen per cent of pupils admit to making hurtful sexual comments, remarks or jokes at secondary school. Girls are less likely to admit to making hurtful sexual comments remarks or jokes comments than boys at secondary school (10% vs

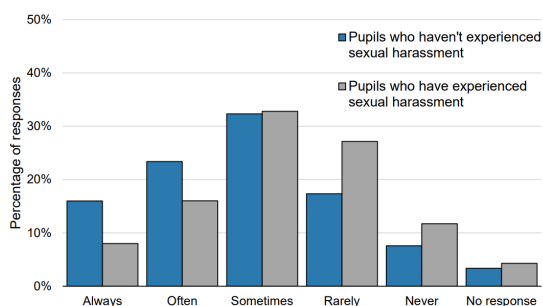
18%). Those who did not select male or female report harassing other pupils less.

Most pupils who left a comment for this question wanted to highlight that they have never harassed other pupils, while a few noted that sexual or hurtful comments had been made during arguments with friends or as a joke. Both boys and girls noted that they have made such comments as a joke. Whilst a small number of both male and female pupils claim to have made negative comments during arguments with friends, all comments made by pupils that consider themselves to be non-binary claim that they have never harassed others.

## School response to complaints

We asked pupils if, in their opinion, school staff took complaints about peer-on-peer sexual harassment seriously and if they responded appropriately. Pupils who have experienced harassment are less likely to believe complaints are taken seriously. Overall, girls are less likely to believe complaints are taken seriously than boys, but this may be related to the fact that they are more often victims of sexual harassment.

Figure 5: Responses to question "In your opinion, do people in your school take complaints about sexual harassment seriously and respond appropriately?"



A high percentage of comments state that sexual harassment complaints are often ignored or not dealt with well by teachers. However, a minority of pupils also note that sexual harassment is sometimes addressed in assemblies or lessons, and others state that they do receive some guidance or help with the issue. More girls than boys believe that their school deals well with complaints

about sexual harassment. However, more girls than boys also note that complaints are often ignored or are not dealt with properly. Girls also note that there is a lack of understanding about what sexual assault is and how pupils should make complaints. A high percentage of non-binary pupils feel that complaints are ignored or are not dealt with. Non-binary participants also claim that they do not know whether the school deals well with complaints or not. Those that did not wish to disclose their preferred gender generally feel that issues of sexual harassment are ignored or not dealt with well, but also acknowledge that there is some guidance for them on what to do about it.

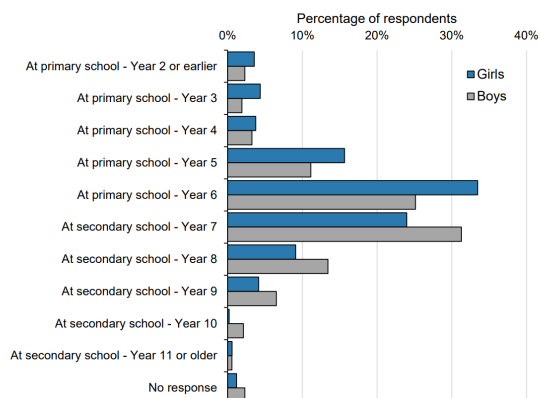
## **When to start talking about peer-on-peer sexual harassment**

We asked pupils to consider when they thought it would be appropriate to start lessons about peer-on-peer sexual harassment. Most pupils in all year groups put the age between Year 6 and 7. Only 38% of the pupils who did not select a sex or identity as male or female believe this. As pupils get older, the percentage of pupils who think it should be taught in primary school decreases.

Girls are more likely to choose a lower age than boys. Forty-four per cent of boys think it should be talked about in primary school compared to 61% of girls. Pupils who have experienced sexual harassment are more slightly more likely to think sexual harassment should be talked about at a younger age. Fifty-eight per cent believe it should be talked about in primary school, compared to 53% of all participants.

Those who did not select male or female are most likely to think it should be talked about in primary school, with 64% believing it should be talked about in primary school. Only 18% of this group of pupils believed it should be talked about in Year 7 , 20% in Year 6, and 44% believed it should be talked about in Year 5 or below.

Figure 6: Response to question "In your opinion, at what age should schools start to talk about pupil on pupil sexual harassment?", by gender



Many pupil comments include a detailed explanation for their answer. A high proportion of these reference age and maturity, believing that a few pupils are too young to understand, or are either not mature enough in a few cases, whilst mature enough in others. The majority believe that the topic should be introduced in primary school at the same time as sex education. A higher percentage of girls believe this than boys. A higher proportion of non-binary pupils believe that discussions on sexual harassment should be introduced in primary school than other groups of pupils. However, a few also believe that the topic should be taught in the first years of secondary school or that it should be made age appropriate according to maturity.

## Pupils' opinions on what more can be done by schools

Pupils were invited to offer further comments if they wished about what they thought schools could do to deal with peer-on-peer sexual harassment.

Many respondents to the last question believe that schools should teach pupils about sexual harassment more regularly, particularly in lessons such as the Welsh Baccalaureate and PSE. They also stipulate that organising more assemblies and bringing in external visitors would help to educate pupils about it.

Interestingly, more boys than girls say that they believe that schools already do enough. More boys state that placing information such as posters around the

school would be enough to deal with the matter.

Many pupils, particularly girls, refer to schools creating a safer and more comfortable environment where they can talk to teachers or other members of staff about their experiences during a particular lesson. A few suggest that boys and girls should be separated during the conversations so that they feel more comfortable discussing the issues. Many non-binary pupils also believe that a safer environment for discussions should be created.

Pupils also refer to changing staff attitudes, with many pupils believing that staff do not take matters seriously enough and that harsher punishments should be put in place for incidences of harassment. Furthermore, a few pupils believe that there is a need for increased awareness and understanding, either by staff paying more attention when sexual harassment happens, or by educating the staff themselves on the issue of peer-on-peer sexual harassment. More girls than boys believe that staff should take matters more seriously and that harsher punishments should be given. Non-binary pupils and pupils who preferred not to define their sex or gender make particular reference to increasing staff awareness about sexual harassment.