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Dear Parent/Carer

I wanted to write to give you an update of the work that continues following the national rapid review of sexual harassment in schools and colleges that Ofsted have just completed. I have linked to a copy of their report [here](#) which we have summarised for you below the body of this letter. The report is very serious and reflects a shocking national picture concerning all schools.

The school leadership team has read and discussed the report carefully paying particular attention to the recommendations. When Ofsted visited Chiswick School in January 2020 they found that personal development which includes PSHCE was outstanding; we are confident that we are covering all aspects of a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, which specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This includes time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'. Ms Kitteringham, who is our head of PSHCE, leads the Hounslow Schools Network for this subject and is very experienced. PSHCE is on each student's timetable and is taught by specialist teachers, not just as an add on in form time, which is also a strength.

Prior to the report we worked with students to highlight the issues of sexual harassment and they made a short film which we shared with all the students. Although this work was completed recently it is easy for students to forget; please do watch it with your child to remind them of the important themes it contains. A link to the film is [here](#).

Many parents and carers have been in touch to thank the school for the PSHCE for Parents that we send out in the weekly newsletter. You will be aware that our first and third episodes, last half term, were about [sexting](#) and [pornography](#) and how exposed young people are to this now. I have linked the episodes above for you to watch again if you would like to.

We also launched our TELL campaign and the posters that are around the school are a good reminder for students about the unacceptability of many of the themes that run through the rapid review. This highlights the way students can report incidents of all types using our safeguarding@chiswickschool.org email address which is monitored by our designated safeguarding lead Ms Middleton. Mental health week also focussed on the impact of the language we use and the treatment of others and how this may impact upon wellbeing, self-esteem and happiness.

Last half term all staff received training on sexual harassment in schools and student focus groups fed into these sessions. This training was held to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:

- better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
- identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
- consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse.



All incidents and record keeping of safeguarding incidents are thorough and checked regularly by school Governors and they commission an external safeguarding annually to quality assure our work.

I am confident that Chiswick School has robust procedures and safeguarding in place concerning sexual abuse and harassment; we will continue developing our practice in partnership with local safeguarding partners, students and families to ensure that we remain vigilant and responsive to this priority.

Should you have any questions or comments about the themes in my letter, our response or the Ofsted rapid review report please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Laura Ellener
Headteacher

Ofsted Rapid Review Summary for Parents

Ofsted was asked by the government to carry out a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. This report summarises their findings and recommendations. Chiswick School was not visited by Ofsted as part of this review.

Reporting on:
Safeguarding and curriculum
Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
Victims' voice and reporting

- 32 schools and colleges visited
- Spoke to over 900 children and young people / teachers / leaders / governors / LSP's and parents
- Secondary data for this report - Ofsted complaints and school exclusion figures

The review has revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. For some children, incidents are so commonplace that **they see no point in reporting them**. This review did not analyse whether the issue is more or less prevalent for different groups of young people, and there may well be differences, but it found that **the issue is so widespread** that it needs addressing for all children and young people. It recommends that schools, colleges and multi-agency partners **act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening**, even when there are no specific reports.

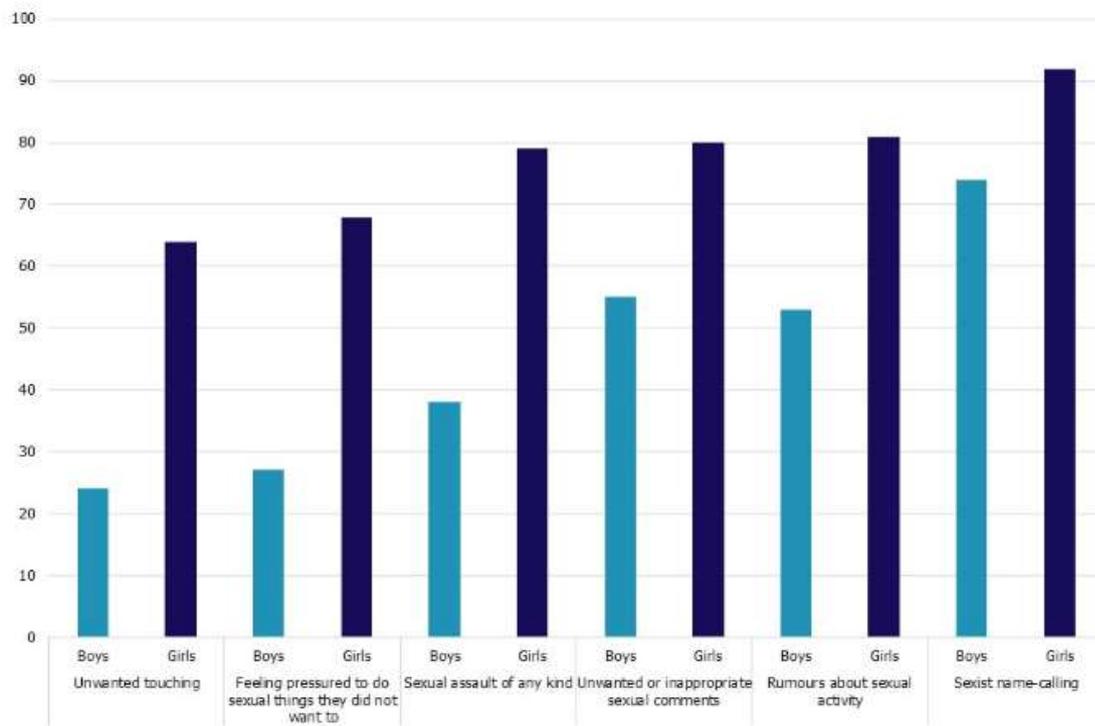
Why they don't report it:

- Risk of being ostracised
- Risk of getting peers into trouble - 'commonplace'
- Worry it will damage their reputation
- Worry how adults will react - not being believed/being blamed
- If they report - it will be out of their control
- Mismatched sense of shame or embarrassment

800 students surveyed - summary of girls responses

The following types of harmful sexual behaviours happened 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people their age:

Figure 2. These things happen 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people my age (%)



	Boys	Girls
Unwanted touching	24	64
Feeling pressured to do sexual things they did not want to	27	68
Sexual assault of any kind	38	79
Unwanted or inappropriate sexual comments	55	80
Rumours about sexual activity	53	81
Sexist name-calling	74	92

Children and young people's safety - in school

Overall, children and young people tended to say that they felt physically safe at college or school, although there was a clear emotional impact on girls who experienced regular sexual harassment or other harmful sexual behaviour.

Children and young people talked in particular about sexual harassment happening in unsupervised spaces, such as in corridors between lessons. School leaders should identify where there might be ‘hot-spots’ of poor behaviour and act accordingly.

When children and young people talked about feeling physically unsafe, this generally related to situations that occurred outside school.

Children and young people’s safety - online

Children and young people told us that online forms of sexual abuse were prevalent, especially being sent sexual pictures or videos that they did not want to see. The vast majority of girls said being sent sexual images, being coerced into sharing images, or having their images reshared were common. A significant proportion of boys agreed.

Research in this area indicates that, while most secondary school pupils recognise the harm that sexual approaches from adult strangers online bring, there is less clarity about what constitutes sexual harm within the context of peer relationships or existing online networks.

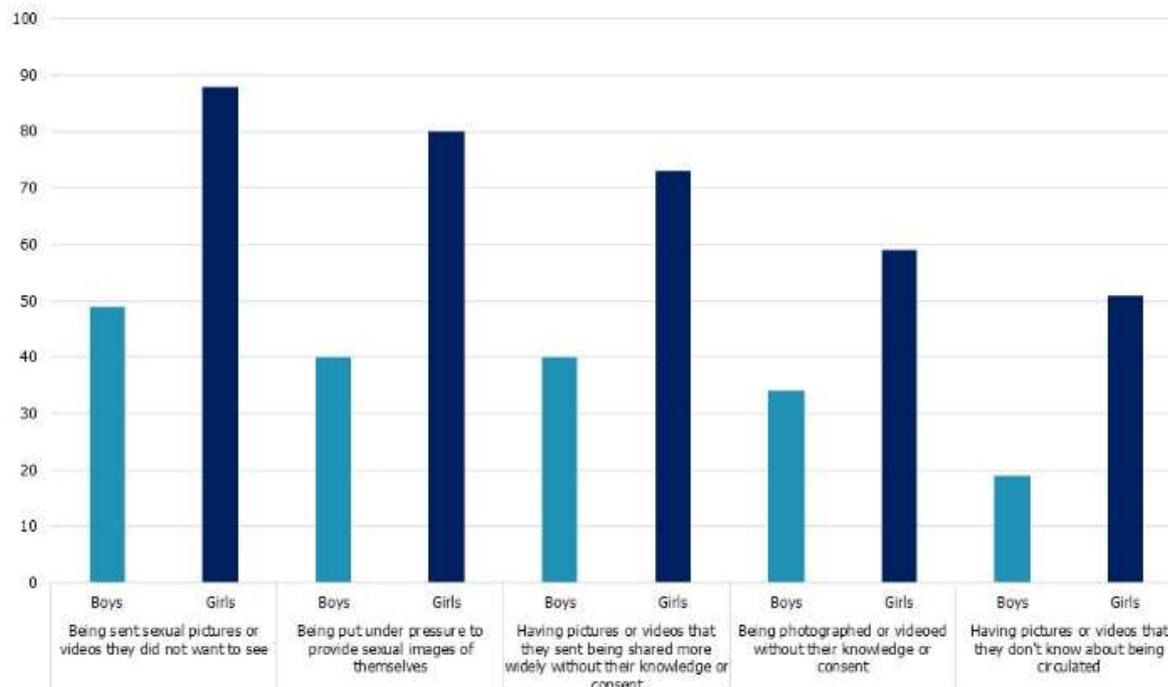
Evidence suggests that nearly half (48%) of 11- to 16-year-olds in the UK have viewed pornography.

Children and young people’s safety outside of school

Children and young people in several schools told us that harmful sexual behaviour happens at house parties, without adults present, and that alcohol and drugs are often involved.

Girls talked about feeling uncomfortable because of behaviour from peers on bus journeys (including school buses), where they said they experienced the kind of sexual harassment and bullying behaviour that happened in school.

Figure 3. These things happen ‘a lot’ or ‘sometimes’ between people my age (%)



	Boys	Girls
Being sent sexual pictures or videos they did not want to see	49	88
Being put under pressure to provide sexual images of themselves	40	80
Having pictures or videos that they sent being shared more widely without their knowledge or consent	40	73
Being photographed or videoed without their knowledge or consent	34	59
Having pictures or videos that they don't know about being circulated	19	51

Recommendations for schools:

- School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.
- In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them. This should include:
 - a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'
 - high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
 - routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
 - a behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
 - working closely with local safeguarding partners in the area where the school or college is located so they are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour
 - support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), such as protected time in timetables to engage with LSPs
 - training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse.

Recommendations for Government:

- take into account the findings of this review as it develops the Online Safety Bill, so it can strengthen safeguarding controls for children and young people to protect them from viewing online explicit material and engaging in harmful sexual behaviour using social media platforms
- establish better coordinated arrangements between the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted and ISI for how to deal with complaints that inspectorates receive about schools
- strengthen the 'Working together to safeguard children' guidance to make the involvement of all state and independent schools and colleges with LSPs more explicit, including their engagement in multi-agency safeguarding audits
- produce clearer guidance for schools and colleges to help them make decisions when there are long-term investigations of harmful sexual behaviour, or when a criminal investigation does not lead to a prosecution or conviction

- review and update the definitions of sexual abuse, including peer-on-peer, to better reflect the experiences of children and young people
- develop an online hub where all safeguarding guidance is in one place, with any updates clearly visible and ideally made in good time in the school year to aid planning
- in partnership with others:
 - develop a guide that helps children and young people know what might happen next when they talk to an adult in school or college about sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - develop national training for DSLs
 - develop resources to help schools and colleges shape their RSHE curriculum
 - launch a communications campaign about sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, which should include advice for parents and carers.

Conclusion

This review has revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. It is concerning that for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them. This review did not analyse whether the issues are more or less prevalent for different groups of young people, and there may well be differences, but it found that the issues are so widespread that they need addressing for all children and young people. It recommends that schools, colleges and multi-agency partners act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports.

