

Sexual Harassment in Schools: A Parent's Guide!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This information is intended to help us work together to discuss the subject of sexual harassment to our children. It is our legal obligation as a school to educate our students on the definition, types, effects, and protections against sexual harassment. It is our hope that you thoughtfully review this guidance and then read and discuss the information with your children at their own pace of understanding. It is critical for our children to understand what is, and what is not, appropriate and that the laws are strict in terms of enforcement. Our goal is that every child in Rushden Academy is in an environment free from harassment of every kind.

Mrs P Smith
Assistant Principal/Safeguarding Lead

Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which interferes with a student's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere. Under law and policies, sexual harassment is illegal and is prohibited in school settings.

Sexual harassment may involve a boy harassing a girl, a girl harassing a boy, a boy harassing another boy, or a girl harassing another girl.

What Behaviours are Not OK?

- It is not OK to grab, touch, or pinch the private body parts of another person.
- It is not OK to grab another person's underwear or to pull someone's clothing up or down to show their underwear or body parts.
- It is not OK to say silly or nasty things about anyone's private body parts.
- It is not OK to make fun of someone for being a boy or being a girl.
- It is not OK to tell stories about anyone's body parts or their private behaviour.
- It is not OK to give an unwanted kiss or hug or to dare someone else to do that.
- It is not OK to brush up against someone in a way that makes them feel bad.
- It is not OK to pass notes, pictures, jokes, or cartoons that make someone feel bad.
- It is not OK to make gestures that make someone feel bad.

What to tell your children about Sexual Harassment!

- Sexual harassment is not your fault. Nothing you say or do makes you deserve it.
- Sexual harassment isn't about feelings of love or being attracted to someone.
- It's about having power over someone and not respecting their decisions and limits.
- Flirting is welcome behaviour that goes both ways and makes both people feel flattered. Sexual harassment, on the other hand, is unwanted behaviour. It is one-sided and uses the power of words and actions to make someone feel embarrassed or dirty.
- 'No' means 'no.'

How do I know when sexual harassment may be occurring?

Is my child being harassed? Is my child harassing someone? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the behaviour make my child or someone else feel bad?
- Does the behaviour interfere with my child's, or someone else's, ability to learn or to enjoy school or classroom activities?
- Does the behaviour involve one person trying to have some kind of power over another person?
- Is the behaviour part of a repeated pattern?
- Would I want this behaviour to be directed toward my child?

What should I do if I believe my child is being sexually harassed?

- Ignoring sexual harassment is not a way to stop it!
- Tell your child's teacher, a member of the safeguarding team at Rushden Academy, a member of the Ethos team.
- Tell your child to firmly say "No! Stop!" to the harasser whenever possible.
- Help your child to recall and write down: date, time, place, and other people who may have been around.

The government has also asked NSPCC to set up a helpline for children to seek advice. From the April 1st the NSPCC has launched a new, dedicated helpline for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school and also for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. Young people and adults can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on **0800 136 663** or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

You can find further information from NSPCC regarding **Understanding Sexual Behaviours in children**. Via this link

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/sexual-behaviour-children/>