



**PROJECT
ZERO**

SCHOOLS

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Insert School Name



EdShift
ACT OUT/SPEAK UP



West Yorkshire
**Violence
Reduction Unit**

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INTRODUCTION:

Feminists and women's organisations have been voicing the need to prevent different forms of VAWG through education since the 1980s. The calls for VAWG prevention work through education, were in response to the high levels of sexual harassment and violence that female staff and girls experienced in schools.

Almost four decades later results from the UK Feminista and NEU's ground-breaking study 'It's Just Everywhere' evidenced little change, with such high levels of sexism and gender inequality reported in schools the NEU and UK Feminista urged education bodies and Government to take urgent action to tackle it.

It is only recently that the prevention of VAWG through work with children and young people has firmly emerged on the national agendas. Although it appeared in earlier documents (Home Office 2003) it was disconnected.

In 2010, the government first published the Our Call to End Violence against Women and Girls, published under the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. This strategy strengthened the legislative framework by introducing new offences to tackle stalking (The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) and Forced Marriage (Home Office, 16th June 2014). It was also the strategy that introduced the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), also known as "Clare's Law", which became a statute, enabling the police to disclose information to a victim or potential victim of domestic abuse about their partner's or ex-partner's previous abusive or violent offending. Clare's Law was implemented across all police forces in England and Wales in March 2014.

The 2010 – 2015 strategy also introduced a new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour and created new protection orders for domestic violence, sexual violence, and female genital mutilation, to allow authorities to take protective action before harm occurred. The legislation also underpinned work to change attitudes and prevent offending, with a focus on working with the

police to improve their response to VAWG crimes and provided national funding for specialist support services and national helplines.

However, it was only in 2021 when the Home Office launched the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy that there was a national prevention strategy in England and the first strategy to prioritise prevention through education.

Through the Call for Evidence Public Survey, it was acknowledged that 'More needs to be done to prevent women and girls becoming victims, i.e., more done about the perpetrators, education about consent, boundaries, a change at societal level.

Furthermore, when asked which of several options they thought should be the highest priorities for the Government in tackling all forms of violence against women and girls most respondents selected "more action to prevent violence against women and girls from happening, for example, education programmes in schools to teach children about these crimes."

The urgent need for VAWG intervention in education was also echoed after anonymous testimonials of sexual abuse were published on the website 'Everyone's Invited'. This exposed the universal prevalence of the problem of sexual violence within UK schools.

It is due to the above that this Project Zero VAWG Policy complies with the national strategy and with schools' statutory obligations of Relationship and Sex Education under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It also has regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance.

VAWG Delivery Model and Approach:

A whole school approach (WSA) is considered an effective delivery model that can drive change in school culture and create an ethos where gender-based violence, is not tolerated. It can also support children and young people to learn about many issues including health, bullying and more broadly, values and beliefs and how and where these are learned.

By using this approach, the intention is to prevent violence and abuse by equipping students with the skills to identify acts of VAWG in their own relationships, so they have the know how and confidence to leave a relationship before it escalates.

The approach also engages in secondary prevention by raising awareness across the whole school and wider community, staff, students and parents and carers are armed with the knowledge of external support services and how to report and respond to disclosures of VAWG.

During the developmental stages of Project Zero it was decided through tentative research that WSA was an appropriate strategy to address VAWG, because VAWG and violence in general are socially and culturally produced, tackling challenges of violence within a school culture are therefore vital to ensure the school environment is safe for all pupils, staff and visitors.

The Role of Schools:

VAWG prevention can also help schools with other aspects of their work such as safeguarding, gender equality and in fulfilling their duty to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils.

However, we were aware through the other projects and interventions that EdShift delivers in schools that incidents of VAWG are oftentimes unchallenged by staff and pupils were unsure how to report incidents of sexual assault and harassment and if they'd be taken seriously. Other reports were of girls having to navigate a hypersexualised school environment with little or no recourse to

support or provision, having a direct impact of their physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

To further compound this point the NEU and UK Feminista emphasised in their report:

'To take effective action against sexism, schools need to listen to girls and learn about their daily experiences. Boys must also be actively engaged on the issue in order to challenge the harmful attitudes that underpin sexual harassment and sexism. Yet a key issue identified by both teachers and students in this study is summed up by the words of one secondary school teacher: "we don't talk about sexism".

Teacher's report being unclear about what constitutes sexism or how to explain to students why it is harmful. This perpetuates a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue, as well as the perception that it is not taken seriously by the school'.

It is because of these insights that we predicted teachers' anxieties about eliciting disclosures and not feeling equipped to manage this as a potential barrier. Our solution to this was to provide schools with training and to support them in implementing a VAWG school policy, procedure, and overarching framework. It is our belief, backed up by research from other VAWG provisions that the implementation of an overarching framework, will ensure it can be specifically and explicitly addressed and consistently enforced to support both staff and pupils.

Where VAWG is addressed in subjects such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), this is oftentimes in short instructional lessons and as part of a wider curriculum, which has been evidenced as ineffective. We researched other gold standard VAWG prevention models based in Australia and North America where there is a much longer history of VAWG prevention than in the UK. Key points in the evaluations of these provisions emphasised the importance of delivering VAWG from a whole school approach, and where possible delivering workshops to small groups over a long period of time to generate discussion and increase student led activism.

The Importance of Gender:

Gold Standard VAWG provisions have also stressed the importance of delivering VAWG from a gendered perspective. VAWG provisions in Canada accentuate the importance of discussing gender in the context of the different forms of Violence Against Women and Girls and how these have developed overtime as a social problem. Furthermore, gendered analysis and a feminist perspective is crucial to understanding the root causes of VAWG and how prevention work should be approached.

Significant numbers of young people experience some form of abuse with greater numbers of girls reporting sexual, physical and emotional violence. Whilst this raises issues for safeguarding it also highlights the importance of prevention work which both reflects and addresses the gendered aspects of violence.

The Mayor of West Yorkshire and The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit:

The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is one of 20 areas to receive funding from the Home Office's Serious Violence Fund to tackle serious violent crime and its associated issues.

In April 2022, the Home Office announced that VRU would receive £5,863,803 in 2022/23 to continue in its pioneering response to serious violent crime, with an added guarantee of funding for the next three years.

Project Zero has been funded by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, to fulfil the Mayor of West Yorkshire's pledge to put women's safety at the heart of the Police and Crime Plan and uphold the Home Office's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

PROJECT ZERO aims to empower and enable students to discuss and learn about VAWG, to report incidents and to act for equality. This also enables Project Zero to fulfil the cross-cutting themes of keeping women and girls safe and prevention and early intervention outlaid in West Yorkshire Combined Authorities the Police and Crime Plan.

This can be achieved by talking at school assemblies or to classes, covering topics such as:

- What is VAWG and why does it matter?
- How we can challenge gender inequitable beliefs, stereotypical gender roles and violence supportive attitudes through Positive Bystander Intervention
- How to report VAWG in your school.
- How everyone benefits from a gender equitable society

We do not stand alone in our belief that violence against women and girls is preventable. We believe working with schools and partners will bring us one step closer to eradicating all forms of VAWG and living in a world based on equality, safety and respect.

To do this, schools must first acknowledge the scale of the violence women and girls experience in their lives and the roles they play in safeguarding them.

Equipping children and young people with the knowledge and information they need to learn about sexual consent and respectful relationships as part of a 'whole school approach' to ending violence against women and girls is a responsibility we must all take to being part of the solution.

SECTION ONE: VAWG POLICY

Introductory statement:

This policy covers [school name] whole school approach to Violence Against Women & Girls Provision as part of the mandatory Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum (RSE).

This policy's aim is to eradicate VAWG and ensure all students, staff and visitors positively experience their time at [school name]

This policy and its accompanying procedure are written in the acknowledgement that incidents relating to Violence Against Women and Girls can and does happen at [school name]

It sets out how the school defines such abuses, what the school expects of its staff, students, and visitors and how the school will respond when these serious issues are experienced and perpetrated.

[school name] has a duty of care towards all its members to prevent and respond to these issues.

To be a safe, respectful, and trustworthy school, it is vital that [school name] is clear on what kinds of behaviours and cultures are unacceptable and what can be done if they are witnessed or experienced. Student, staff, and visitor safety is paramount; through enacting this policy the school will seek to safeguard all, especially those with care and support needs.

The VAWG policy also emphasises the importance of safeguarding and gender equality and enables us to fulfil our duty to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of all our pupils. It also equips our children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful, and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

[school name] believes that all children and young people have a right to understand the crimes related to Violence Against Women & Girls so they can identify it when it occurs, know how to report it and where they can seek support.

We believe that through delivering VAWG provision at our school, we are upholding our ethos and values and our commitment to the safety, equality, and celebration of all our pupils.

This policy was produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, pupils, and parents. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

The policy complies with The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and the Governments Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.

We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our Violence Against Women and Girls provision and wider RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies:

- Anti-bullying policy,
- Behaviour policy,
- Child protection
- safeguarding policy,
- PSHE
- Online safety policy
- RSE Policy

SECTION TWO: DEFINITIONS

Violence Against Women and Girls (hereafter VAWG) is the term given to all forms of violence and abuse experienced disproportionately by women and girls, or experienced by them because of their gender, including:

- rape
- domestic violence,
- forced marriage,
- 'honour' based violence,
- FGM
- sexual harassment.

VAWG is linked to women and girls' inequality and is neither acceptable nor inevitable.

This definitions section describes some of the main forms of violence and abuse that girls experience in the UK alongside other evidence on how widely they are experienced.

Considering there is such high levels of abuse across the UK, education establishments need to understand how imperative it is to listen to, believe and support young survivors.

Some forms of violence and abuse, such as rape, FGM and 'revenge' pornography are specific criminal offences, whilst other forms, such as abusive 'sexting', domestic violence and child sexual abuse, may constitute a range of different offences.

Details on UK law can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation:

Child sexual abuse involves any form of sexual activity with a child under the age of consent and can be committed by adults or peers, most often by those who are in a position of trust and/or authority over the child (such as friends or family members).

It can be a single incident or for many repeated years.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse based on an ongoing exploitative relationship between perpetrator and child. It ranges from 'relationships' with a significant power imbalance, where sexual

activity is exchanged for gifts, 'protection' or accommodation, to trafficking and the organised abuse of children.

Gang-association is a particular context for girls' sexual exploitation by peers.

- Nearly a quarter (24.1%) of young adults aged 18-24 report having experienced sexual abuse in childhood (31% of young women and 17.4% of young men); 90% are abused by someone they know and 66% are abused by other children or young people under 18.5
- In 2012-2013, 22,654 sexual offences against under-18s were reported to police in England and Wales with four out of five cases involving girls.
- Police recorded at least 2,865 reports of sexual abuse of children in schools between 2011 and 2013 with more than half committed by other children.
- The UK is a significant site of internal and international child trafficking.
- Most trafficked children in the UK are aged 14-17, with many girls trafficked for sexual abuse and exploitation

Domestic Violence and Teen Relationship Abuse:

Domestic violence is the term applied to the varied forms of abuse experienced from a current or former intimate partner. It is a pattern of control, coercion, and threats and can involve physical abuse (such as assault), emotional abuse (such as intimidation), sexual abuse (such as rape), psychological abuse (such as isolating them from friends and family), and financial abuse (such as using money to control them).

Domestic violence can also be inflicted alongside wider family violence involving multiple perpetrators, including in gang-associated relationships and where family or community 'honour' is perceived to be at stake.

As well as being affected by domestic violence within parent/carer relationships at home, young people can also experience abuse within their peer relationships. Teen relationship abuse was acknowledged formally in 2013 when the Home Office definition of Domestic Violence was extended to include young people aged 16 and over and awareness of the issue has increased in part due to the Home Office's targeted campaign This Is Abuse.

- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence in their families.
- On average, two women a week are killed each year by a current or former male partner.
- 25% of young women (aged over 13) experience physical violence and 72% experience emotional abuse in their own relationships.
- A 2013 survey found that around a quarter of education professionals had been approached by a young person about relationship abuse in the past two years.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons". FGM can have severe short- and long-term health consequences, including severe pain and shock, infection, fatal haemorrhaging, cysts, and complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Women and girls living with FGM can also experience long term effects on their physical, emotional, and sexual health.

The most common age for FGM to be carried out is between four and ten years old.

- Over 60,000 girls under the age of 15 are at high risk of FGM every year in England and Wales.¹⁶
- Over 137,000 women in England and Wales are already living with the consequences of FGM.¹⁷

Forced Marriage:

Forced Marriage is a marriage performed without the full and free consent of one or both parties (children under 16 and people with some learning disabilities, for example, cannot legally consent). Emotional, financial, physical and sexual threats and abuse, as well as notions of 'honour,' can all be used to force someone to marry and forced marriage can lead to physical violence, rape and even murder.

- In 2014, the Government's Forced Marriage unit gave advice of support to over 1200 victims of Forced Marriage - the vast majority being girls and young women under 21 years of age.

'Honour' Based Violence:

'Honour' based violence is the term given to the various forms of violence and abuse perpetrated against women and girls by family or community members in the name of 'honour'. The abuse is typically carried out in a collective and planned way and can be an extension of - or incorporate - many other forms of VAWG including stalking and harassment, domestic violence, rape, FGM, forced marriage, as well as acid attacks, coerced or enforced suicide and murder.

'Honour' based violence is not limited to any one society, community, culture, religion, class, or ethnic group. The common thread in this type of violence is the treatment of women and girls as men's property and the perceived need to strictly control women's behaviour and sexuality to ensure they do not 'dishonour' or 'shame' their family or community.

- In 2019 the Home Office collected data from police forces on HBA offences on a mandatory basis since April 2019. Its first figure showed 2,024 offences recorded in 2019-20

Online Abuse:

As a lot of young people's social interaction now occurs through social media, young women and girls can be exposed to online harassment and abuse from peers or adults which facilitates and amplifies the violence and abuse they experience offline.

Adults or peers can also manipulate online relationships with young women and girls to initiate non-contact sexual abuse (e.g. via webcam) or to exploit them into sexually abusive or exploitative relationships offline through making them send self-generated photographs (which can then be used to threaten, coerce and control them), or introducing them to sexualised or pornographic material.

- In 2014, surveys found that girls aged 9–16 were almost three times as likely as boys to have been bothered, uncomfortable or upset by something online in the past year.
- In 2012, the Internet Watch Foundation found that 88% of self-generated sexually explicit online images and videos of young people had been taken from their original location and uploaded onto other websites.
- CEOP's 2013 report showed a 70% increase in the proliferation of online child abuse images of girls under 10 years old.

Pornography:

Pornography has no exact definition but is generally acknowledged as material produced principally for the purpose of sexual arousal and is widely regarded as existing for a male audience and privileging male sexual pleasure. Mainstream pornography, like much sexualised popular culture commonly depicts grossly racist and sexist stereotypes, for example presenting black men as hyper-sexual and savage, and Asian women as sexually exotic and submissive.

There are clear gender differences in exposure and attitudes to pornography: young men and boys are more likely to deliberately access, seek or use pornography

and view it more favourably, while young women and girls are more likely to experience unwelcome exposure to pornography and feel much more uncomfortable than young men and boys when viewing it. Young people's exposure to pornography is also linked to unrealistic attitudes about sex, beliefs that women are sex objects, and less progressive attitudes to gender roles (e.g., male dominance and female submission)

- A 2014 BBC survey of 16–21-year-olds found that 60% of young people in the UK are first exposed to pornography aged 14 years or younger and 74% of young people believe it particularly affects young men's expectations of sex.
- Online interviews with 18-year-olds found 70% think pornography can have a damaging impact on young people's views of sex or relationships; 72% think pornography leads to unrealistic attitudes to sex and 70% think pornography encourages society to view women as sex objects.
- Research into anal sex among 16–18-year-old heterosexuals found it to be "painful, risky and coercive, particularly for women" with pornography frequently cited as an explanation for engaging in it.

Rape and Sexual Assault:

Sexual violence, like most forms of VAWG, is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men and boys against women and girls they know. Rape is a form of sexual violence involving the penetration of the vagina, mouth or anus using a penis performed without consent.

To be able to consent, one must have both the freedom to consent (without, for example, pressure, coercion, threats, or violence) and the capacity to consent (without, for example, excessive drink, drugs or a disability). Sexual assault is a form of sexual violence involving non-consensual sexual touching.

Far from being a result of 'miscommunication,' acts of sexual violence, such as rape and sexual assault, are used intentionally to exert power and control. This 'miscommunication' myth inaccurately blames women and girls for not saying 'no'

clearly enough and dangerously overlooks the sexually harmful attitudes and behaviours of men and boys, which risk being normalised and accepted if they go unchallenged.

Meaningful sexual consent involves verbal or non-verbal, ongoing and enthusiastic 'yes' to all sexual activities taking place.

- 85,000 women are raped and over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted in England and Wales every year.
- Sexual violence is even more prevalent for younger women as one in three teenage girls has experienced some form of sexual violence from a partner.
- Two in five girls aged between 13 and 17 suffer sexual coercion of some sort by a boyfriend, ranging from rape to being pressurised into going further than they wanted through physical force or other means.

Young women and girls affected by gangs experience high levels of sexual violence including sexual exploitation, sexual assault, individual rape and multiple perpetrator rape.

Rape can be carried out as an attack on a rival gang or as a method of gang initiation.

- In 2013, the police recorded over 1,000 reports of sexual violence in schools, of which 134 were reported as rape.
- In a 2013 Joint Inspectorate study of young sex offenders almost half of the cases contained documented evidence of the young men and boys exhibiting previous "concerning sexualised behaviour" that was either not identified at the time or was subject to disbelief, minimisation and denial by professionals and families - crucially missing the opportunity to intervene and prevent abuse.

'Sexting'

'Sexting' is the sending of sexually explicit messages via mobile phones or computers, typically involving self-generated images sent between peers. 'Sexting' is not a

gender-neutral practice and is often coercive (with boys pressuring girls to send images of

themselves) and is linked to sexual harassment, bullying and even violence. Self-generated images from 'sexting' can also be used later as a form of harassment and abuse known as 'revenge pornography' which involves the distribution (or threat of distribution) of images, without the consent of those depicted, to threaten, control, bully, harm or humiliate them.

- As many as 40% of young people engage in 'sexting', with a sexual double standard very apparent in expectations and responses to it (with sexually active young men admired, and sexually active young women denigrated)

Sexual Harassment / Bullying:

Sexual harassment can be verbal (including making indecent remarks about someone's appearance, sexual orientation or sex life, or making requests or demands for sexual favours), non-verbal (including staring, displaying sexually explicit material or sending indecent messages) or physical (including touching, pinching, and sexual assault). It can be a one-off incident or a persistent pattern of behaviour, and can occur in the street, on public transport to or from school and within school itself.

- In a poll of 16-18 year olds: 29% of girls say they experienced 'groping' or other unwanted sexual touching at school; 71% say they have heard sexual namecalling such as "slut" or "slag" towards girls at school daily or a few times per week;
- 28% say they have seen sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more.

In a 2012 survey, 43% of young women in London (aged 18-24) reported having experienced sexual harassment in public places (such as in the street, in a parks or on public transport) in the previous year, and almost twice as many women as men reported feeling unsafe on public transport.

Stalking:

Stalking is a pattern of abusive behaviour designed to incite fear and curtail freedom, such as watching or monitoring someone or forcing contact with them through any means (including via social media). Young women can be particularly at risk of stalking as school and social media can provide a backdrop of monitoring and surveillance which others can easily abuse.

Stalking often escalates to and is perpetrated alongside other forms of abuse.

- For example, 56% of women who have experienced stalking will also have experienced another form of abuse, such as sexual or domestic violence.

SECTION 3: EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND VISITORS

1. Whilst within the school environment we take a zero tolerance approach towards sexual violence, harassment and/or misconduct.

Perpetrating any crimes relating to VAWG as outlined in the definitions section of this policy is never acceptable under any circumstances and may constitute a criminal offence.

Perpetrating this behaviour is harmful to others' health and wellbeing and can have long term consequences on a persons physical and mental health.

The behaviour listed in this policy can be perpetrated in person or online.

Every member of the school is expected to adhere to this policy while using social media and any other form of online interaction including email communication. All reports of sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence and/or sexual misconduct will be taken seriously.

Anyone found to be behaving in this way will be dealt with under the appropriate internal disciplinary procedures and may result in a criminal investigation.

The person reporting and the respondent and any Witnesses will be treated fairly, with dignity and confidentiality throughout any process and will be provided access to relevant support services within the school and externally.

2. Seek Consent:

All members of the school community are expected to seek enthusiastic consent when interacting with others. Consent is agreeing by choice and having the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Consent is not limited to a verbal "yes" or "no" – it involves paying attention and checking in with physical cues as well.

Consent is not ongoing: it needs to be negotiated every time you have sex and also, during sex as you start to do different

activities. You must stop if you are not sure that you have someone's consent. Any prior sexual activity or relationship, does not, in and of itself, constitute consent regardless of any previous sexual activity that has taken place on that occasion or at any other time.

Consent may be withdrawn at any time (including during sex) and can never be implied, assumed, or coerced.

3. Act appropriately in the school environment:

There are many sexualised behaviours that are never appropriate in a school environment.

There are many possible power dynamics that people should be conscious of: gender, race, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age are some of the factors covered in the Equality Act 2010 that may intersect with how power is held by some people over others. Members of the school are expected to recognise this in their peer, work, and professional relationships.

4. Be an active bystander.

The bystander effect is a social psychological phenomenon that occurs when the presence of others discourages an individual from intervening in a situation.

This compounds people's experiences by normalising and accepting inappropriate behaviour.

All members of the school have a responsibility to do or say something if they witness sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence and/or sexual misconduct and it is safe to intervene.

Respond in a thoughtful and supportive way to disclosures:

If someone tells you they have experienced sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, FGM or Honour Based Violence or any other crime relating to VAWG you should respond in good faith with the assumption that they are telling the truth. There are many myths within society that lead to victim blaming: it is advisable to familiarise yourself with the reasons why these myths are hurtful and unfounded.

There are support services both in school and within the local community available if someone experiences any form of violence, harassment, or abuse. If you are not specially trained it is best to listen non-judgementally and direct them to these services.

SECTION FOUR: SUPPORT

[school name] is committed to providing support for anyone that discloses any crime or incident relating to VAWG. Or any such persons directly or indirectly affected by these issues.

[school name] will provide information on support resources available and offer interim measures as appropriate to the person reporting and the respondent witnesses and those supporting any of the aforementioned.

Support is available to any member of the school regardless of their choice to proceed to a report either to the school or the Police.

In cases where those involved are directly linked to the school, support for reporting person and the respondent will be separate.

There are Support Services in school that exist to offer a safe environment and provide health and wellbeing support. These services may have different names in different schools, they could be:

- Pastoral Team
- Child Welfare
- Safeguarding Team

In the case of recent sexual violence (within the last 7 days) and if appropriate the reporting person may be signposted to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre or other external independent support agencies.

You can also access support from local and national organisations such as:

Childline 24-hour confidential listening service for children.

Tel: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

Broken Rainbow

A service for LGBTQ

Tel: 08452 60 44 60

Rape Crisis

National body that provides co-ordination for rape crisis

Website: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education

Tel: 0800136663

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Rights of Women

Free Legal Advice.

Tel: 020 7251 6577

Website: www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

KRASAC

Support to survivors of rape and sexual violence

Email: helpline@kcrasac.co.uk

Email: anything@kcrasac.co.uk

FORWARD

Support and advice about female genital mutilation.

Tel: 0208 960 4000

National Forced Marriage Unit

Tel: 0207 008 0151

Imkaan

Specialist Asian women's refuge sector.

Website: www.imkaan.org.uk

WomenCentre

Domestic abuse support

Website: www.womencentre.org.uk

SECTION FIVE: DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING

[school name] encourages students, staff and visitors to inform someone if they have experienced sexual violence, harassment and/or misconduct.

[school name] understands the importance of minimising the number of times the reporting person must disclose information. It is often not in the best interest of the person disclosing to have to recount potentially traumatic experiences. This process seeks to limit the burden on the reporting person and provide them with several options for seeking support and resolution.

This policy makes a distinction between a disclosure and a report.

A disclosure:

Is when someone informs another person or professional that they have experienced sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence and/or sexual misconduct. This may be the only step the reporting person takes and it may not be clear from the beginning of a conversation that a disclosure is about to occur.

Disclosures should be recorded as per the schools safeguarding policy (this can be done anonymously or with details, depending on the wishes of the person disclosing). While action will not normally be taken because of disclosures there may be some cases where the school has a duty of care to act, usually in cases where someone is at immediate risk of harm or under our safeguarding policy. Anyone disclosing will be kept informed if it is felt that action needs to be taken.

A report:

Is when someone informs a member of staff in the school that they have experienced sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence and/or sexual misconduct and would like the school to do something about it. A disclosure therefore becomes a report if the student wants action to be taken because of the disclosure.

A report will generate a case. An appropriately trained member of staff will review cases and (considering the wishes of the reporting person) decide the most appropriate steps to take. The school is limited in what action it could take if the person reported is not a student in the school. The school will take any disclosure or report in good faith that the person reporting is telling the truth and, on this basis, will refer the reporting person onto the relevant support services. The reporting person may be asked to provide further information for the school to take the most effective action.

All school staff are expected to follow the key principles of best practice in responding to disclosures:

- Listen non-judgmentally.
- Acknowledge what someone has shared with you.
- Respond in good faith that they are telling the truth.
- Understand that the person disclosing is choosing to share something personal and often painful with you.
- Be led by the person disclosing.
- Engage choice – create a space for the person disclosing to decide what they want to do next.
- Be honest about what you can and can't do – being clear about the boundaries of your role.
- Let someone know what further support is available – these can be internal and specialist external services.

SECTION SIX: RESPONDING TO VAWG PROCEDURES

The following procedures detail what a student should be able to do within the school if they experience VAWG or witness an incident taking place.

This section also details how these incidents can be reported to the school and how the school will respond to such reports.

What to do if you experience VAWG in school:

It is important to remember that what you have experienced is not your fault and what you do next is your choice.

There are several internal and external support services for students [\[provided in section four\]](#)

You can access support irrespective of whether you choose to report what has happened to you.

You can report to the school anonymously or with your contact details [so you get a response].

You can also report in person to the school pastoral team, Safeguarding Lead, Head of Year, or a trusted adult.

Information about how the school will respond and what action can be taken should you choose to make a report can be found in section five.

You can decide if you would like to contact the police or not. There is also advice available on what that processes will involve should you choose to report to the police.

What to do when receiving a disclosure:

People who experience sexual violence, sexual harassment and or assault stalking, domestic violence or rape are most likely to tell someone they are already close to and trust if anyone at all. Therefore, it is important that the school have an informed response to such disclosures.

Here are some steps to follow when receiving a disclosure:

- When someone has experienced a violation that has removed their agency the best way to support them is to listen and empower them to make choices for themselves.
- Remind yourself that the person has responded in the best way they can considering the resources they have. This means that we need to leave behind our own judgements about what we would have done in their position.
- Reflect what is being disclosed and when responding avoid using the words like 'should', 'ought' or 'must' and instead use phrases such as 'did you know there are a, b, c support services, 'these resources may be helpful' or 'you have the options to do x or y'.

The school is keen to build a better understanding of when and where people experience for students that experiences any form of VAWG outlaid in this policy and procedure. To do this, the school ask that staff record disclosures and reports that they receive verbally.

Disclosures can be recorded without any personal details if the person disclosing does not feel comfortable with that and there is no risk of harm to anyone.

If the subject of the incident is identifiable, we will normally contact them to offer support and seek their views on taking any further action.

Signpost to the appropriate reporting and support services [\[section Four\]](#)

You should not take a full account of the situation, nor should you seek to investigate the situation. If the disclosure is about sexual violence refer on to an appropriately trained person who can take an initial report.

If the person disclosing informs you that they or the person(s) they are disclosing information about is at risk of hurting themselves or others it may be appropriate to escalate the situation to:

- The emergency services by calling 999
- Safeguarding Lead
- Children's Safeguarding Team 01422 393000
- Emergency duty team [out of hours] 01422 288000.

If you are witnessing sexual violence or harassment taking place, it is an emergency (for example there is a risk of someone being hurt) and you are in school, you should alert someone in a role of authority.

If you are not in school or on school grounds, you may consider directly calling the emergency services on 999.

If you are witnessing sexual harassment where you do not consider it to be an emergency, you can still delegate to a member of staff or intervene if it is safe to do so.

Possible ways of intervening include:

- Direct Action – telling the perpetrator that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Distraction – distract either the perpetrator or the target to defuse the situation.
- Delay – it is always worth checking in with the target of the behaviour after it has taken place; it is validating for them to know that another person believes what has happened is not acceptable.

You may wish to report what you have witnessed after that incident has occurred. You can do this by reporting anonymously or via the internal support services in school. If the subject of the incident is identifiable and contactable the school will contact them to offer support and seek their views on taking any further action.

How the school will respond to reports:

If a student has disclosed any of the VAWG incidents outlined in this policy and procedure and is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, the school has a statutory duty of care to share information with appropriate agencies or professionals without the child's or their parent's consent.

If a student is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If a student is not in immediate danger:

We will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures as soon as possible. These provide clear guidelines on the steps the school will take if a student discloses sexual violence, abuse, or sexual assault.

The school will state who is the designated safeguarding or child protection lead and which agencies we are reporting to.

The school will also contact local child protection services.

The school will also contact the police who will assess the situation and take the appropriate action to protect the student.

If the school makes a verbal referral to local children's services, they will follow this up with a written referral as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours.