

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A Guide for Schools



This guide from the End Violence Against Women Coalition has been designed to support school leaders in tackling violence against women and girls.

The guide sets out the different forms of abuse and warning signs to look for, what good teaching in this area looks like, and how to get your whole school working towards ending abuse. The guide contains three documents:

Violence Against Women and Girls Factsheet: Key information for education staff to understand violence and abuse of girls **page 2**

Gold Standard Sex and Relationship Education: Principles and practices to prevent violence and abuse of girls **page 10**

A Whole School Approach: A template model for education establishments to prevent violence and abuse of girls **page 14**

Violence Against Women and Girls Factsheet

Key information for education staff to understand violence and abuse of girls



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Introduction to Violence Against Women and Girls

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 and sexual harassment.¹ VAWG is linked to women and girls’ inequality and is neither acceptable nor inevitable.

This document² sets out some of the main forms of violence and abuse that girls experience in the UK alongside evidence on how widely they are experienced. In light of such high levels of abuse across the UK, education establishments will be aware of the importance of listening to, believing and supporting young survivors, so we also include information about responses to abuse and dealing with disclosures.

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/>

¹ It is important to note that as violence against women and girls is predominantly an abuse of power, men and boys can be subject to many of the same forms of abuse. Whilst a VAWG analysis highlights that victim-survivors are disproportionately women, and perpetrators are disproportionately men, it is a focus on this disproportionality that means men and boys are not excluded as possible victim-survivors. For more on how a VAWG analysis includes men and boys, see Coy, M., Kelly, L., & Lovett, J. (2011) *Violence Against Women and Girls: Step by step guidance on moving towards an integrated approach in London boroughs*, Greater London Authority.

² This document has been developed with input from the EVAW Prevention Network which holds a unique position in its breadth and depth of expertise on all forms of VAWG experienced by young women and girls.

Sensitively handling disclosures

Within any group of people – young or old - there are bound to be survivors of abuse. Sensitive, non-victim-blaming awareness-raising around forms of VAWG can be very positive and is likely to encourage survivors to come forward. Education establishments must be prepared for this and ensure their first steps are to believe the young person, ensure they know they are not to blame, recognise their strength in speaking out, let them know the boundaries of confidentiality and what will happen next, and find them specialist advice and support from their local VAWG service. Such support services, including for Black and Minority Ethnic women, can be found by searching a local area at:

Women's Aid <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
Rape Crisis <http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/>

As part of their Prevention Platform (www.preventionplatform.co.uk), AVA also provides a free e-learning course for anyone working with young people to help them learn how to respond appropriately to warning signs of abuse and disclosures.

Survivor responses to abuse

Both adults and children who experience violence and abuse cope in different ways. Some may become withdrawn, isolating themselves to keep themselves safe, while others may throw themselves into work, focused on 'achieving' and try to be around people constantly in order to avoid unwanted thoughts. Survivors may start to control their eating or develop 'eating disorders' in order to claim back a sense of control over the body, to keep the body small or large as a form of protection. Many survivors use some form of self-injury to cope with their feelings of numbness or low self-worth, again seeking to reassert control over their body and their self. Some use substances (such as drugs or alcohol) to block out unwanted or overwhelming emotion or to help them express emotion if they are feeling numb.

These varied responses should never be a way of determining the severity or effect of the violence or abuse that has been experienced, and the lack of an 'expected' or 'typical' response should in no way be used to doubt, undermine or discredit a survivor's testimony of abuse. They are all a way of coping with the impacts of different forms of VAWG, and survivors deserve to be treated with respect, care and dignity.

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).³ 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,

³ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, CEOP, 2012, available online at: http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOPThreatA_2012_190612_web.pdf

'protection' or accommodation, to trafficking and the organised abuse of children. Gang-association is a particular context for girls' sexual exploitation by peers.⁴

- 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.⁶
- 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.⁷
- The UK is a significant site of internal and international child trafficking. The vast majority of trafficked children in the UK are aged 14-17, with many girls trafficked for sexual abuse and exploitation.⁸

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 Violence⁹ 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*.¹⁰

- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence in their families.¹¹
- On average, two women a week are killed each year by a current or former male partner.¹²
- 25% of young women (aged over 13) experience physical violence and 72% experience emotional abuse in their own relationships.¹³

⁴ *Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence - Interim findings*, University of Bedfordshire for the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC), 2012, available at:

http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_637http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/force_download.php?fp=%2Fclient_assets%2Fcp%2Fpublication%2F637%2FUniversity_of_Bedfordshire_Report_final_for_website.pdf

⁵ *Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK today*, NSPCC, 2011, available at:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/child-abuse-neglect-uk-today-research-report.pdf>

⁶ *How Safe Are Our Children? Indicator 4*, NSPCC, 2014, available at:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/researchhttp://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/how-safe-children-2014-indicator-04.pdf>

⁷ More than 300 rapes reported in schools in past three years, *The Independent*, 22 August 2014, available at:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/more-than-300-rapes-reported-in-schools-in-past-three-years-9686793.html>

⁸ *Strategic Threat Assessment: Child Trafficking in the UK*, CEOP, 2009, available at:

http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/child_trafficking_report0409.pdf

⁹ *Information for Local Areas on the change to the Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse*, Home Office, 2013, available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf

¹⁰ *This Is Abuse* campaign, Home Office, 2013-14, available at: <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>

¹¹ *Women's Mental Health: Into the Mainstream*, Department of Health, 2002, available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Closedconsultations/DH_4075478

¹² *Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences*, ONS, 2011-12, available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_298904.pdf

- 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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵ 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).¹⁸ Emotional, financial, physical and sexual threats and abuse, as well as notions of 'honour,' can all be used to force someone to marry¹⁹ and forced marriage can lead to physical violence, rape and even murder.²⁰

- 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.²¹

'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.

¹³ *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*, NSPCC, 2009, available at: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/partner-exploitation-violence-teenage-intimate-relationships-report.pdf>

¹⁴ *Relationship abuse between young people: Information for schools*, NSPCC and ATL, 2013, available at: <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/relationship-abuse-between-young-people-information-for-schools-nov-13.pdf>

¹⁵ *Living With FGM*, Daughters of Eve, available at: <http://www.dofeve.org/living-with-fgm.html>

¹⁶ *Report shows 137,000 Women and Girls with FGM in England and Wales*, City University, 2014, available at: <http://www.city.ac.uk/news/2014/jul/new-report-shows-137,000-women-and-girls-with-fgm-in-england-and-wales>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ 'Our Girl' Film and resource on Forced Marriage available at: <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/our-resources/good-practice-guidance--toolkits/our-girl---film-on-forced-marriage.aspx>

¹⁹ *The Missing Link: a joined up approach to addressing harmful practices in London*, Imkaan for GLA, 2011, available at: http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/The_Missing_Link_-_Sep_2011.pdf

²⁰ *IKWRO welcomes Government plans to make forced marriage a crime*, IKWRO, 2012, available at: <http://ikwro.org.uk/2012/06/press-release-ikwro-welcomes-government-plans-to-make-forced-marriage-a-crime/>

²¹ *Forced Marriage Unit: Statistics January to December 2014*, Home Office and FCO, 2014, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412667/FMU_Stats_2014.pdf

'Honour' based violence is not limited to any one particular 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 police women's behaviour and sexuality to ensure they do not 'dishonour' or 'shame' their family or community.²²

- In 2010 more than 2800 cases of 'honour' based violence were reported to the police.²³

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.^{24 25}

- 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.²⁶
- 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.²⁷
- CEOP's 2013 report showed a 70% increase in the proliferation of online child abuse images of girls under 10 years old.²⁸

Pornography

Pornography has no exact definition but is generally acknowledged as material produced principally for the purpose of sexual arousal,²⁹ and is widely regarded as existing for a male audience and privileging male sexual pleasure.³⁰ Mainstream pornography, like much sexualised popular culture,³¹ commonly depicts grossly racist

²² 'Honour' Killing and Violence, Aisha K Gill, 2014

²³ Nearly 3000 cases of 'honour' violence every year in the UK, IKWRO, 2011, available at: <http://ikwro.org.uk/2011/12/nearly-3000-cases-of-honour-violence-every-year-in-the-uk/>

²⁴ The Process of Grooming, Rape Crisis South London, 2014, available at: http://www.rasasc.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/rapeCrisisSouthLondon_theProcessOfGrooming.pdf

²⁵ Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, CEOP, 2012, available at: http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOPThreatA_2012_190612_web.pdf

²⁶ Net Children Go Mobile: The UK Report, A comparative report with findings from the UK 2010 survey by EU Kids Online, 2014, available at: <http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/>

²⁷ Internet Watch Foundation Annual and Charity Report 2012, IWF, 2012, available at: <https://www.iwf.org.uk/assets/media/annual-reports/FINAL%20web-friendly%20IWF%202012%20Annual%20and%20Charity%20Report.pdf>

²⁸ Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, CEOP, 2013, available at: http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOP_TACSEA2013_240613%20FINAL.pdf

²⁹ Criminal Justice and Immigration Act, 2008, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/4/part/5/crossheading/pornography-etc/enacted>

³⁰ "Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape": How young people in England understand sexual consent, CWASU for OCC, 2013, available at: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_744

³¹ Pornographic Performances: A review of research on sexualisation and racism in music videos, Dr Maddy Coy for EVAW, Imkaan and Object, 2014, available at: <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/66/Pornographic-Performances-FINAL-Aug-2014.pdf>

and sexist stereotypes, for example presenting black men as hyper-sexual and savage, and Asian women as sexually exotic and submissive.³²

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.³³ 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).³⁴

- 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.³⁵
- 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.³⁶
- 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.³⁷

Rape and Sexual Assault

Sexual violence, like most forms of VAWG, is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men and boys against women and girls they know.³⁸ 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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰ Meaningful sexual consent involves verbal or non-verbal, ongoing and enthusiastic 'yes' to all sexual activities taking place.

³² *Racy Sex, Sexy Racism*, Gail Dines, 2010, available at: <http://gaildines.com/ch7/>

³³ "Basically... porn is everywhere" *A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the Effect that Access and Exposure to Pornography has on Children and Young People*, OCC, 2013, available at: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_667

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ *BBC Three survey reveals one in four young people first view porn at age 12 or under*, BBC, 2014, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2014/porn-whats-the-harm>

³⁶ *500 Online Interviews amongst UK adults aged 18*, Opinion Research for IPPR, 2014, available at: <http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/publications/attachments/OP4391-IPPR-Data-Tables.pdf>

³⁷ *Anal heterosex among young people and implications for health promotion: a qualitative study in the UK*, Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2014, available at: <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/4/8/e004996.full.pdf+html>

³⁸ *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales*, Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2012, available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/an-overview-of-sexual-offending-in-england--wales/december-2012/index.html>

³⁹ *Sexual Offences Act 2003*, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

⁴⁰ *Professionals failing children who sexually harm, finds chief inspector*, Community Care, 2013, available at: <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2013/02/06/professionals-failing-children-who-sexually-harm-finds-chief-inspector/>

- 85,000 women are raped and over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted in England and Wales every year.⁴¹
- 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.⁴²
- 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.⁴³
- Young women and girls affected by gangs experience high levels of sexual violence including sexual exploitation, sexual assault, individual rape and multiple perpetrator rape.⁴⁴ Rape can be carried out as an attack on a rival gang or as a method of gang initiation.⁴⁵
- In 2013, the police recorded over 1,000 reports of sexual violence in schools, of which 134 were reported as rape.⁴⁶
- 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.⁴⁷

‘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.⁴⁸ 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, in order 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).⁴⁹

⁴¹ *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales*, Ministry of Justice, Home Office & the ONS, 2013, available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/an-overview-of-sexual-offending-in-england--wales/december-2012/index.html>

⁴² *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*, University of Bristol for NSPCC, 2009, available at: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_report_wdf70129.pdf

⁴³ *Large numbers of teenage girls experience sexual coercion in relationships*, University of Bristol, 2015, available at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2015/february/stir-study.html>

⁴⁴ *"It's wrong... but you get used to it" A qualitative study of gang-associated sexual violence towards, and exploitation of young people in England*, University of Bedfordshire for OCC, 2013, available at:

http://www.beds.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/293234/Gangs-Report-final.pdf

⁴⁵ *Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation & sexual violence: Interim report*, University of Bedfordshire for OCC, 2012, available at: http://www.beds.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/215873/GASV_Interim.pdf

⁴⁶ *More than 300 rapes reported in schools in past three years*, The Independent, 22 August 2014, available at:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/more-than-300-rapes-reported-in-schools-in-past-three-years-9686793.html>

⁴⁷ *Examining Multi-Agency Responses to Children and Young People who sexually offend*, Joint Inspectorate, 2013, available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmiprobation/joint-thematic/children-yp-who-sexually-offend-report.pdf>

⁴⁸ *A qualitative study of children, young people and ‘sexting’*, IoE, KCL and LSE for NSPCC, 2012, available at: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/qualitative-study-children-young-people-sexting-report.pdf>

⁴⁹ Ibid

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.⁵⁰

- 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 name-calling 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.⁵¹
- 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.⁵²

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.⁵³

Working Together to End Violence Against Woman and Girls

We believe violence against women and girls is not inevitable; it is preventable. Working together we can create a world free from the possibility and reality of all forms of VAWG. Acknowledging the scale of the violence women and girls experience in their lives, as outlined in this document, is the first step in understanding the problem. Giving children and young people the information they need about sexual consent and respectful relationships as part of a 'whole school approach' to ending violence against women and girls is the step we can all take towards being part of the solution.

⁵⁰ Hollaback!, 2014, see: <http://www.ihollaback.org/about/>

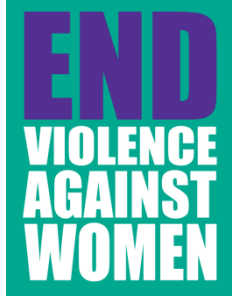
⁵¹ *Sexual Harassment in Schools: a YouGov poll for EVAW*, End Violence Against Women, 2010, available at: http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/Schools_Safe_4_Girls/YouGov_poll_for_EVAW_on_sexual_harassment_in_schools_2010.pdf

⁵² *Sexual Harassment Survey*, EVAW/YouGov, 2012, available at: <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

⁵³ *Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*, Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, 2004, available at: <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/media/28384/hors276.pdf>

Gold Standard Sex and Relationships Education

Principles and practices to prevent violence and abuse of girls



Gold Standard Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) seeks to change attitudes and behaviours that accept and normalise violence against women and girls (hereafter VAWG), and intersecting forms of violence including racism and homophobia, whilst teaching skills for young people to build relationships based on mutual respect and equality.

This document outlines the core principles and practices that the End Violence Against Women Coalition see forming the basis of a gold standard for SRE.⁵⁴ For teaching materials that address these issues, we recommend visiting the AVA Prevention Platform, an excellent online hub of educational resources, fact sheets, policies and information on understanding a whole-school approach to ending VAWG, searchable by issue, age group, key stage and region.⁵⁵

The Principles of Gold Standard SRE

Gold Standard SRE is:

1. Embedded within a **'whole-school approach'**⁵⁶ to preventing violence against women and girls, focused on prevention, education and safeguarding.⁵⁷ This is an approach that addresses the needs of pupils, staff and the wider community across the entire school environment, from the curriculum or learning environment to addressing the school's physical environment and what actions are taken to prevent VAWG and ensure safety for both students and staff. Action should focus on the 6 areas identified by Against Violence and Abuse in their evaluation of prevention projects in England,⁵⁸ including:
 - Institutional and policy development
 - Awareness raising, training and support for staff

⁵⁴ The End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition campaigns for governments at all levels around the UK to take urgent action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. We are the largest coalition of its kind in the UK representing over seven million individuals and organisations. A full list of members is on our website at:

<http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/>. These principles and practices have been created in consultation with our members and supporters, with particular thanks to the expert contributions of: Against Violence and Abuse (AVA); Dr. Sharon Elley, University of Leeds; FORWARD; Girlguiding UK; The MsUnderstood Partnership; Rape Crisis South London; Southall Black Sisters; Hannah Wharf; and WomansAid.

⁵⁵ AVA (a member of our Prevention Network) has developed the Prevention Platform contains a comprehensive toolkit looking at all forms of VAWG and how to create a whole school approach to challenging and ending VAWG. Anyone working with young people can also access the free e-learning course to help recognise warning signs of abuse and to learn how to respond appropriately. www.preventionplatform.co.uk

⁵⁶ Detailed information on what is included in a 'whole-school approach' is available in Maxwell, C., Chase, E., Warwick, I., Aggleton, P., & Wharf, H. (2010) *Freedom to Achieve: Preventing violence, promoting equality: a whole-school approach*, Womankind Worldwide, available online at: http://www.womankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/WKREPORT_web-24-NOV-2010.pdf

⁵⁷ See MOPAC (2013) *London VAWG Strategy Refresh: Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-17*, available online at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Pan-London%20Strategy%20on%20Violence%20against%20Women%20and%20Girls%202013_17.pdf

⁵⁸ See AVA (2014) *Prevention on the Schools Agenda: Summary of Key Learning, Prevention Project* available online at: <http://www.preventionplatform.co.uk/media/Prevention-report-Key-Learning.pdf>.

- Education and support for students, including effective safeguarding and signposting to specialist services.
2. Grounded in a **gendered and human rights** framework that promotes the rights of women and girls, men and boys, to safety, freedom of movement, dignity, sexual autonomy, bodily integrity, non-discrimination, education and equal participation in decision-making and society, as well as recognising the responsibility of educational institutions to uphold the rights of women and girls.⁵⁹
 3. Committed to addressing the **root causes of cultures of violence** including gender, race and sexuality stereotyping, enforcement of honour and shame codes, and the beliefs informing practices of inequality such as ableism, racism and classism.
 4. A planned, integrated and resourced curriculum of study embedded across the learning life-cycle from early years, primary through to secondary school,⁶⁰ as well as making cross-curricula links with other subjects to strengthen the learning. All lessons and activities are thus **age-appropriate and responsive** to the issues raised by young people themselves at different key stages.
 5. Delivered in a safe, supportive and **clearly bounded** environment including: students being able to opt-out; both mixed and single sex sessions made available to enable student's full participation;⁶¹ the limits to confidentiality explained to students at the beginning of every session; and ensuring both teachers and external facilitators have a clear understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures and how they link to forms of VAWG.
 6. Positioned as part of a wide reaching **safeguarding framework** that assesses safety within the whole school environment and makes necessary changes to the environment if/when it is identified as being unsafe.
 7. **Assessed and evaluated** in consultation with both staff and young people; and regularly updated and developed in light of young people's views of what matters to them and what is of current significance in terms of forms of VAWG, relationships and sexual health.

The Practices of Gold Standard SRE

Gold Standard SRE does:

1. Educate young people about all forms of VAWG including but not limited to: sexual violence such as rape and childhood sexual abuse; sexual bullying and harassment; intimate partner violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and crimes in the name of so-called 'honour'. Specific focus is given to exploring sexual consent in an age appropriate way, with the onus on the importance of 'seeking' consent without applying pressure or coercion, rather than on 'giving' or 'refusing'.⁶²

⁵⁹ See End Violence Against Women Coalition (2011) *A Different World is Possible: A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent violence against women and girls*, available online at:

http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/19/a_different_world_is_possible_report_email_version.pdf

⁶⁰ For an example of primary through to secondary lesson plans, Women's Aid's *Expect Respect* toolkit, online at:

<http://www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=00010001001400100004§ionTitle=Education+Toolkit>

⁶¹ A recent report from member organisation Girlguiding shows the importance of delivering SRE content in both mixed and single sex sessions. The report shows 46% of girls and young women aged 11-21 would prefer at least some of the lessons about sex and relationships to be taught in single sex groups. See Girlguiding UK (2014) *Girls' Attitudes Survey, 2014*, available online at: <http://new.girlguiding.org.uk/girls-attitudes-survey-2014>.

⁶² For evidence on the importance of delivering sexual consent messages in this way, see Coy, M., Kelly, L., Elvines, F., Garner, M., & Kanyeredzi, A. (2013) *Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape: How young people in England understand sexual*

2. Explicitly address human rights, responsibilities and relevant International, national and regional legal frameworks, alongside gender equality issues, including gender stereotypes, power relations and control.
3. Recognise intersectional inequalities and their impact on sex and relationships, including making explicit links between gender and other forms of lived inequality including but not limited to inequalities based on class, ability, religion and race.
4. Challenge traditional notions of masculinity and femininity that encourage or excuse VAWG in all settings, whilst teaching all young people how to positively manage their emotions and behaviours, including the development of anger management, communication, and conflict resolution skills.
5. Explore how particular assumptions, attitudes and behaviours can create a social context that makes VAWG, racialised and homophobic violence both possible and acceptable, as well as help young people identify positive attitudes and behaviours that provide an alternative way of relating to each other and the wider community.
6. Encourage the development of mutually respectful relationships, provide positive approaches to promote girl's and women's agency, and the right to express their sexuality, desire and pleasure.
7. Address diverse sexualities and gender expressions, including exploration of how rigid gender stereotyping is a key factor contributing to homophobic and transphobic bullying and violence in educational environments. A commitment to diversity is embedded in the language that is used by the staff and examples used in the sessions.
8. Teach media literacy skills through challenging representations in popular culture and media that promote cultures of violence, including but not limited to sexualised sexism,⁶³ bodily objectification, and the harms of pornography.
9. Challenge myths and build empathy among students towards survivors of all forms of violence and abuse through unpicking harmful stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes that place responsibility on girls and women to protect themselves from VAWG, and teaching skills on bystander intervention.⁶⁴
10. Include a clear policy and training provision for school staff to be trained and supported in order to develop their skills, expertise and confidence to lead discussions on issues related to VAWG, racism and homophobia, as well as skills in responding to disclosures.
11. Recognise that external agencies such as the specialist VAWG sector and other violence prevention charities, can offer valuable support in the form of staff

consent. Office of the children's Commissioner England, available online at:

http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/force_download.php?fp=%2Fclient_assets%2Fcp%2Fpublication%2F744%2Fsex_with_out_consent_i_suppose_that_is_rape_newprint.pdf

⁶³ Sexualised sexism is a concept developed by Dr. Maddy Coy in an expert briefing for EVAW, to more appropriately capture what is often referred to as 'sexualisation', being the ways in which popular culture is saturated with sexualised motifs. For Coy, the term 'sexualised sexism' may be more helpful than simply 'sexualisation' as it makes clear that sexualisation is deeply gendered, and that its limited and reductive portrayals of women and girls form part of a conducive context for VAWG. For a detailed discussion see Coy, M. (2014) *Sexualised Sexism: Popular culture, sexualisation and violence against women and girls*, EVAW, available online:

http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/63/Sexualised_Sexism_Maddy_Coy_July_2014.docx

⁶⁴ An excellent example of teaching bystander intervention to young adults is available through the University of Western England's *Bystander Initiative*, commissioned by Public Health England and available online at:

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/research/interventioninitiative/abouttheprogramme.aspx>. These materials are developed for University age students, however the theoretical rationale resonates across all teaching on bystander responses to VAWG and as such form a useful resource for teachers of school-aged children and young people considering embedding similar work into their SRE curriculum. Further examples of bystander work for school-aged children and young people, including lesson plans, are available at AVA's prevention platform www.preventionplatform.co.uk

training, policy development and session delivery; whilst acknowledging that teachers have crucial investments in and relationships with their pupils, and need to be fully supported and trained to deliver the work themselves.

12. Engage men and boys to end violence against girls and women, creating spaces for them to think and talk about how they are negatively impacted by gender inequality and VAWG.

Gold standard Sex and Relationships Education is guided by these principles and practices to recognise the active agency of all children and young people and engage them in interactive and experiential learning on how to create a world without violence against women and girls.

A Whole School Approach

A template model for education establishments
to prevent violence and abuse of girls



Many forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (hereafter VAWG) such as rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, domestic violence, forced marriage, 'honour' based violence and FGM disproportionately affect young women and girls.⁶⁵ Education establishments are often on the frontline of responding to VAWG with staff spending much time and energy supporting pupils - and sometimes parents or fellow staff members – as they deal with abuse or its aftermath (including impacts on pupil behaviour, attendance and underachievement).

A Whole School Approach⁶⁶ is a comprehensive way of creating an educational environment that enables and structures such support and works to eliminate VAWG. Vitally, a Whole School Approach ensures that positive activity in one area of work is not undermined elsewhere. For example, SRE lessons teaching about respectful and equal relationships in the classroom will be meaningless if sexual harassment is ignored in the corridors outside.

Many education staff will already be aware of many of these issues and may be unsurprised at research that has found:

- A quarter of education professionals were approached by a young person with concerns about relationship abuse in a two year period.⁶⁷
- One in three 16-18 year-old girls has experienced 'groping' or other unwanted sexual touching at school; one in three 16-18-year-olds see sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more and seven in ten report hearing sexual name-calling such as "slut" or "slag" towards girls at school daily or a few times per week.⁶⁸
- More than 2,800 reports of sexual abuse of children in schools were recorded by police in a two year period.⁶⁹

A Whole School Approach gives both young people and staff the skills to respond to, challenge and prevent violence against women and girls within their establishment and the local community. Developed through evaluation of in-schools prevention programmes by specialist organisations,⁷⁰ the six-part Whole School Approach model covers all the key aspects of VAWG prevention including:

⁶⁵ See EVAW's *Factsheet on Violence Against Women and Girls* for an explanation of forms of abuse and their prevalence.

⁶⁶ See Womankind's *Preventing Violence, Promoting Equality: A whole-school approach*, 2010 http://www.womankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/WKREPORT_web-24-NOV-2010.pdf

⁶⁷ *Relationship abuse between young people: Information for schools*, NSPCC and ATL, 2013, available at: <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/relationship-abuse-between-young-people-information-for-schools-nov-13.pdf>

⁶⁸ *Sexual Harassment in Schools: a YouGov poll for EVAW*, End Violence Against Women, 2010, available at: http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/Schools_Safe_4_Girls/YouGov_poll_for_EVAW_on_sexual_harassment_in_schools_2010.pdf

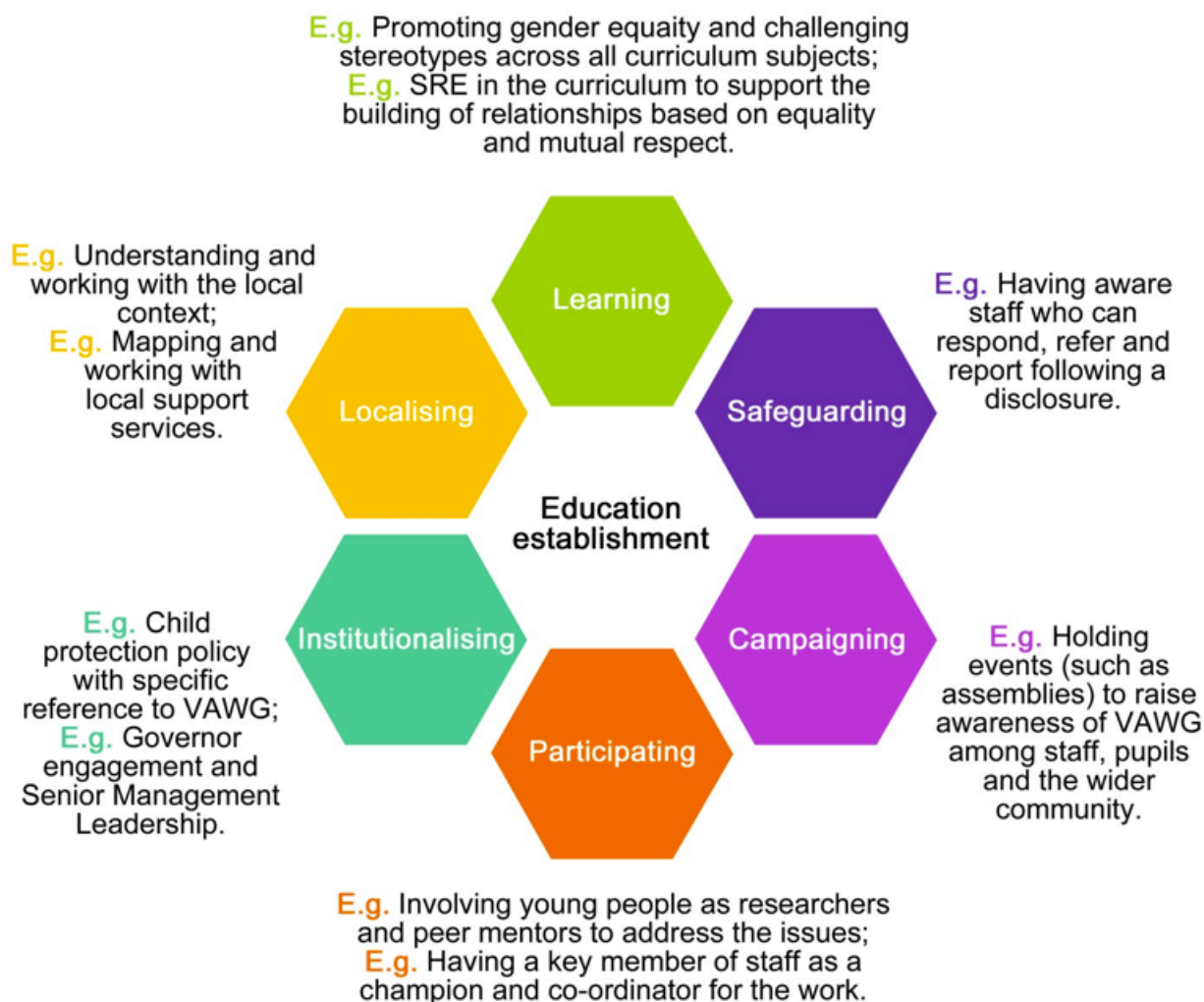
⁶⁹ *More than 300 rapes reported in schools in past three years*, The Independent, 22 August 2014, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/more-than-300-rapes-reported-in-schools-in-past-three-years-9686793.html>

⁷⁰ This model is from AVA (Against Violence and Abuse)'s report of in-schools prevention work carried out by specialist organisations: Southall Black Sisters, Tender, Respond, Victim Support Cornwall SAFE Project, Equation (formerly Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum) and Off the Record (Bath and Bristol). A summary of the report can be found at: <http://www.preventionplatform.co.uk/media/Prevention-report-Key-Learning.pdf>

- Guidance, ongoing training and support to staff to identify the signs of all forms of VAWG, including how to respond to disclosures and harmful behaviour;
- Tackling all forms of VAWG and gender inequality through the curriculum;
- Specialist support for students and staff who experience VAWG, whether current, recent or historic – regardless of whether they report to police.
- School policies on behaviour, bullying and safeguarding that specifically address VAWG.

The below diagram shows the six key areas of a Whole School Approach, including examples of what each area of work might involve. All of the areas are closely interlinked and support one another, for example:

- Involving young people as researchers to map the issues they are facing will inform which support services are most relevant to work with; or
- Holding an assembly on forced marriage may encourage pupils at risk to come forward and seek support, so staff must be prepared to respond, refer and report the disclosure.



More information about how to develop a Whole School Approach, as well as resources for delivering prevention work within the curriculum, can be found on AVA’s award winning Prevention Platform at: www.preventionplatform.co.uk

To find out more about EVAW’s work, our members, and how you can help to ensure all education environments are safe for girls, visit www.evaw.org.uk