

What Schools Can Do

Be Aware

Sibling sexual trauma is real, common, and possible in any family. It is happening to students at your school. An estimated 2-5% of children are victims of a sibling's harmful sexual behaviour. For half of them, it begins before age 8. For most, it continues for years, in their own home.

It can happen to any student who has a sibling, regardless of gender, age, ability level, or family circumstances. However, some children are at **higher risk**:

- females
- younger siblings
- those regularly cared for by a sibling
- those who are part of a stepfamily, adoptive family, or foster family
- those with a family history of domestic violence, sexual abuse, or other types of abuse
- those with physical, social, or intellectual disability or diversity

Unfortunately, children and young people can and do cause sexual harm.

- **The peak age for harmful sexual behaviour toward a child or sibling is 12-14 years old.**
- **Young people of any gender may harm siblings of either the same or a different gender.**
- Most who harm have social skills, intelligence, & school behaviour that is average or above.
- Yet young people who struggle with impulse control, social isolation, or with delayed social or intellectual development may be at higher risk to sexually harm a child.
- Rising exposure to explicit online sexual content has led to increasing rates of early and problematic sexual behavior.
- Most children & young people who cause harm are not paedophiles and don't abuse as adults.
- Students with sexual behaviour problems need help to change their behaviour and deal with contributing factors. They need supervision and accountability, without shame.

Sibling sexual harm or abuse is a possibility to consider when there are concerns or changes in a child's behaviour or emotions. However, many children show no outward signs.

Educate staff on the messages children most need to hear if they talk about any type of abuse:

- "I'm sorry this happened to you."
- "I'm glad you told me."
- "This wasn't your fault."

Additional referrals for headteachers and counselors to have ready include:

- StopItNow.org.uk (confidential helpline, for parents & staff wondering how to respond)
- siblingsexualabusesupport.org (information & support for survivors age 13 and up in the UK)
- Siblingsexualtrauma.com (comprehensive information, links to resources & online support)
- 5WAVES flyer for parents who just found out (5waves.org/printable-info-for-outreach)

Be Ready to Respond



MORE TOOLS & INFORMATION:
5waves.org | siblingsexualtrauma.com



What Schools Can Do (continued)

*Work
Toward
Prevention*

"I'm a very big enthusiast for comprehensive school-based prevention education. I think it's one of the best tools we have [to prevent child sexual abuse]...one that I think deserves our priority attention." David Finkelhor, Director, Crimes Against Children Research Center

Train yourself and other school staff:

- learning.nspcc.org.uk/training (NSPCC Child Protection in Schools training)
- admin@aimproject.org.uk (email to access AIM book and training: *Understanding and Managing Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings*)

Select and implement body safety and consent education.

Start early and repeat on a yearly basis.

See suggestions at 5waves.org/resources-for-schools. >>>



When choosing or modifying a curriculum, look for:

- Inclusion of students with all learning styles, needs, and diversities
- Information on respecting others' boundaries as well as protecting your own
- A strong internet safety component
- Specific mention that body safety rules apply to other children and to family members
- A trauma-informed approach (many children participating have experienced abuse)
- Educational materials for parents, to complement what children learn
- Plan for children to follow up confidentially if they have more questions or concerns
- Plan to support families, students, and school staff if a child discloses abuse

Model and remind students about principles of body safety, boundaries, and consent in all school environments. Enforce expectations without shaming.

Make internet safety a priority.

- Make sure your school's technology plan includes multiple layers of protection.
- Give options for students to do homework on paper or on a device without internet.
- Regularly share information with parents on age-appropriate ways to talk about online behaviour, and tools for increasing online safety when outside of school.

Provide students with multiple, trusted, age-appropriate options for guidance and support about sexual and/or online activity. Suggested sites include:

- shorespace.org.uk
- childline.org 0800 1111
- [#myfriendtoo](https://twitter.com/myfriendtoo)

*Help
Students
Find Help*



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