



Our Streets Now

Tackling Public Sexual Harassment in Schools

Whole-School Approach

“ I was walking home from school one day in my school uniform when a group of men started harassing me. When I told them I was 13, they said age did not matter to them. ”

Let's end
Public Sexual
Harassment



A Whole-School Approach to Public Sexual Harassment

This document has been created by Our Streets Now to support secondary schools in developing a whole-school approach to tackling Public Sexual Harassment (PSH)

Who are Our Streets Now?

Our Streets Now is a national campaign to end PSH through legislative and educational change. Our vision is for every young person to be taught about PSH, its root causes and its impacts in school.

What is Public Sexual Harassment/PSH?

PSH refers to unwelcome and unwanted attention, sexual advances and intimidating behaviour by strangers in public spaces. It can be experienced by all, yet it is usually directed towards women and oppressed groups within society. PSH is about power and control and is often committed because of sexism and prejudice.

Sample statement on the school's attitude to PSH

Schools may wish to publish a statement outlining their attitude to PSH and this sample is provided as an example that may be helpful in that context.

Public Sexual Harassment (PSH)

This school recognises the detrimental impact of PSH on the wellbeing, safety and freedom of pupils. While PSH generally refers to sexual harassment perpetrated by strangers in public spaces, schools still have a significant role to play in tackling the culture that allows PSH to continue. We are committed to tackling PSH by:

1. Equipping pupils to challenge harassment and harmful behaviour by being active bystanders
2. Raising awareness of the extent and impacts of PSH and teaching all pupils to empathise and support those who experience it
3. Tackling victim-blaming myths and teaching pupils that PSH is never their fault
4. Teaching about consent and respect and that sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable and not a normal part of growing up

Key elements of a whole-school approach on PSH

Dedicated PSHEE Time

Using PSHEE time to teach pupils about PSH, why it happens and how to challenge it is a key part of a school's approach to PSH. PSH should be taught as a form of misogyny and as a form of sexual violence that is experienced differently by different groups and is frequently impacted by other forms of oppression, such as racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or fatphobia.

Our Streets Now provides lesson plans on PSH, complete with Powerpoint slides that are available on our website. This is complimented by a scheme of work which gives suggestions for incorporating PSH into PSHEE lessons.

Tackling Stigma

Schools should aim for PSH to become a topic that is easily and freely discussed in school and should tackle the stigma and embarrassment around it. This could involve assemblies, external speakers or a visible awareness raising campaign around school. Our Streets Now has created a set of four posters which can be downloaded and printed and displayed around school.

Staff Training and Awareness

Schools should work towards ensuring that all staff have a basic understanding of what constitutes PSH, the extent to which it is experienced by young people, particularly girls and marginalised genders, and the impacts it has. Staff should be aware of how to support and empathise with pupils if they report PSH and how to decide whether action needs to be taken.

Schools can also encourage staff to take bystander training, particularly if they monitor the areas around school or areas where pupils interact with members of the public. Our Streets Now has teamed up with The Safeguarding Network to offer a teacher training resource on PSH, designed to be led by Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Including Pupil Voices

Pupils should be at the forefront of any decisions made about policies to tackle PSH. When teaching about PSH, teachers could allow extra time for pupils to suggest things that they think the school could be doing differently. There should be a mechanism for students to feedback away from the scrutiny of the class. Teachers should be aware that adults tend to underestimate the extent of PSH that young people face and its impacts and they should be ready to learn from the pupils.

Some pupils may want to take a leading role in raising awareness of PSH. We have an assembly kit on our website which can be downloaded if pupils want to deliver assemblies on the issue.

Strong Reporting System

There must be visible and clear reporting mechanisms for pupils to use. Even though PSH occurs outside of school, there are still opportunities for schools to counter it if there are particular areas near the school building where PSH is pervasive.

In addition to creating a reporting mechanism, schools should aim to create an environment where pupils are encouraged to speak up and report their experiences, rather than believing that it is an inevitable part of growing up.

“My girlfriend and I constantly experience wolf-whistling and homophobic taunts when we walk together holding hands. It makes me too afraid to express my affection as I want to.”



Key Resources for Staff

The following resources can all be viewed and downloaded from the Our Streets Now webpage:
<https://www.ourstreetsnow.org/our-schools>

- KS3 and KS4 Lesson plans
- Scheme of work for incorporating PSH into the PSHEE curriculum
- Posters to display
- Teacher training
- Resource pack
- Assembly kit



Our Streets Now is a youth-led, grassroots organisation. We currently do not provide safeguarding advice, support services or in-person visits and workshops to schools.

For safeguarding and child protection advice, we recommend Safeguarding Network and for workshops, we recommend Beyond Equality, Bold Voices, Sex Ed Matters and Sexpression: UK (who use Our Streets Now workshop activities).

You can also find a list of support services and helplines on our support page: <https://www.ourstreetsnow.org/support>

“I was walking on the street and this guy was following me. He was saying ‘come on show me your face, show me your face’ and after a few streets I took my niqab off and showed him my face. I was so scared that I took it off. After a couple of streets down I put it back on again”



“If I go for a jog in public, there’s a 50 percent chance I’ll have someone yell “run fat girl, run” as they drive by in a passing car. I’ve had every possible insult for being fat thrown at me by strangers on the street without hesitation”

“Two boys in my art class would regularly take objects from around the art classroom (often large fake flowers) and try to insert them up my skirt”

