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The Slough Association of Secondary Headteachers

July 2021

You may be aware that the national schools' inspectorate, Ofsted, recently published its findings from a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools.

The full report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

All Slough schools have long had robust processes in place to respond with urgency and sensitivity when issues of this nature arise. The Ofsted report suggests that much of this abuse takes place in unsupervised areas outside school, such as parks or parties without adult supervision, but there are also incidents in schools which go unreported. However, what is particularly shocking to note from the report is the sheer prevalence of sexual harassment and online sexual abuse which Ofsted found.

Slough secondary schools have always worked in collaboration to serve the best interests of the young people of Slough. We are clear that any form of harassment or abuse is unacceptable and we are committed to working with primary school colleagues, families, the Local Authority and a full range of agencies to play our part in the community response to this problem which is required if we are to ensure our young people are safe.

As guided by Ofsted, we accept that our starting point should be to assume that sexual harassment is taking place in our schools, even if we have no evidence to support that and, on that basis, all Slough secondary schools are committed to a range of action including:

- creating an environment where staff model respectful and appropriate behaviour
- ensuring children and young people are clear about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- creating an environment that allows children and young people to be confident to ask for help and support when they need it
- carefully planning and implementing our Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE) curriculum and pastoral programme
- having in place sanctions and interventions to tackle poor behaviour
- providing support for children and young people who need it
- providing training and clear expectations for staff and governors
- pro-actively seeking and listening to the views and experiences of children and young people
- sharing good practice within and across schools and partners

As the harassment or abuse very often happens outside school in the community or online, we would encourage all families to use the publication of this report to raise the topic with their children in an open and supportive manner. There are important lessons and learning here for every child, irrespective of gender. We are committed to working together to encourage children to feel able to disclose anything that makes them uncomfortable, to empower them to make the right choices, and to make our schools and communities as safe as they can be.

