

# Hotspot Mapping (Stein *et al* 2018)

This guidance forms part of the Beyond Referrals audit toolkit and should help schools audit their responses to extra-familial harm (EFH). This guidance outlines one method that can help a school complete their beyond referrals audit – hotspot mapping. This guidance provides key pointers created by Stein *et al* (2018)<sup>1</sup> on how to conduct hotspot mapping with young people.

The document includes:

- Guidance for carrying out a hotspot mapping
- Appendix A: Discussion Questions
- Appendix B: Student consent form

## HOTSPOT MAPPING

Mapping Safe and Unsafe Spaces at School and Beyond the School Gates

- To identify where exact locations in the school and outside the school the students feel “hot” and where they feel “cool”;
- To help students identify these places;
- To provide information for the school to use in order to develop a “cooler” school environment (including the journey to and from school);
- To empower students to transform “hot” areas into “cool” areas by examining why they consider particular locations to be “hot” and what the school can do to make those areas “cooler.”

## GUIDANCE

The questions provided here are examples, use them as a basis for developing and adapting your own questions. The purpose of this conversation should be to assess the current situation and allow students to feel comfortable to talk and reflect on their views on the safety of the physical environment of the school. It is important therefore that the conversation is confidential unless a student discloses a safeguarding concern that has not been responded to or has not been responded to appropriately.

Students should feel able to raise concerns in a safe space without being judged or fear of repercussions. The focus of the student engagement session is on student wellbeing and

school environment in general terms, rather than individuals’ specific experiences. The aim is not to get students to disclose; it should be noted that a group setting is not the right environment for young people to disclose and could lead to additional harm. However, if any safeguarding concerns do arise at any stage of the session, then these should be appropriately followed up.

Before engaging students, it is important that a response is developed in the event that a student does disclose harm. For example, identifying a member of staff – normally the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – through an appropriate referral pathway.



<sup>1</sup> Find the full document here, pages 18 & 57:

<https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/assets/documents/Shifting-Boundaries-w-Copyright-at-Lib-of-congresst.pdf>

Key steps and considerations for setting up and carrying out a student engagement session are provided below.

**In order to arrange a student engagement session for hotspot mapping we recommend taking the following steps:**

**1 Develop a session plan:**

The student engagement session should follow a session plan. See below for how the session could be run.

**2 Identify facilitators:**

We advise that two facilitators are identified to lead the student engagement sessions. Facilitators could be members of staff who students feel at ease talking to, or schools may also choose to train and support students to deliver student engagement sessions themselves.

**3 Identify participants:**

Sessions should be held with 4-8 students. When selecting young people to participate in the groups within each key stage, careful consideration should be taken to whether the young people selected will be appropriate to talk together. Consider, for example, if there are any current concerns or problematic peer group dynamics at play before going ahead with the selected group. You may need to make some adjustments to the group. The sessions should involve a diverse range of students from across all school years and from a range of backgrounds and academic ability to capture as many perspectives as possible.

**4 Ensuring consent:**

Students must be clear that they do not need to take part in student engagement: it is an optional activity. We therefore recommend asking the selected young people to fill in a consent form in advance of the session taking place, such as the example provided in Appendix B.

**5 Establishing confidentiality protocols:**

Both facilitators and participants must be clear on confidentiality protocols. This includes establishing what confidentiality means and what procedures and processes are in place if a disclosure is made. While students might assume that 'what is said in the room stays in the room' is it important they know that what they say will be kept confidential unless they say something that suggests they, or another young person may be at risk of harm. It is important to state at the start what would happen in this event.

**6 Finding and creating the right space:**

Student engagement sessions should be held in a quiet and private room during class time. It is important that students feel comfortable to discuss challenging issues, and that an informal, comfortable space is created to enable this. This includes allowing the students to leave at any time if it is safe to do so.

**7 Capturing the information:**

The session could be recorded in notes. The maps that students will mark should remain anonymous, however it is important that any individual concerns arising are noted and appropriately followed up.

**8 Right to withdraw:**

Students have the right to withdraw their consent to engage in the research. They can do this at any point during the session itself, also allowing time after the session for students to change their mind about being involved in the project. As a guide, we usually allow 4 weeks following a student engagement session for a student to withdraw their consent.

**9 Follow up:**

Once the session has been captured, an intervention plan should then be developed for issues that arise from the information gathered. All issues reported should be taken seriously. Some of these may relate to concerns outside of the school, for example a particular location where young people feel unsafe. It is important that these are raised with the local authority. The first point of contact within the local authority will vary between local areas. Actions that result from the student engagement sessions should be disseminated to the students so that they know their voice and opinions are being taken seriously.

Group settings are not the right environment for young people to disclose, however, if any safeguarding concerns do arise at any stage of the session, then these should be appropriately followed up.

## SESSION PLAN

You need to gain informed consent (Appendix B) from each of the students taking part in this exercise. This includes explaining to pupils what the process is should any safeguarding concerns arise during the exercise.

**RED** stands for very “hot” spaces: locations that make you feel unsafe, unwelcome, or uncomfortable in school; locations you try to avoid

**AMBER** stands for somewhat “hot” spaces

**GREEN** stands for “cool” spaces: locations that make you feel welcome and safe; where you feel most comfortable spending your time

- 1 Draw and photocopy a crude blueprint of the school building, as well as locations beyond the school gates, such as the routes to and from home, to keep as a ‘master’ copy (Illustration 1)
  - a Think about the whole school: include the cafeteria, stairwells, toilets, hallways, lockers, outside spaces, bus stop, etc.; you can include a separate map for locations beyond the school gates too, such as local parks, takeaways, transport hubs, and so on, – It doesn’t have to be perfect, you can label these as long as students are able to colour code these areas!
  - b Include a space for students to write their year group and gender, but remind students that the maps are anonymous and that they do not have to put their name on them.
- 2 Pass students one copy each to label where they feel “hot” or “cool” – they can do this by colouring in areas of the map in **red**, **amber**, and **green** to identify “cool” or “hot” locations.
  - a Give students around 15 minutes to complete this. At this point it is important to ask students to not look at other students’ maps and to remind students they do not have to take part in the exercise if they do not want to.
- 3 Once they have completed marking the map, allow 25 minutes for discussion which will ask broader questions about where they think students in this school generally identify as “cool” and “hot”. This discussion is not for students to share their personal experiences, but to talk about the *general* student experience; asking questions such as:
  - Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “cool” locations, places where they would feel safe and comfortable?
  - What can we as a class or as students do to make the problem areas safer and more welcoming? How can we make our school feel “cooler”?
  - In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?
  - There is an extensive list of example questions by Stein *et al* (2018) in Appendix A.
- 4 Thank the students for their involvement and collect the completed maps at the end of the session. At this point you may want to let pupils know where they can go if wants to get any help or support following the exercise and what the school intend to do with the information shared.

- 5** Using either an unmarked map of the school, or a list of school locations, tally up the number of times each area was described as “hot” or “cool”. You can compile this to create a ‘score summary map’, which includes the total number of **green**, **amber** and **red** tallies; it will create a useful visual representation of any themes.
- 6** Consider the differences between areas generally considered “hot” by students and those generally considered “cool” by students:
- Is there more guardianship or a great adult presence in “cool” areas?
  - Do older students congregate in areas that younger students deem “hot”?
  - What are the reasons students give when they label an area “hot”?
- 7** In doing the exercise it is important that you respond to the information young people are telling you about safety in and outside of the school. Now that you have compiled the data, you may want to present these results (to the school leadership team, governors, student groups, or the like), and determine the school’s next steps in ensuring school safety in these spaces. The areas with the highest number of red ratings are the “hottest” areas and further safety measures are needed in those areas.

- For example – A lot of students marked space around the lockers as “hot” or unsafe because it is dark and enclosed with little staff supervision; you may consider changing the layout of the lockers to be more open, increase the lighting, and consider staff supervision for that area.

- 8** Where possible, try and feedback to students who participated in the safety mapping exercise the ways in which the school is responding to the concerns they identified.

This is just one method to assess school safety and can be used periodically to assess the physical environment of the school, and whether interventions are making school spaces safer.

## **APPENDIX A: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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- 1** Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “cool” locations, places where they would feel safe and comfortable?  

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  - 2** Which areas do you think most students in your school would identify as “hot” locations, places they try to avoid or feel uncomfortable or unsafe in?  

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  - 3** Do you think certain areas might be designated as “hot” by some students and “cool” by others? If yes, which areas? Why might that happen?  

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  - 4** Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s gender? If so, why?  

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  - 5** Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on one’s age and year group? If so, why?  

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  - 6** Might the “hotness” or “coolness” of certain areas differ depending on other characteristics? Such as one’s ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or something else??  
If so, why?  

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  - 7** What are other reasons that certain areas may be labelled as “hot” or “cool”?  

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  - 8** What can we as a class or as students do to make the problem areas “cooler” – safer and more welcoming? How can we make our school feel “cooler”?  

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  - 9** In what ways could the school staff make the problem areas “cooler”?  

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## APPENDIX B: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

### Safety in school research project

#### CONSENT FORM FOR YOUNG PERSON

Before we start, we need to be sure that you are happy to take part in our research project. Please read or listen to these things and tick the box if you agree. If there is anything you're not sure about, please just ask me.

I KNOW THAT:	YES				
This group is about how well schools keep young people safe from harms you might encounter in school from peers or from adults in or around the school, such as bullying, violence, name-calling and discriminatory harassment.					
You will ask us questions about safety at our school.					
I can stop taking part at any time or change my mind about you using what I tell you within four weeks.					
You will use what I tell you to improve how the school responds but you won't use my name or anything that would let people know that it was me.					
If I tell you that someone (including myself) is being hurt or is in danger, you will have to tell someone to get help.					
I can talk to a staff member at school if I have any worries or questions after taking part.					
It is important that I don't tell other people what was said in the group.					
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YES	NO				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

YOUR NAME:

YOUR AGE:

YOUR SIGNATURE:

DATE: