Beyond Referrals: Levers for addressing HSB in schools

THE BEYOND REFERRALS TRAFFIC LIGHT TOOL

KEY	
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviours
MA	Multi-agency
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Staffing capacity related to safeguarding within school	• Fully protected DSL role or safeguarding team.	• Some protected time for DSL role.	• DSL role additional to teaching/other core responsibilities without protected time.
Recording and referral pathways internally within school	Referral pathways available for staff to internally record and refer incidents	• Staff record all incidents of HSB, using either behaviour or safeguarding logs, including those that are deemed 'low level' incidents, up to those that are abusive.	• Clear referral and recording pathways are in place, however staff record incidents on an ad-hoc basis, or only record those deemed serious incidents (e.g. problematic, abusive or violent behaviours).	• Referral and recording pathways are yet to be established for HSB incidents.
Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy	HSB or peer-on-peer abuse policy	• The school's strategic response to HSB is: – clearly outlined in a standalone HSB/peer-on-peer abuse safeguarding policy or explicitly integrated into a broader safeguarding policy – linked to national and local MA HSB procedures.	• The school's strategic response to HSB is: – embedded within behaviour and/or exclusions policy or – has been developed without reference to local or national guidance.	• The school has yet to develop a strategic response to HSB.
Engagement in local context	Response to emerging concerns in the local environment outside the school	• The school takes proactive steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership prior to incidents occurring.	• The school takes steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership once they affect their students.	• The school is not aware of trends identified by the local MA partnership which may affect their students.

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Partnership input	Level of external input from partnership to develop the school's response to HSB	• The school draws upon resources, information, training and guidance available within the local partnership to develop their procedures and approach for responding to (and preventing) HSB.	• The school receives partial input from partners to develop their response to HSB. • The school draws upon partners to inform the development of their referral pathway.	• Policy, procedures and approaches to responding to HSB, if available, have been developed independently of resources and pathways within the local partnership.
Parental engagement	Procedure adopted for engaging parents in relation to the school's approach to HSB	• The school proactively engages parents through preventative activity to raise awareness of HSB and encourages them to report any emerging concerns. • This wider awareness is drawn upon following incidents of HSB to ensure parents are kept updated.	• The school proactively engages parents following HSB incidents.	• Parents are engaged in response to HSB incidents when there is evidence of parental anxiety.
⚠️ **PREVENTION**				
Training	Good quality staff training	• All school staff receive regular training specifically on HSB, in addition to training on safeguarding processes and issues generally, informed by national and local evidence. • Staff are provided with updates more than annually on relevant issues to HSB. • Staff receive training on teaching RSE in a safe and effective way for all pupils.	• DSLs receive training relevant to HSB and disseminate to school staff. Or • HSB training that is delivered to all school staff is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or • HSB training for all school staff is delivered on a less than annual basis.	• School staff do not receive training relevant to HSB. Or • Training delivered to the DSL is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or • Training is delivered on a less than annual basis to the DSL for the purposes of dissemination to other staff.

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Relationships and sex education	Relationships and sex education	• The RSE curriculum is delivered to all year groups, and learning is embedded and consistent (i.e. RSE has a regular slot in the timetable). • The RSE curriculum recognises the gendered nature of HSB, takes steps to tackle victim-blaming, engages an equalities approach (e.g. that recognises the intersection of gender, disability, and ethnicity); and ensures students are involved in curriculum development. • Teaching about HSB in RSE lessons supports students to feel confident about options for disclosure and the school's referral pathways. • The RSE curriculum is taught in line with safe and effective principles of PSHE pedagogy (e.g. establishing a safe classroom environment by setting ground rules and is age appropriateness).	• The RSE curriculum is delivered to all year groups, however the focus is on laws and the negative consequences of sexual behaviour. • RSE is delivered through drop down days but is not embedded in student timetables.	• RSE education is delivered to a limited number of students/year groups. Or • RSE is delivered without reference to national guidance or local expertise.
Prevention and incident management	Actions taken by the school following incidents and the prevention of further incidents	• Swift action taken by the school following incidents set a tone and expectation for the wider student body that contribute to the prevention of further incidents. • Students and staff perceive that issues associated with HSB are addressed.	• Swift actions are taken by the school following incidents of HSB. However, students do not perceive that all incidents are responded to.	• Actions to incidents are limited – for example, only contact incidents such as sexual assault, but not online sexual harassment are responded to – which sets the tone to the wider student body that such behaviours may not be addressed and thus become normalised.

IDENTIFICATION

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Definition	The school has a definition for HSB	• All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB, which is drawn from the HSB definition used in the MA partnership. The definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation.	• All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB. The HSB definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation. • The HSB definition used in the school is not aligned with the HSB definition used in the MA partnership.	• A definition for HSB is not yet used within the school And/or • The HSB definition is not referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation.

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
HSB recording and tracking	The school has safeguarding and behaviour log recording systems that allow for flagging or marking cases as HSB, or a related term	• The school uses their safeguarding or behaviour log systems to flag or mark cases as HSB, or a related term. • The school uses these systems to log details of locations and peers linked to incidents. • The school uses data to identify trends associated with HSB; for example, chronologies are used to contextualise incidents that have occurred and peer-group mapping exercises are used to support prevention.	• School staff have an awareness of HSB trends informally. • Systems to formally record or track HSB, such as HSB flags, are not yet fully in place within the school.	• Systems to record or track HSB, for example HSB flags, are not yet in place at the school.
Resources	Awareness of, and access to, resources to assist identification of HSB	• Staff at all levels are aware of, and have access to, up-to-date HSB resources that facilitate understanding of thresholds and identification of harm. For example, school staff use the Brook traffic light system. • HSB resources used by the school are aligned with those used by the MA partnership.	• The DSL has access to, and understanding of, HSB resources to assist identification. • The staff rely on a referral to the DSL to ascertain level of harm.	• The DSL and school staff do not have access to HSB resources to assist identification, resulting in some forms of HSB being undetected or not recognised as harmful.
Disclosure options	The safeguarding process is transparent and available to the whole student body	• Students are offered a variety of mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB. For example, there are: – multiple trusted individuals within school to disclose to and – safe spaces in which to access staff and – a variety of mechanisms for disclosure; for example, online reporting. • Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes is made available to students.	• Students are offered mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB, for example there are: – trusted individuals to disclose to or – a safe space in which to access staff or – a variety of mechanisms for disclosure for example online reporting. • Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes is made available to students.	• Mechanisms for disclosure of HSB concerns are not apparent. Or • Clear, accessible and transparent information relating to the school's safeguarding processes are not yet made available to students.

RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Staff motivation	Staff motivation to intervene	• School staff feel empowered and motivated to intervene to prevent or respond to instances of HSB. • School staff are encouraged and supported to do so.	• School staff identify the need to address HSB and want to intervene to prevent or respond to incidents. • Some school staff feel motivated to do so.	• School staff have accepted at least some forms of HSB as an inevitable aspect of the school environment. • School staff are not encouraged or supported to take action to prevent or to intervene in HSB incidents.
Thresholds	Understanding and application of HSB continuum thresholds	• School staff understand which behaviours fall across an HSB continuum. • Responses are proportionate and consistent. • Thresholds used in the school are consistent with those used in the wider MA partnership.	• The DSL and some staff understand which behaviours fall across an HSB continuum. • There is inconsistency across staff about what behaviours are considered developmentally normal and those which are harmful. • The school's understanding of thresholds is consistent with that used in the wider MA partnership.	• There is varied understanding and application of thresholds for incidents of HSB across school staff. • Incidents are inconsistently referred internally by staff members, and responses are not always proportionate or consistent. • The school's understanding of thresholds is inconsistent with that used in the wider MA partnership.
Response to incidents	Response to young people involved in incidents that are abusive, violent or escalating in nature and the wellbeing of students involved	• Responses to HSB incidents consider, and take steps to, safeguard all students who were involved, both those who harmed and those who were harmed. • The school supports the ongoing welfare of the wider student body and has multiple resources that prioritise student mental health.	• Responses to HSB incidents take steps to safeguard some students who were involved. • Responses to HSB incidents are largely characterised by the use of school sanctions. • Long-term safeguarding measures are allocated to social care professionals alone.	• Responses are focused on changing the behaviour of those who were harmed rather than those who harmed them. • Responses feature victim-blaming language.

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Physical environment	Assessment of physical environments following incident	• Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is recognised, risk assessed and, where necessary, intervention is taken to prevent future incidents. • The school undertakes proactive assessments of locations where HSB occurs through mapping exercises with students.	• Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is logged.	• Interventions following HSB incidents are focused solely on individuals involved, and do not include the physical location where they took place.
Multi-agency/ External incident referral	External referral of abusive, violent or reoccurring HSB incidents and partnership inputs	• School refers HSB incidents to social care services. • Active facilitation of a partnership response to the incident.	• School refers HSB incidents to social care services. • School intervention ceases following referral.	• Inconsistent referral to the partnership following HSB incidents.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Prevalence	Nature and extent of HSB within school	• The school proactively takes steps to identify the nature and extent of HSB in the school drawing on a variety of data capture mechanisms, such as incident records, staff engagement activities and student disclosures. • Prevalence data is informed by the student voice through student engagement activities.	• The school proactively takes steps to identify the nature and extent of HSB in the school by drawing on a variety of data capture mechanisms, such as incident records, staff and parent engagement activities and student disclosures.	• Prevalence data is solely informed by student disclosures.
Student disclosure	Students' use of disclosure options	• Students have a clear understanding of the safeguarding processes in the school and information sharing process within these, including whether and at what point disclosures would be shared with others. • School takes steps to understand what barriers exist to student disclosure and attempts to address these. For example: – Curriculum specifically addresses the culture of 'snitching'. – The school understands and draws upon the importance of friendships, and takes steps to support disclosures through this process. – School staff are discreet, understand confidentiality, and are comfortable when receiving a disclosure.	• Not all students are aware of the safeguarding process in the school, and if they were to make a disclosure, whether and at what point information would be shared with others. • The school takes steps to understand what barriers exist for student disclosure but steps are not always taken to address these barriers. • Young people disclose to their peers, but peers are not supported to manage disclosures.	• Students are not aware of the safeguarding process in the school, and if they were to make a disclosure, whether and at what point information would be shared with others. • The students are not given opportunities to share what barriers there are to disclosing. • Some staff may informally be aware of the barriers to disclosure, such as 'snitching', but these barriers are accepted as inevitable or not possible to change. • Measures are not taken to address these barriers to disclosure.

LEVER	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Peer support	Mechanisms of peer support in the school and understanding of peer influence	• The school empowers young people to support each other as part of the response to HSB incidents. • Resources are in place to support positive peer influence associated with HSB incidents, e.g. via bystander approaches.	• Risk of negative peer influence associated with HSB incidents is recognised and addressed by the school, but there may be inconsistency in the application of this.	• Following HSB incidents young people intervene in sometimes problematic or harmful ways, such as threats or use of violence or shame to discourage disclosure, which are not recognised or addressed by school staff.
Ethos	School ethos	• The school actively promotes healthy and positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference. • Students and staff recognise, welcome and participate in this ethos.	• School has taken some steps to promote positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference, but these are not fully embedded within the school ethos.	• The dominant culture amongst students and staff features evidence of harmful and unhealthy attitudes towards relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference, and the school is yet to take effective steps to address this.
Language and challenging normalisation	Language used within the school to describe HSB and the way the school challenges harmful attitudes and behaviours related to HSB within the school	• Language used by staff and students to describe HSB within the school recognises the spectrum of behaviours, the harm these can cause and the context in which the harm occurred. • Staff and students challenge a range of HSBs within the school that recognise a spectrum of behaviours. • Language used by staff and students understands harm in context (i.e. does not victim-blame, and recognises the influence of power, trauma and gender).	• School staff challenge victim-blaming language or gendered language used in association with HSB. • Students normalise abusive social norms, identified through the use of victim-blaming or gendered language, or the acceptance that some behaviours are just 'banter', or expected. • Staff challenge a range of HSBs. Staff recognise the underpinning gendered and trauma-informed dynamics of incidents of HSB.	• Some staff and students use victim-blaming or gendered language, identified in assessments, case notes or interactions with staff and students. These go unchallenged. • Staff and students accept some forms of harmful sexual behaviour as expected or normal. • Inappropriate and problematic incidents of HSB – such as calling someone a 'slag' – are responded to as behavioural issues akin to swearing. • There is an acceptance by students that some behaviours are just 'banter', or expected.