

Responding to Children and Young People with Sexual Behaviour Problems

A guide for adults to Identify, Assess and Respond to sexual behaviour which cause concern

Knowing how to identify and respond to sexual behaviours in children and adolescents helps adults to support the development of healthy sexuality and protect young people from harm or abuse.

- 1. *Identify the behaviour.*** Sexual development is influenced by many factors. When using the traffic lights framework to categorise behaviour, it is necessary to consider the current social, cultural and familial content. The continuum on the following page lists specific examples of 'Blue', 'Yellow', 'Red' and 'Black' Flag behaviours at various ages..

Use the continuum framework to identify the appropriateness of the behaviour and then follow steps 2 and 3 to assess and respond. All Blue, Yellow, Red, and Black behaviours require some level of attention and support. It is the level of intervention that will vary. Blue light behaviours may be opportunities to provide constructive feedback and information which supports healthy sexuality. Yellow, Red and Black behaviours may require observation, documentation, education, reporting, increased supervision, therapy and/or a legal response.

- 2. *Assess the behaviour (see flag descriptors below)***

- 3. *Response Protocols***

6.2 Continuum of Sexual Behaviours for Adolescents

Adapted and modified from Ryan, G. (2000).

Childhood Sexuality: A decade of study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(1), 33-48.

Blue Flags: Commonly encountered behaviours requiring pastoral intervention

- Sexually explicit conversations with peers
- Obscenities and jokes within cultural norm
- Sexual innuendo, flirting and courtship
- Interest in erotica
- Solitary masturbation
- Hugging, kissing, holding hands
- Foreplay (petting, french kissing, fondling)

Yellow Flags: Behaviours requiring an elevated level of concern and pastoral intervention

- Sexual preoccupation or anxiety (interfering with daily functioning)
- Pornographic interest
- Sexually aggressive themes or obscenities
- Sexual graffiti (especially graphic and impacting individuals)
- Embarrassment of others with sexual themes
- Violation of others' body space
- Pulling skirts up or pants down
- Single occurrence of peeping, exposing, frottage with own age peers
- Mooning and obscene gestures

Red Flags: Serious matters requiring immediate action

- Compulsive masturbation (especially chronic or public)
- Degradation or humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Attempting to expose the genitals of others
- Chronic preoccupation with sexually aggressive pornography
- Sexually explicit conversation with significantly younger children
- Touching genitals without permission (grabbing or goosing)
- Sexually explicit threats (verbal or written)

Black Flags: Illegal behaviours defined by law and requiring immediate action

- Obscene phone calls, written notes and/or electronic/phone communications, voyeurism, exhibitionism, frottage, sexual harassment
- Sexual contact with significant age difference
- Forced sexual contact
- Forced penetration
- Sexual contact with animals
- Genital injury to others
- Any genital injury or bleeding not explained by accidental cause.

Note:

In some circumstances behaviour will be unlawful and will require immediate action.

In some circumstances behaviour will constitute grounds for making a report of risk of significant harm to the NSW Community Services Child Protection Helpline and/or making a report to Police.

Reference should be made to the *Mandatory Reporter Guide* for assistance with decision making.

Any personal information collected must be managed in accordance with Privacy Principles (refer *CEC Privacy Manual*).



6.1 Continuum of Sexual Behaviours for Children Under 12 Years

Adapted and modified from Ryan, G. (2000).

Childhood Sexuality: A decade of study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(1), 33-48.

Blue Flags: Commonly encountered behaviours requiring pastoral intervention

- Genital or reproduction conversations with peer or similar age siblings
- *Show me yours/I'll show you mine* with peers
- Playing doctor
- Occasional masturbation without penetration
- Imitating seduction (i.e. kissing, flirting)
- Dirty words or jokes within cultural or peer group norm

Yellow Flags: Behaviours requiring an elevated level of concern and pastoral intervention

- Preoccupation with sexual themes (especially sexually aggressive)
- Attempting to expose the genitals of others (i.e. pulling skirts up or pants down)
- Sexually explicit conversation with peers
- Sexual graffiti (especially graphic or impacting on individuals)
- Sexual innuendo, teasing, embarrassment of others
- Touching genitals of others
- Precocious sexual knowledge
- Single occurrence of peeping, exposing, obscenities, pornographic interest, frottage
- Preoccupation with masturbation
- Simulating foreplay with dolls or peers with clothing on (i.e. petting, french kissing)

Red Flags: Serious matters requiring a high level of concern and immediate action

- Sexually explicit conversations between persons of a significant age difference
- Degradation or humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Inducing fear/threats of force
- Sexually explicit proposals or threats including written notes and/or electronic/phone communications
- Repetition of chronic peeping, exposing, obscenities, pornographic interests, frottage
- Compulsive masturbation and/or task interruption to masturbate
- Mutual masturbation or group masturbation
- Masturbation that includes vaginal or anal penetration
- Simulating intercourse with clothes on with dolls, peers, animals



No question

- Oral, vaginal, anal penetration of dolls, children, animals
- Forced exposure of the genitals of others
- Simulating intercourse with peers with clothes off
- Any genital injury or bleeding not explained by accidental cause.

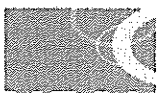
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In some circumstances behaviour will constitute grounds for making a report of risk of significant harm to the NSW Community Services Child Protection Helpline and/or making a report to Police.









Reference should be made to the *Mandatory Reporter Guide* for assistance with decision making.

Any personal information collected must be managed in accordance with Privacy Principles (refer *CEC Privacy Manual*).



8. RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

In most cases a response sequence will be:

1. Report of a student's inappropriate sexual behaviour is made to the principal, school consultant and CSO Psychologist
2. Principal, in consultation with the Schools Consultant and CSO Psychologist, determines whether the reported behaviour is identified as  blue,  yellow,  red or  black. (See flag descriptors)
3. Address the matter as appropriate, considering whether it is  blue,  yellow,  red or  black. (See below)



Blue Flag

Deal with the issue as part of the normal pastoral care and other procedures of the school/CSO.

1. Provide pastoral support and intervention appropriate to the incident.
 - 1.1 Determine whether parents should be contacted and involved.
 - 1.2 If the report relates to a repeat or emerging pattern of behaviour, parents need to be contacted and a pastoral strategy for dealing with the issue should be put in place.

Yellow Flag



The matter is serious and should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

1. In all cases the School Consultant and the CSO Psychologist must be notified and consideration given to what other specialist personnel from the CSO may need to be involved.
2. The *Mandatory Reporter Guide* needs to be consulted and consideration given to all possible child protection reporting requirements. Details of the matter need to be notified to the CSO Child Protection Team.
3. Complete Pastoral Care – Student Wellbeing Concern Form and forward to the CSO Child Protection Team and CSO Psychologist.
4. Parents/Carers of students involved should be contacted by the principal unless disclosure will result in further risk of harm to those involved.

3.1 Parent/Carer co-operation should be sought in implementing a pastoral response.

The CSO psychologist/school counsellor is available to assist in meetings with parents/carers. It may take some time for parents/carers to come to terms with the situation and they may need assistance during this process.

3.2 A lack of reasonable co-operation by the family may lead to temporary withdrawal of the student from the school until a return to school has been negotiated. Before any such step is taken, the School Consultant may be informed and the Director's Office should be consulted.

Such cases may include:

- denial that the inappropriate sexual behaviour has taken place, despite evidence to the contrary;

4. A Case Management Team may be set up to provide advice and support if it is considered necessary.
5. A Support Plan using the Pastoral Care – Student Wellbeing Concern Support Plan or Support and risk plan for students displaying problematic behaviour must be implemented. It must include monitoring procedures to identify any repeated behaviour.
6. Parish Priest/Chaplain, where appropriate, may be informed and enabled to provide assistance as required.
7. Confidential and secure record keeping.

Red Flag

The matter is serious and requires an immediate response.

1. In all cases the School Consultant must be notified and consideration given to what other specialist personnel from the CSO may need to be involved.
2. The *Mandatory Reporter Guide* must be consulted and consideration given to all child protection reporting requirements. Details of the matter must be notified to the CSO Child Protection Team.
3. Investigations at the school level are not to proceed until advice has been provided from Community Services or Police. The principal liaises with relevant statutory authorities and must follow instructions given by the authorities, which may include advice about contact with parents/carers of the students involved. The CSO Child Protection Team is available to assist in this regard.
4. Parents/Carers of the student involved should be contacted unless disclosure will result in further risk of harm to those involved.

4.1 Parents/Carers' co-operation should be sought in implementing a pastoral and protective response. It is important to remember that parents/carers may take some time to come to terms with the student's inappropriate sexual behaviour. The CSO Psychologist is available to assist parents/carers in understanding the behaviour.

4.2 A lack of reasonable co-operation by the family may necessitate withdrawal of the student from the school. Before any such step is taken, the School Consultant must be informed and the Director's Office should be consulted.

Such cases may include:

- denial that the inappropriate sexual behaviour/offence has taken place, despite evidence to the contrary;

5. A Case Management Team is set up.

6. A risk and support plan must be implemented as soon as possible. It must include monitoring procedures to identify any repeated behaviour and be developed with the assistance of the Case Management Team.

7. It may be necessary to seek advice from external specialists with competence in the field.

8. Parish Priest/Chaplain where appropriate should be informed of the serious nature of the inappropriate behaviour and enabled to provide assistance as required.

9. Confidential and secure record keeping.

Black Flag

This is an illegal matter as defined by law and requires an immediate response.

1. The Principal (or delegate) must determine what action needs to be taken to protect the immediate safety, welfare and wellbeing of all concerned. Avoid direct questioning as it may compromise any subsequent investigation by relevant statutory authorities.

2. In all cases the School Consultant must be notified and consideration given to what other specialist personnel from the CSO may need to be involved.

3. The *Mandatory Reporter Guide* must be consulted and consideration given to all child protection reporting requirements. Details of the matter must be notified to

the CSO Child Protection Team.

4. Investigations at the school level are not to proceed until advice has been provided from Community Services or Police. The principal liaises with relevant statutory authorities and must follow instructions given by the authorities, which may include advice about contact with parents/carers of the students involved. The CSO Child Protection Team is available to assist in this regard.
5. A risk and support plan must be implemented as soon as possible. It must include monitoring procedures to identify any repeated behaviour and be developed with the assistance of the Case Management Team.
6. In the event that Community Services/Police refer the matter back to the school for ongoing management then a support plan must be implemented. It must include monitoring procedures to identify any repeated behaviour and be developed with the assistance of the Case Management Team.
7. Parents/Carers of the student involved should be contacted unless disclosure will result in further risk of harm to those involved.
 - 7.1 Parents/Carers' co-operation should be sought in implementing a pastoral and protective response. It is important to remember that parents/carers may take some time to come to terms with the student's inappropriate sexual behaviour. The CSO Psychologist is available to assist parents/carers in understanding the behaviour.
 - 7.2 A lack of reasonable co-operation by the family may necessitate withdrawal of the student from the school. Before any such step is taken, the School Consultant must be informed and the Director's Office should be consulted.

Such cases may include:

- denial that the inappropriate sexual behaviour/offence has taken place, despite evidence to the contrary;
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