

# Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

This guide has been written by NSPCC to help you decide what kind of sexualised behaviour a young person is displaying, and respond to it in the right way. Use this guide alongside the version completed by your organisation overleaf, and visit [nspcc.org.uk/hsb](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/hsb) for more information.

## Need advice?

Contact our helpline for advice and support:

- Call **0808 800 5000**
- Email **help@nspcc.org.uk**
- Visit **nspcc.org.uk/helpline**

## Childline

For children who need further support our free, confidential helpline is available 24/7:

- Call **0800 11 11**
- Visit **childline.org.uk**

Normal/ developmentally typical	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour</li> <li>• Consensual (P&amp;P), mutual, and reciprocal</li> <li>• Decision making is shared (no coercion)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single instances of developmentally inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>• Behaviour that is socially acceptable within a peer group</li> <li>• Generally consensual and reciprocal</li> <li>• May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour</li> <li>• May be compulsive</li> <li>• Consent may be unclear and the behaviour may not be reciprocal</li> <li>• May involve an imbalance of power</li> <li>• Doesn't have an overt element of victimisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrusive behaviour</li> <li>• May involve a misuse of power</li> <li>• May have an element of victimisation</li> <li>• May use coercion and force</li> <li>• May include elements of expressive violence</li> <li>• Informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely) ref:Reg P&amp;P</li> <li>• Use of DA tactics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically violent sexual abuse</li> <li>• Highly intrusive</li> <li>• May involve instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator</li> <li>• May involve sadism</li> </ul>
<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours</li> <li>• Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse</li> <li>• Signpost helpful resources such as our PANTS activity pack: <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/pants">nspcc.org.uk/pants</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amber behaviours should not be ignored</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection</li> <li>• Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a designated health safeguarding lead who can be notified and will provide support</li> <li>• Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate</li> <li>• YJA Sexting Scheme</li> <li>• RSE curriculum (Health Relationship)</li> <li>• E safety (links)</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action</li> <li>• If a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999</li> <li>• Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection</li> <li>• Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a designated health safeguarding lead who can be notified and will provide support</li> <li>• Refer to CP Gateway for initial risk assessment</li> <li>• Gateway staff to consider AIM assessment</li> <li>• Commission AIM from appropriate services</li> <li>• Consider the use CASPR</li> <li>• Refer the child or young person for targeted supports services</li> </ul>		

## Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

This guide has been completed by your organisation. You can use it to help you identify the sexualised behaviours a child is displaying and understand the steps your organisation has asked you to follow when responding. Please speak to your manager or safeguarding lead if you have any questions or concerns.

### Responsible Agencies

Education Authority SG leads  
Gateway C&YP services  
PHA  
Public Health Nursing  
NSPCC  
C & V agencies  
Councils  
General Practitioners  
Schools  
Trusts  
Primary Healthcare Professionals  
Allied Health professionals

### Responsible Agencies

NSPCC CSA HUB  
CAMHs  
C&V agencies  
Education Authority (SG lead)  
Schools  
Womens Aid  
Youth Justice Agency  
NSPCC online safety  
NSPCC Childline  
NSPCC Helpline  
Independent SW  
Trust: Gateway / FIT/ transition Team / LAC +  
Primary Healthcare

### Responsible Agencies

SS Gateway Referral  
PSNI (PPU)  
Forensic CAMHs  
CAMHs  
NSPCC