

What is Harmful Sexual Behaviour?

Some sexual behaviour is a normal part of children's development, the behaviour becomes harmful when it is inappropriate for the child's age or causes others harm. Children may get involved in harmful sexual behaviours without realising the seriousness of their behaviour or the potential harm it could cause others.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour may involve:

- Children using sexually explicit language,
- Sexualised role-play/games,
- Children exposing genitals to other children,
- Inappropriate sexual touching,
- Children simulating sexual acts,
- Creating and sharing sexually explicit images,
- Pressurising or enticing others into sexual conversations or behaviours that are inappropriate for their age,

(NSPCC, 2020)

How do I know if my child's behaviour is healthy or age-appropriate?

It can be difficult knowing what is and isn't appropriate for your child's age and stage of development.

The Brooks Traffic Light Tool is a helpful tool to identify if the behaviour is age appropriate:
https://legacy.brook.org.uk/brook_tools/traffic/index.html?syn_partner=



Where can I go for help?

If you become aware of any of these behaviours or are worried about your child demonstrating inappropriate sexual behaviours - Always seek advice from a professional e.g. a teacher, G.P., social worker.



What can you do to help?

- Don't panic
- Talk to your child about your concerns using language and ideas your child will understand,
- Avoid making your child feel ashamed,
- Create an environment where your child feels safe to share their thoughts and feelings by being open, honest and understanding,
- Talk to your child about the importance of recognising and respecting personal boundaries,
- Talk to your child about consent and the importance of respecting people saying no.
- Praise your child for being respectful to others.
- Ensure the age appropriateness of television and computer games your child is exposed to.
- Provide opportunities for safe age appropriate behaviours.
- Have age appropriate conversations about sex and consent.

Some parents may find it difficult having conversations about sex with their children visit the NSPCC website for some tips:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/talking-about-difficult-topics/>

If you have an urgent concern about a child in Norfolk contact the **Norfolk Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)** on 0344 800 8020.

General information and resources

NSPCC

The NSPCC website contains information on Harmful Sexual Behaviour as well as how you can keep your child safe and best support them.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sexual-behaviour-children/>



Article on Harmful Sexual Behaviour for parents; an overview of Harmful Sexual Behaviour and what you can do to help:

<https://parentinfo.org/article/harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-children-and-young-people-what-parents-need-to-know>

internet matters.org

Internet matters a website to help parents keep their children safe online:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

NSPCC

The NSPCC website contains information on keeping your child safe online:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Parents Protect!

Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

Parents Protect website discusses age appropriate sexual development aimed at parents:

https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/harmful-behaviour-in-young-people-and-children.htm?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIqPSuyOPW6QIVGLLtCh20Lw3gEAYA_SAAEgKPufD_BwE



Think U Know Website provides online resource for parents to help identify Harmful Sexual Behaviour :

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Harmful-sexual-behaviour/>



Think U Know website also contains information for parents on internet safety:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>



Parentzone provides practical advice on keeping your child safe online:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/parents>

Useful Websites and Resources for Children and Young People

childline

Childline includes information for children and young people on healthy and unhealthy relationships:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/friends-relationships-sex/sex-relationships/healthy-unhealthy-relationships/>

healthline

Healthline have created a resource to help teach your child about consent throughout their childhood:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/consent-at-every-age#toddlers-and-early-elementary>

NSPCC

The NSPCC have put together the 'PANTS: The Underwear Rule' and the Pantosaurus to provide simple guidance for talking to your child about keeping safe from sexual abuse:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/underwear-rule/>

iCaSH

iCaSH offers free, confidential advice to young people about sexual health and contraception for young people living in: Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk.

<https://www.icash.nhs.uk/what-to-expect/about-us>