

‘You Couldn’t Avoid It’

Quoted from one of the testimonials from a student

A rapid review for the Jersey Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) into: (a) the handling of allegations of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse raised by older students at Jersey College for Girls in March and April 2021, citing alleged actions by some students at Victoria College; and (b) whether policy and procedures were properly followed to enable a safe and appropriate outcome for the young people concerned

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FINAL REPORT

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1 Introduction

- 1 The tragic murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 raised considerable feelings and disquiet about the safety of women in society. On 12th March 2021, a senior student at Jersey College for Girls (JCG) contacted the Principal expressing her concern over the issue of safety and citing the experiences of girls at JCG. Allegations of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse were raised by girls at JCG in anonymised testimonies, citing actions in a range of contexts, and particularly involving the boys at Victoria College Jersey (VCJ). As such, these allegations constituted peer on peer abuse – that is, any abuse that occurs between children of a similar age.

Peer on Peer Abuse

'Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyber bullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, Part 2 page 26.**

- 2 This partnership review, commissioned by the Jersey Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) examines the way in which these allegations were handled. Initially the allegations were presented to the Principal of JCG, subsequently the Headmaster of VCJ, then to States of Jersey Police (SOJP) and the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES). We provide an analysis of significant events to inform our overall findings. Key learning points are highlighted, and we conclude with recommendations for improvement.

The Wider Context

- 3 The website *Everyone's Invited* was established in 2020 with a mission to expose and eradicate rape culture with empathy, compassion and understanding.¹ The website has become a repository for the stories of young women who have experienced harassment and abuse. The publicity that *Everyone's Invited* attracted has made sexual harassment and abuse a prominent issue for schools and colleges, with accounts about such incidents being posted anonymously rather than emerging through an individual child's disclosure to a trusted adult. School leaders and education professionals have experienced heightened pressure to respond to what students have told them about their experiences. Whilst many of the events considered in this report were happening, updated guidance for schools about how to respond to the issues raised by *Everyone's Invited* was being issued by headteacher associations in the UK and the Girls Schools Association (GSA)². The Secretary of State for Education in England commissioned OFSTED to conduct a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in England. Subsequently OFSTED has published a national report with significant recommendations, reflected in revised guidance for schools and revisions to the school inspection framework.³

¹ www.everyonesinvited.uk

² 'Guidance for Heads Everyone's Invited,' GSA 31.03.21

³ 'Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges,' OFSTED, June 2021. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education,' DfE, September 2021, Part 5.

2 Remit for the Review

- 4 The remit was to review the handling of allegations of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse raised by older students at JCG in March 2021, in which alleged actions by some students at VCJ were cited. The review was to look in particular at whether policy and procedures were properly followed to enable a safe and appropriate outcome for the young people concerned.
- 5 Terms of Reference for the review are set out at [Appendix 1](#). Details of the review team and the methodology for the review are provided at [Appendices 2 and 3](#).

3 Background and Context

The Schools

- 6 JCG is a government-provided selective girls secondary school with a sixth form. VCJ is a Government of Jersey selective boys secondary school with a sixth form. Both schools are in receipt of government funding and parents pay fees. The most recent published inspection reports for each school found that statutory requirements were met for safeguarding students and promoting their welfare.
- 7 JCG and VCJ are located adjacent to one another on Le Mont Millais, on the border of St Saviour and St Helier. The walking routes for JCG students to and from the school to the centre of St Helier are past or through the VCJ main building and preparatory school site. The schools share a number of facilities, including the sports facilities at Langford. There is shared teaching and facilities in the sixth form. In their testimonies, the JCG students mentioned that the shared walking routes and facilities meant that harassment was a daily experience: 'I knew someone (a boy) would shout something at me. You couldn't avoid it. I rarely walk that way anymore because of this.'⁴

The Allegations

- 8 The sixth formers at JCG recorded incidences of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse anonymously through two separate survey websites that were set up by two sixth form students, Student A (survey with Year 12) and Student B (survey with Year 13). This approach to recording the girls' concerns anonymously was accepted by the Principal of JCG following discussion with the students. The Vice-Principal offered practical and emotional support to the two students who had initiated the surveys, including advising on the accompanying wording for the surveys and, in the case of the Year 13 survey, offering to collate the comments received. Contact with the students and their parents was maintained during the period when the on-line contributions were being posted, reviewed, and edited. The student who had taken the lead on the Year 12 survey was particularly concerned to ensure that the individual statements from students did not include any material that would enable a particular individual, occasion or location to be identified. The final edited version of the Year 12 survey, with the girls' statements grouped into themes, was given to the Principal on 19th March 2021. Subsequently,

⁴ Quoted from one of the JCG student testimonies, March 2021.

the statements in this format were shown to the Headmaster and senior leadership team at VCJ on 22nd March, the SOJP on 29th March, and a multi-agency professionals meeting on 31st March 2021. The Year 13 survey continues to be held by JCG and has not been subject to any consideration outside the school. To date no individual disclosures of sexual harassment or abuse have been made directly to the schools following the testimonies.

- 9 The reviewers have seen the Year 12 survey material and evaluated the statements against a continuum of behaviours derived from the DfE guidance ‘Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges’ (May 2018).⁵ The students’ testimonies made for concerning reading. They recorded many instances of sexual harassment including verbal abuse; sexual jokes and taunts; intimidating physical behaviour towards them; and on-line harassment. These experiences affected their self-esteem and well-being. Students reported that they changed daily routines to avoid continuing instances of harassment. A small number of students’ testimonies also included instances of unwanted sexual advances and potentially sexual assault. There were a few anonymous posts from male students that mentioned experiences of homophobic taunts and bullying. The issues raised through the testimonies had implications for the culture in schools, not only at JCG and VCJ, but for all schools in Jersey. From speaking to the students and reading the testimonies, it is clear that their experiences were distressing and harmful.

Relevant Policies and Procedures

- 10 At the time when the testimonies were being collated and JCG was considering its course of action, neither CYPES nor the SPB had safeguarding guidance relating to peer-on-peer abuse. The SPB Child Protection Procedures briefly mention peer on peer abuse in the section about responding to abuse and neglect.⁶ The procedures indicate that concerns about peer on peer abuse, as with other safeguarding concerns, should be raised through an enquiry to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), with an interagency strategy meeting if the child had suffered, or was likely to suffer significant harm.
- 11 JCG’s own comprehensive safeguarding policy, updated in November 2020, included some guidance about the nature of peer on peer abuse.⁷ It did not include any specific procedures for responding to peer on peer abuse beyond the standard guidance for staff about what they should do if they had concerns about a child or received a complaint of abuse. JCG was in receipt of guidance from the Girls’ School Association and also drew on policy guidance published by UK Feminista and the National Education Union.⁸ In its evidence to the review team, JCG stated that ‘this resource became the main source of advice and guidance in shaping our policy response.’ The

⁵ ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education,’ Part 5. Department for Education, September 2021

⁶ ‘Sometimes ‘significant harm’ refers to harm caused by one child to another (which may be a single event or range of ill treatment) which is generally referred to as ‘peer on peer abuse’. SPB Child Protection Procedures – Responding to Abuse and Neglect.

⁷ <https://jerseycollegeforgirls.com/pages/about-jcg/our-policies-and-procedures/safeguarding-and-child-protection-policy>

⁸ “It’s Just Everywhere”: A Study on Sexism in Schools and How We Tackle It. UK Feminista/NEU 2017

VCJ safeguarding policies mirrored the model policies for schools and colleges from CYPES and did not include any guidance or procedures for peer on peer abuse.

4 Timeline of Significant Events

- 12 The reviewers prepared a multi-agency chronology for the time period of the review (12th March 2021 until 31st May 2021). A timeline of significant events is set out in the table below.

TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS	
MARCH 12TH – MAY 31ST 2021	
March 12th – March 19th 2021: JCG students raise concerns. The Principal accepts the collation of anonymous testimonies by the students	
16.03.21	Prompted by murder of Sarah Everard, students raised concerns with the Principal about a culture of sexual harassment, particularly in relation to students at VCJ. At a key meeting of Principal, Vice-Principal and two sixth form students on 16.03.21, it was noted that the students had set up surveys to upload anonymous testimonies from JCG students.
17.03.21	The issues raised by the students were discussed at a key meeting of the JCG Senior Leadership Team on 17.03.21.
18.03.21	A letter to parents on 18.03.21 (prior to receipt of testimonies) outlined in general terms the discussions with students about their experiences of harassment, with signposting to support from some relevant agencies.
	Headmaster of VCJ was formally notified that the testimonies were being collated. The text of the letter to parents shared with VCJ and an adapted version sent to VCJ parents on the same day. Joint planning was already happening between Vice-Principal and VCJ's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
	The Vice-Principal emailed all JCG students in Years 11, 12 and 13 on 18.03.21, acknowledging their bravery in having 'spoken about personal experiences of harassment or assault which have been wholly inappropriate and distressing'. Details of sources of school-based and external support were provided.
19.03.21	The Principal received testimonies from Student A (edited to delete any reference to a date or occasion or location that might identify survivors or perpetrators) on 19.03.21.

March 19th – 1st April 2021: Joint working between JCG and VCJ with an initial response to the students' concerns	
19.03.21	On 19.03.21 the Vice-Principal (JCG) and DSL (VCJ) agreed to initiate immediately a joint-duty arrangement on the VCJ campus at the end of the school day.
22.03.21	The SLTs from JCG and VCJ met on 22.03.21 to review the testimonies. They agreed to work together over an extended period, with regular meetings to take forward an action plan to address the issues.
23.03.21	The Headmaster, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher from VCJ attended assemblies and meetings with the JCG Sixth Form, a group of Year 12 students and some students from Year 10 to hear first-hand about their experiences.
24.03.21	On 24.03.21 the Headmaster provided an email briefing about the issues for the Chair of Governors.
31.03.21	The first in the programme of joint meetings between the schools' SLTs took place on 31.03.21. A programme of work was agreed to go forward after Easter, to include presentations for all students from SOJP and Dewberry House on public sexual harassment and options for support.
01.04.21	A joint letter to parents on 01.04.21 outlined work already done together in response to the testimonies and highlighted further by a student working party to produce a shared statement of values about 'what a culture of respect looks and sounds like'.

March 29th – April 23rd 2021: Involvement and States of Jersey Police and wider multi-agency support	
29.03.21	On 29.03.21 the School and Youth Focus (SAYF) officer from SOJP assigned to JCG was invited to meet the Principal to discuss the testimonies. The SAYF officer briefed senior colleagues and undertook an initial 'triage' of the testimonies.
30.03.21	On 30.03.21 an Inspector from SOJP Community Policing Team held a virtual meeting with the Principal. It was agreed to take forward the school's request SOJP input to an assembly for students at the start of the Summer Term on 19.04.21. Following the meeting, the Inspector convened an urgent multi-agency professionals meeting.
31.03.21	At an operational meeting on 31.03.21 the Inspector briefed the Director of Safeguarding and Care in CYPES about the testimonies. This was the first time that a senior officer in CYPES was aware of the testimonies. The professionals meeting took place on 31.03.21. The purpose was to share information, identify the support for JCG students that was already in place, coordinate further support for the students, and consider pan-island action should similar issues occur at other schools. The schools were not invited to the meeting.
01.04.21	An immediate action from the professionals meeting was to offer support to JCG for an assembly for Year 10-13 students on the last day of term, 01.04.21. This offer was accepted by the school and went ahead with an input from Dewberry House.
19.04.21 and 23.04.21	After the Easter school holiday, SOJP officers delivered school assemblies at JCG on 19.04.21 and VCJ on 23.04.21. Colleagues from CYPES liaised with SOJP and the schools about the content.

March 31st – 30th April 2021: Strategic response by CYPES	
31.03.21	<p>On 31.03.21 the DSO – Education had a virtual meeting with the Principal of JCG, following the professionals meeting. It was confirmed that none of the testimonials could be referred to MASH unless individuals came forward. There was a further opportunity to reinforce offers of support for students through the assembly for Year 10-13 on April 1st.</p> <p>The Director General (DG-CYPES) only became aware of the developments at JCG late on 31.03.21 in a briefing call with the Director of Safeguarding and Care (DSC), and the Group Director, Education (GD – Ed).</p>
01.04.21	<p>On 01.04.21 senior officers arranged top-level briefings with the Chief Minister and Assistant Minister, the Chief Executive, Children’s Commissioner and the Chair of the SPB. The Chief Minister (who was also acting Minister for Children and Education) was advised to issue a media statement, setting out the action being taken by CYPES to work with JCG, VCJ and all schools to ensure support was available for students affected. The Headteachers’ Update issued on the same day at the end of the school term briefed schools about the situation and included the Chief Minister’s statement.</p> <p>The timing of the Chief Minister’s statement on 01.04.21 was coordinated with the release of the joint letter to parents from JCG and VCG.</p>
19.04.21	The Headteachers’ Update at the start of term on 19 th April included a further briefing about the issues at the two schools and the continuing work with them by CYPES.
08.04.21	On 8 th April the DG-CYPES set up an operation known as Threadbare. Its remit was to review a range of issues arising from the action at JCG and to ensure coordinated support for students from JCG and other schools coming forward for support in relation to sexual harassment and abuse.
19th April – 27th May 2021: JCG and VCJ Statement of Intent and Action Plan	
A programme of joint SLT meetings and Student Forum meetings took place during the first half of the Summer Term to agree a Statement of Intent and Action Plan between the schools, and a Student Charter.	

5 Main Findings

Understanding and responding to young people's experiences

- 13 Students at JCG displayed great courage and maturity in seeking to bring to light their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse. It was clear that their focus was on promoting a change in culture in the way that students from JCG and VCJ related to one another in school and other social settings. The Principal and SLT at JCG responded proactively and took seriously the concerning issues highlighted in the girls' testimonies. The swift engagement with the students reflected well on the school's commitment to listening to and empowering students.

Positive and Proactive Joint Working between JCG and VCJ

- 14 The Headmaster and SLT at VCJ responded positively to the issues highlighted in the girls' testimonies. That response included meetings with groups of Sixth Form and Year 10 students at JCG to hear their concerns first-hand. The leadership teams from JCG and VCJ took immediate action to put a senior staff presence from each school on duty at the end of the school day to supervise students en route from school through the VCJ site. This was one of the situations where JCG students experienced verbal abuse and levels of harassment. Feedback from JCG students to the reviewers indicated that the situation had improved significantly.
- 15 The SLTs from JCG and VCJ ensured that there was coordinated communication and a consistent message to parents about the issues and the work that the schools were doing together. A programme of age-appropriate assemblies with common content was delivered in both schools by the SAYF colleagues from SOJP at the start of the Summer Term.
- 16 JCG and VCJ (including their preparatory schools) have agreed and published a 'Statement of Intent' with the stated commitment, working in partnership, 'to leading positive change and building inclusive and respectful communities where all feel safe...working even more closely together...in bringing about a necessary change of attitudes and behaviours'. The statement is underpinned by an ambitious programme of work including:
- a student working party to establish positive relationships and to advise senior leaders on actions;
 - information and training for staff and parents to ensure a sustainable collective approach;
 - establishing and rigorously enforcing a joint-school policy on gender equality.

Detailed joint-governance arrangements are to be put in place to implement, monitor and evaluate progress. This is an important development, addressing the fundamentals of school culture and behaviour. It will be important to ensure that momentum is sustained in the coming academic year, the impact of the work is monitored and evaluated (with direct input from students), and the learning is shared widely with other schools in Jersey.

Anonymised Testimonies brought to light the scale and range of sexual harassment and abuse, but limited the scope for the schools and other agencies to support students who had experienced harm or to address the harmful behaviour of perpetrators

- 17 Evidence from research suggests that students in schools have been reluctant to come forward with disclosures for a variety of reasons⁹. As a result, the incidence of sexual harassment in schools has been under-reported and normalised. The key decision by the Principal at JCG to accept anonymised testimonies no doubt enabled the nature and scale of sexual harassment and abuse experienced by the students to come to light. The oversight of the giving of testimonies at JCG to a large extent enabled the students to convey the nature and scale of sexual harassment in a climate of trust where their concerns were taken seriously and acted upon. An agenda for change was generated and swift action by the schools was initiated.
- 18 At the point when the process to gather anonymous testimonies was accepted, there does not appear to have been sufficient consideration of the way in which the school would need to respond to any testimonies that indicated significant harm, including sexual assault and violence. The JCG Safeguarding and Child Protection policy states that when a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff they should not make any promise offering confidentiality to the student.¹⁰ The students' insistence on providing the testimonies anonymously left the Principal with a judgement to make in balancing the students' wishes to show the scale of sexual harassment that was taking place against the duty to protect young people who had experienced harm.¹¹
- 19 In these circumstances, the Principal should have sought advice from the consultation service in the MASH or the DSO-Education prior to finalising the process for seeking and collating the testimonies. This would have ensured more effective and timely multi-agency involvement in creating a range of safe options for the students to make disclosures, to evaluate the issues, and coordinate support. Given the high profile media interest in concerns about sexual harassment in schools and colleges, an early alert to senior officers in CYPES would also have been appropriate and expected at that point.
- 20 Anonymous testimonies limited the scope for the school and other agencies to identify individual students, follow up potential incidents of harm or abuse, or make referrals for further support. As one professional stated to the reviewers in fieldwork discussions: 'Girls have felt empowered to disclose – but anonymous disclosure

⁹ There are a variety of reasons why young people are reluctant to report sexual abuse, even where their schools encourage it: the risk of being ostracised by peers or concern about getting peers into trouble; worry about how adults will react, that they will not be believed, or will be blamed; fear that they will lose control of a situation if other agencies are involved.

¹⁰ JCG Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Systems and Procedures

¹¹ See: 'Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges', DfE May 2018, paragraph 51.

has silenced them'. Subsequently, the SLT at VCJ was unable to take any action to identify perpetrators and put in place support to address harmful behaviours.

- 21 It was appropriate for JCG to share the anonymous testimonies with the Headmaster and SLT at VCJ, given that the information enabled the two schools to understand the context in which the JCG students had experienced sexual harassment and abuse, and to initiate some protective action.¹² Nevertheless, it would have been good practice to have sought advice from the MASH or DSO-Education about information sharing protocols under the SPB Child Protection Procedures.

The 'testimony' process itself had an impact on the students' well-being

- 22 Greater recognition of the impact on the students' well-being from the 'testimony' process should have been anticipated. The Principal and Vice-Principal at JCG maintained contact with Students A and B and their parents as the arrangements for the surveys were put in place. Even with this support it is evident that the impact on the two students was significant. They found the responsibility for collating and editing the testimonies to be stressful, partly because of the responsibility it placed on them in maintaining the trust of peers and mediating a network of peer relationships, but also because of the nature of the testimonies themselves.
- 23 JCG recognised the potentially traumatic impact on individual students from the process of relating experiences of sexual harassment. The students were provided with information about sources of support within the school and from other agencies. Evidence from trauma-informed practice suggests the need for a range of safe options to be available in school for students to disclose or seek support. Early engagement by the school with Dewberry House might have enabled more flexible arrangements to be put in place to support safe disclosure as a follow-up to the testimonies.
- 24 Some boys at VCJ became aware of the two surveys through informal contact with JCG students in a shared sixth form class. As awareness of the surveys spread, some boys felt that they were being unfairly targeted and approached VCJ staff. The response from the Headmaster and SLT at VCJ was to ensure that VCJ students understood that the girls' testimonies were to be respected and taken seriously. At the same time it was important to ensure that VCJ students were not being stereotyped or demonised. In these circumstances there was some risk of negative retaliation and the posting of alternative surveys on social media. The schools responded quickly to close down any instances of this kind.

¹² The reviewers considered that the sharing of the testimonies was in line with the SPB Information Sharing Protocol July 2019 in that there was a legitimate purpose for sharing the testimonies in line with the protocol, and the information did not enable an individual to be identified.

Partnership Working

- 25 There was a significant delay in involving SOJP and subsequently CYPES. Both agencies were left having to put in place support from partner agencies for students at JCG and young people more generally at short notice immediately prior to a school and public holiday period.
- 26 SOJP acted quickly to convene a professionals meeting, having received the testimonies and discussed the situation with the Principal at JCG. A number of appropriate and timely actions were agreed at the meeting to support JCG and the students. Of particular benefit was the offer for IDVA/SARC colleagues to attend an assembly for Year 10-13 students the following day. This was in recognition of the on-going distress and trauma that the students may have continued to experience, and the loss of peer and school support networks during the school holiday. There was good partnership working with the schools and Dewberry House to deliver the assembly for Years 10-13 at JCG on 1st April and the assemblies for all year groups at the schools in the first week of the Summer Term.
- 27 There would have been a benefit in inviting the schools to attend the meeting as some of the proposed actions duplicated work that was already underway in the schools. Partner agencies would have had a better understanding of the work that was already in hand in the schools. The schools would have had the opportunity to hear about the wider safeguarding concerns from the perspective of partner agencies and develop their on-going work in the light of that advice.
- 28 Senior officers in CYPES directed their response with a focus on three aspects:
 - direct engagement with JCG to ensure an appropriate safeguarding response and the availability of support for young people who had experienced sexual harassment, particularly with the impending school holiday period;
 - briefing Ministers, the Children's Commissioner, the Chief Executive, and all headteachers and principals, putting in place coordinated communications in anticipation of the likely public interest;
 - establishing an 'operation' to coordinate a further response and review of the way the students' testimonies had arisen and been handled.

The short-term response was effective. Support agencies were available to support JCG students and young people across the island who may have experienced sexual harassment and abuse. There was good coordination of the Chief Minister's statement, the letters to parents from the two schools, and the briefings for headteachers and principals.

- 29 The departmental operational group liaised with partner agencies to track whether any allegations of sexual harassment or abuse had been made by students from JCG and VCJ as a result of the awareness raising through the school assemblies. The group also monitored whether there had been an increase in such disclosures more generally. The DG CYPES advised the Chief Executive to establish and chair

a Safeguarding Coordination Group of key tier one officials to have oversight of this and a wider range of safeguarding matters.

6 Key Learning

Sexual harassment is a prevalent issue in schools. 'It can happen here' in Jersey

- 31 School leaders at JCG and VCJ were shocked by the nature and prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse highlighted in the anonymous testimonies. The experiences reported by the students at JCG reflected a similar pattern to those found in OFSTED's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges¹³ and recent previous research studies¹⁴. OFSTED's review has recommended that school and college leaders act on the assumption that sexual harassment is affecting their students and take a whole-school approach to addressing these issues, creating a culture where sexual harassment is not tolerated. The staff and students at VCJ and JCG have begun this process.

Safe options in schools for students to make disclosures

- 32 In their discussions with the Principal at JCG, the students outlined their concerns in about making individual disclosures. Those concerns reflected the findings in OFSTED's review and other research about the factors that prevent students from reporting sexual harassment and abuse, particularly the fear of now knowing what would happen next. Schools need to develop an environment where children and young people can talk to professionals about abuse. Practical steps could include:
- engaging students in small-group sessions to discuss different forms of harmful sexual behaviour;
 - mapping the school and out-of-school spaces to identify where harmful sexual behaviour takes place;
 - using a curriculum-based approach to tackle a culture where reporting is perceived as 'snitching'.

Other important factors in school include:

- children having a trusting and positive relationship with an individual staff member;
- children being aware of previous positive experiences of school responses;
- teachers showing that they respect students, listen and respond proportionately;
- having staff with a specialist role not linked to teaching or behaviour.

The importance of Safeguarding Guidance about Peer on Peer Abuse

¹³ Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges, OFSTED, June 2020. 'Even where school and college leaders do not have specific information that indicates sexual harassment and on line sexual abuse are problems for their children and young people, they should act on the assumption that they are.'

¹⁴ See 'Beyond Referrals - Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Schools: A Briefing on the findings, implications and resources for schools and multi-agency partners'. Lloyd J, Walker J, and Bradbury V. University of Bedfordshire June 2020. See also UK Feminista, op.cit.

- 33 The lack of safeguarding guidance about peer on peer abuse in both the SPB Child Protection Procedures and the Education Child Protection Policy leaves school leaders with difficult decisions about the response to incidents of peer on peer abuse that they are not fully equipped to make. School leaders, DSLs and other professionals need up-to-date safeguarding guidance about peer on peer abuse that provides practice knowledge appropriate to their role, outlines referral routes linked to the SPB Continuum of Need, and signposts support agencies with a contribution to make from early help through to specialist intervention.

‘The Right Conversation at the Right Time’

- 34 The Jersey MASH offers a consultation service for professionals who may be unclear about what action they should take in relation to a safeguarding concern that they have identified. It is important that school leaders and other professionals are aware of this important facility to assist with their decision-making. The opportunity for conversations between professionals of this kind builds shared understanding, relationships that are more likely to include appropriate support and challenge, and confident decision-making. As a result, the incidence of ‘just in case’ referrals may reduce, as will the lack of referral because of an untested assumption that a set of circumstances will not ‘meet the threshold’.

Safeguarding Protocols – Confidentiality

- 35 Professionals need to be reminded about the reason why they cannot promise confidentiality to a child or young person who makes a disclosure. This is because the professional’s overriding duty of safeguarding means that they may need to inform another professional in order to protect a child who has experienced harm or is at risk of harm.

CYPES systems for gathering intelligence about safeguarding issues in a school or group of schools

- 36 Senior Advisers have a key role for CYPES in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in schools. Safeguarding is considered as part of the Senior Adviser’s annual monitoring visit to schools in the autumn term. In addition, Senior Advisers include reports about safeguarding matters in their notes of visit as appropriate. In this case, the Senior Adviser linked to JCG had been made aware of, but not seen, the testimonies at a visit to the school on 22nd March. Information about the testimonies and the work that the school was doing had been included in the Senior Adviser’s note of visit sent to the school and held in the records of the School Improvement and Advisory Service. The note of visit could have provided an alert to senior leaders in CYPES and an earlier multi-agency response to work with the schools.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion: Beyond Referral – the need for a contextual approach

- 37 The experiences related by the JCG students in their testimonies have highlighted the importance of understanding the context and locations in which sexual harassment and abuse occur in school. This was a key concern for the Principal and SLT at JCG. Initially there was a mismatch with the assumptions from some professionals whose initial response was to reinforce ‘correct procedure’ based on referral and intervention for individual young people who had disclosed experiences of harassment or abuse to a trusted adult. Research suggests the need to incorporate both aspects in a coordinated multi-agency contextual approach: ‘when sexual harm happens in schools, a focus on the individual young people is insufficient and must be accompanied by a recognition of the broader contexts that facilitate, and can prevent, harm occurring’.¹⁵

Recommendations

- 1 CYPES should work in partnership with schools and other agencies through the SPB to develop a shared understanding of the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse in Jersey schools, promote effective whole-school responses, and coordinate timely access to appropriate support for victims and perpetrators. Local priorities and agreed actions should be informed by the everyday experiences of young people in Jersey. Learning from the on-going developments at JCG and VCJ should inform this work.
- 2 The SPB should develop and publish multi-agency safeguarding guidance and procedures for Peer on Peer Abuse. The guidance and associated annexes in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (Department for Education - September 2021)¹⁶ provide a good foundation and may be adapted quickly to accommodate specific legislation in Jersey and local child protection procedures.
- 3 The SPB should commission multi-agency training about Peer on Peer abuse, to include Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools.
- 4 CYPES should review its systems for gathering intelligence about safeguarding issues in schools in Jersey, as part of the wider review of its arrangements for improving and assuring the effectiveness of safeguarding in education.

¹⁵ Lloyd J, Walker J, and Bradbury V., op.cit, page 3.

¹⁶ ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, DfE September 2021

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference

A rapid review for the Jersey Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) into the handling of allegations of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse raised by students by older students at Jersey College for Girls in March and April 2021, citing alleged actions by some students at Victoria College, and whether policy and procedures were properly followed to enable a safe and appropriate outcome for the young people concerned.

Introduction

Following the death of Sarah Everard in the UK, the Senior Leadership Team at Jersey College for Girls, supported students to better understand the extent to which misogyny and sexism was being experienced in the school. The resultant student survey, undertaken in March 2021, anonymously raised a number of concerns from low level verbal sexist abuse to an allegation of rape. Following a review of the survey findings, which included sixty-eight testimonials, States of Jersey Police found a total of fifty-five potential crimes.

A rapid review is required to establish the chronological events and facts leading up to and following the production of the survey and the extent to which expected safeguarding and child protection procedures were adhered to. The findings of the investigation should be documented in a report that will inform learning for the future.

The Review Report

The review report must reflect the terms of reference, offer an overview of the facts that have been established and highlight any issues which remain unclear. The report must also include an opinion as to what actions must be taken to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and working together to protect children in Jersey.

Appendix 2 The Review Team

John Harris and Dr Susan Tranter have undertaken the review.

John Harris has recent and relevant experience in improving Children's Services and safeguarding through his role as Children's Improvement Adviser for the LGA in London and East of England. He was the Independent Chair of Doncaster SCB until October 2017 and had a similar position with Sandwell SCB from 2014-2016. He has completed three serious case reviews, including a high profile and complex review for Barnet LSCB. He was Director of Children, Schools and Families in Hertfordshire from 2003- 2011. John is currently a member of the pool of reviewers appointed by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in 2019 and led the fieldwork for the Panel's review of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy, which was published in June 2020. He developed and drafted the Panel Annual Report 2020, published in May 2021.

Dr Susan Tranter is Chief Executive Officer of Edmonton Academy Trust. This Trust serves an economically and socially disadvantaged community and comprises three schools. Susan is a member of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Panel for England. She has also been a member of the MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) strategy group to tackle youth violence and knife crime. Susan has completed a range of safeguarding courses including those for safer recruitment in schools.

Appendix 3 Methodology

The reviewers held virtual fieldwork discussions with staff and students involved from Jersey College for Girls, Victoria College, States of Jersey Police, and the Department of Children , Young People and Skills. In advance of the fieldwork, the two schools, SOJP and CYPES were each asked to submit a significant events analysis document and provide supporting documentation. The reviewers have considered relevant policies and procedures and drawn on wider UK research and inspection evidence.

The findings, learning and recommendations in this report are drawn from what the reviewers have read, and what they have been told in the fieldwork discussions.

Appendix 4 – List of Abbreviations

CYPES	Department of Children, Young People and Skills
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DSO	Designated Safeguarding Officer
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
JCG	Jersey College for Girls
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SAYF	School and Youth Focus
SOJP	States of Jersey Police
SPB	Safeguarding Partnership Board
VCJ	Victoria College Jersey