

Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges

Press release

Ofsted has today published plans for a review into safeguarding policies and practices relating to sexual abuse in state and independent schools and colleges.



The review was announced by government last week, after anonymous testimonials of sexual abuse were published on the website 'Everyone's Invited'. It will seek to find out whether schools and colleges have appropriate safeguarding processes in place. It will also consider whether current guidance is understood by schools and colleges, and whether it is sufficient to help them respond effectively to allegations.

We will visit a sample of schools and colleges where cases have been highlighted. As well as talking to school and college leaders, pupils and students, we will look at how well systems of support and response are working, and we'll discuss the wider issues raised by the evidence.

The review will look at whether schools and colleges need further support in teaching about sex and relationships, and whether current inspection regimes in state and private schools are robust enough around the issue of sexual abuse. It will also consider how well schools and colleges are working with local multi-agency safeguarding partners.

We will work with representatives from social care, police and victim support groups, as well as school and college leaders. The review is aimed to conclude by the end of May 2021.

Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, said:

Like so many others, I have been deeply troubled by the allegations of sexual abuse posted on the 'Everyone's Invited' website. Many of the testimonies reveal that girls have not felt able to report incidents of sexual abuse to their schools. We hope that by

listening to young people's experiences first-hand, this review will provide much needed insight into what these barriers are and how they can be overcome.

Schools play a vital part in promoting a culture of respect among young people – including between boys and girls. We will consider how schools can support and encourage appropriate behaviour, from the lessons in the classroom to the culture in the corridors. And when children do speak up about their experiences, it's vital that schools have the support and structures in place to take them seriously and respond appropriately.

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