

What makes Sexual Behaviour Concerning/Harmful?

Any sexualised behaviour is cause for concern when it:

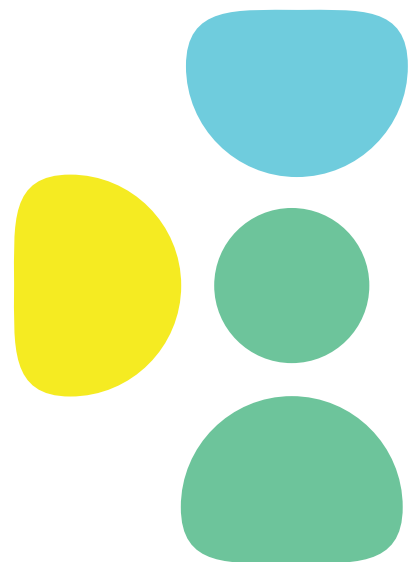
- > **Elicits complaints from other children**
- > **Does not respond to correction**
- > **Pattern of behaviour that suggests child does not understand boundaries**

Concerning Sexualised Behaviour

- > Outside normal developmental range
- > Preoccupied by sexual behaviour
- > Behaviour out of balance with peer group
- > Exposure to explicit sexual material or behavior
- > Is the behaviour 'Sexually Reactive'
- > Fear or anxiety about sexual topics
- > Draws genitals in disproportionate size to body

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

- > Demands to see genitals
- > Force children into sexual touching
- > Coercion or force used when inserting objects into genitals
- > Sexual behaviour with animals
- > Touches genitals with objects
- > Excessive interest and/or preoccupation with sexual matters
- > Seeks out explicit sexual material



Age appropriate sexual behaviours

5-7 year: Early school years

- Self touching including masterbating
 - Show me yours / I'll show you mine with the same age
 - Like to hear and tell age appropriate dirty jokes
 - Playing mummies and daddies
 - Mimicking or practicing observed behaviours, e.g pinching a bottom
- Continually rubbing / touching own genitals in public
 - Persistent use of dirty words
 - Wants to play sex games with much older or younger children
 - Continually wants to touch private parts of other children
 - Chronic peeping behaviour
- Touches or runs self persistently in private or public to the exclusion of normal childhood activities
 - Rubbing genitals on other people
 - Forcing other children to play sexual games
 - Sexual knowledge too great for age
 - Talks about sex and sexual acts habitually

8-12 years: Pre-adolescent

- Occasional masturbation
 - Show me yours / I'll show you mine with peers
 - Kissing and flirting
 - Genital or reproduction conversations with peers
 - Dirty words or jokes with peer group
- Attempting to expose others' genitals
 - Sexual knowledge to great for age once context is considered
 - Preoccupation with masturbation
 - Single occurrence of peeping, exposing, obscenities, pornographic interest (sources include the internet, pay tv, videos, DVDs and magazines)
 - Stimulating foreplay or intercourse with peers with clothes on
- Compulsive masturbation, including task interruption to masturbate
 - Repeated or chronic peeping, exposing obscenities
 - Chronic pornographic interest, child pornography (sources include the internet, pay tv, videos, DVDs and magazines)
 - Degradation / humiliation of self using sexual themes
 - Degradation / humiliation of others using sexual themes

Why Adults May Not Respond!

- > Adults may not like to think of children as having sexual behaviours.
- > Feelings of discomfort that adults want to avoid
- > Difficult to talk about – embarrassed, not confident
- > Triggers
- > Strong negative reactions of shock and disgust
- > Fear - monster, pedophile, sex offender
- > As a result adults may

UNDER or OVER-REACT

Responding is Important

- > It is the response of others (especially adults) to the behaviour, that gives meaning to the child.
- > All incidents merit a response – they are all teachable moments.
- > Opportunities to teach children about boundaries and acceptable behaviour.

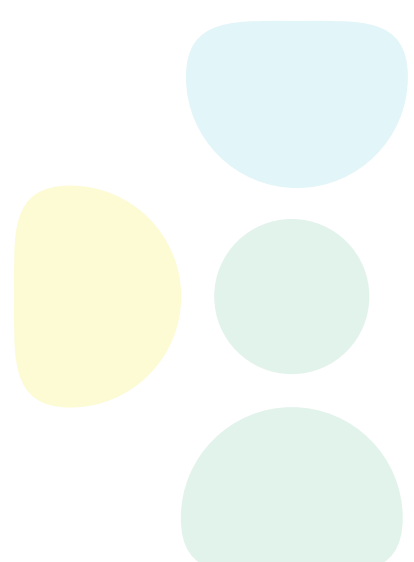
Levels of Response

Red Light

Report and Refer

- > Sexual behaviour that needs professional referral
- > Continue to name, respond, confront and consequence
- > Ensure child who was harmed gets necessary support
- > Steps to ensure safety of child and others – increase supervision
- > Explain to child that you will be informing their caregivers and seeking support
- > Record incident and inform principal / manager / parents/caregivers
- > Develop safety and support plan in collaboration with school, caregivers and other professionals
- > Follow up and monitor the safety and support plan
- > Consult STOP – Referral?
- > If there are any concerns that this child or other children are at risk then the matter may need to be reported to CYFS

Monitor



Orange Light

Confront and Consequence

- > Clear communication, help child develop empathy and promote accountability
- > Confront using a strong tone
- > “It is never OK to talk that way to others at school”
- > “It is not respectful to say that to anyone”
- > “This is not the first time you have used this language or behaviour and it needs to stop”
- > “How do you think Lucy feels when you say or do this”
- > Prohibit the behaviour or set limits – give a consequence – playground limits, safety plan guide, using a particular toilet...
- > What will happen if they do it again – “this behaviour is not ok and it needs to stop”
- > Support child who was harmed
- > Record incident and inform principal/manager/caregivers
- > Develop a playing and keeping safe plan
- > Inform caregivers – encourage their involvement in the safety and support plan
- > Consult with other professionals e.g., STOP

Monitor

Green Light

Name and Respond

- > Normal range, it may be inappropriate for school or in public settings
- > Response should teach boundaries and differences between private and public behaviour
- > Name – “I saw you pull your pants down in the playground”
- > Respond – “It’s not ok to pull our pants down at school” “That’s not what we do in public”.
- > Gather information
- > Inform caregivers so there can be consistent messages

Monitor

When to Consult?

- > Behaviours go beyond developmentally appropriate sexual exploration
- > Persist over time despite safe adult guidance
- > They are part of a pattern rather than isolated events
- > Unable to stop without adult guidance
- > Impulsive, compulsive and aggressive
- > Children may have experienced exposure over and beyond their age or have been sexually abused
- > Poor boundaries
- > Exposure to abuse

Contacts

STOP Children’s Programme Phone : (03) 374 5010

Contact: Suzanne Alliston Team Leader Phone (03) 353 0257. Email: suzannea@stop.org.nz

