

## Sexual behaviours traffic light system

Use the traffic system below to identify any sexual touch behaviour demonstrated by children.

Refer to the last page for advice on what to do for each colour.

Colour	0 to 4 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 13 years	14 to 17 years
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>RED</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sexual behaviours which indicate or cause harm because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening</li> <li>• secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery</li> <li>• not appropriate for the age and stage of development</li> <li>• between children with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow up support.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 to 4 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compulsive masturbation which may be self injurious, of a persistent nature or duration</li> <li>• persistent explicit sexual themes in talk, art or play</li> <li>• disclosure of sexual abuse</li> <li>• simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity</li> <li>• persistently touching the genitals/private parts of others</li> <li>• forcing other children to engage in sexual activity</li> <li>• sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects, masturbation of others, oral sex</li> <li>• presence of a sexually transmitted infection</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 to 9 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compulsive masturbation e.g. self injuring, self harming, seeking an audience</li> <li>• disclosure of sexual abuse</li> <li>• persistent bullying involving sexual aggression e.g. pulling/lifting/removing other children's clothing, sexually threatening notes, drawing, text messages</li> <li>• sexual behaviour with significantly younger or less able children</li> <li>• accessing the rooms of sleeping children to touch or engage in sexual activity</li> <li>• simulation of, or participation in, sexual activities e.g. oral sex, sexual intercourse</li> <li>• presence of a sexually transmitted infection</li> <li>• persistent sexual activity with animals</li> <li>• using mobile phones and internet which includes giving out identifying details or sexual images</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 to 13 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compulsive masturbation e.g. self harming, seeking an audience</li> <li>• engaging vulnerable others in a process to gain sexual activity by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, lies, flattery</li> <li>• force or coercion of others into sexual activity</li> <li>• oral sex and/or intercourse with a person of different age, developmental ability and/or peer grouping</li> <li>• presence of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy</li> <li>• deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images of self or another person</li> <li>• arranging a face to face meeting with an online acquaintance</li> <li>• sexual contact with animals</li> <li>• sexual activity in exchange for money or goods</li> <li>• possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials e.g. photos of children naked or in sexual activities</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 to 17 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compulsive masturbation e.g. self harming, in public, seeking an audience</li> <li>• preoccupation with sexually aggressive and/or illegal pornography</li> <li>• sexual contact with others of significant age and/or developmental difference</li> <li>• engaging others in a process to gain sexual activity by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, manipulation, lies</li> <li>• deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images of another person without their consent</li> <li>• arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance without the knowledge of a peer or known adult</li> <li>• sexual contact with animals</li> <li>• sexual activity in exchange for money, goods, accommodation, drugs or alcohol</li> <li>• forcing or manipulating others into sexual activity</li> <li>• possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ORANGE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sexual behaviours which cause concern because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistence, intensity, frequency or duration of behaviours</li> <li>• the type of activity or knowledge for the age and stage of development</li> <li>• inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability</li> <li>• risk to the health and safety of the child or others</li> <li>• unusual changes in a child's behaviour</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviours signal the need to monitor and provide extra support.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 to 4 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• masturbation in preference to other activities</li> <li>• preoccupation with sexual behaviours</li> <li>• persistently watching others in sexual activity, toileting or when nude</li> <li>• explicit sexual talk, art or play</li> <li>• following others into private spaces e.g. toilets, bathrooms to look at them or touch them</li> <li>• pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will</li> <li>• touching the genitals/private parts of other children in preference to other activities</li> <li>• attempting to touch or touching adults on the breasts, bottom, or genitals in ways that are persistent and/or invasive</li> <li>• touching the genitals/private parts of animals after redirection</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 to 9 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• masturbation in preference to other activities, in public, with others and/or causing self injury</li> <li>• explicit talk, art or play of sexual nature</li> <li>• persistent questions about sexuality despite being answered</li> <li>• persistent nudity and/or exposing private parts in public places</li> <li>• persistently watching or following others to look at or touch them</li> <li>• pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will</li> <li>• persistently mimicking sexual flirting behaviour too advanced for age, with other children or adults</li> <li>• touching genitals/private parts of animals after redirection</li> <li>• use of mobile phone and internet with known and unknown people which may include giving out identifying details</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 to 13 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• masturbation in preference to other activities, in public and/or causing self injury</li> <li>• persistent explicit talk, art or play which is sexual or sexually intimidating</li> <li>• accessing age restricted materials e.g. movies, games, internet with sexually explicit content</li> <li>• persistent expression of fear of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy</li> <li>• marked changes to behaviour e.g. older or adult flirting behaviours, seeking relationships with older children or adults in preference to peers</li> <li>• engaging in sexual activities with an unknown peer e.g. deep kissing, mutual masturbation</li> <li>• oral sex and/or intercourse with a known partner of similar age and developmental ability</li> <li>• using mobile phones and internet with unknown people which may include giving out identifying details</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 to 17 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily function</li> <li>• intentional spying on others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity</li> <li>• explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating</li> <li>• repeated exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing</li> <li>• unsafe sexual behaviour, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/or frequent change of partner</li> <li>• presence of sexually transmitted infection or unplanned pregnancy</li> <li>• oral sex and/or intercourse with known partner of more than two years age difference or with significant difference in development</li> <li>• arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a peer or known adult</li> <li>• using mobile phones and internet to send or receive sexual images of another person with their consent</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GREEN</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sexual behaviours which are part of normal and healthy development and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spontaneous, curious, light hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual</li> <li>• appropriate to the child's age and development</li> <li>• activities or play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels</li> <li>• about understanding and gathering information, balanced with curiosity about other parts of life</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and support.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 to 4 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comfort in being nude</li> <li>• body touching and holding own genitals</li> <li>• unselfconscious masturbation</li> <li>• interest in body parts and functions</li> <li>• wanting to touch familiar children's genitals during play, toilet or bath times</li> <li>• participation in make believe games involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine", playing 'family'</li> <li>• asking about or wanting to touch the breasts, bottoms or genitals of familiar adults e.g. when in the bath</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 to 9 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased sense of privacy about bodies</li> <li>• body touching and holding own genitals</li> <li>• masturbation, usually with awareness of privacy</li> <li>• curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine", playing 'family'</li> <li>• curiosity about sexuality e.g. questions about babies, gender, relationships, sexual activity</li> <li>• telling stories or asking questions, using swear words, 'toilet' words or names for private parts</li> <li>• use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with known peers</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 to 13 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growing need for privacy</li> <li>• masturbation in private</li> <li>• curiosity and seeking information about sexuality</li> <li>• use of sexual language</li> <li>• interest and/or participation in girlfriend or boyfriend relationships</li> <li>• hugging, kissing, touching with known peers</li> <li>• exhibitionism amongst same age peers within the context of play e.g. occasional flashing or mooning</li> <li>• use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with known peers</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 to 17 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for privacy</li> <li>• masturbation in private</li> <li>• accessing information about sexuality</li> <li>• viewing materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies</li> <li>• sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers</li> <li>• interest and/or participation in a one on one relationship with someone of the same or other sex</li> <li>• sexual activity with a partner of similar age and developmental ability (ability to consent must be considered)</li> <li>• use of mobile phones and internet in relationships with peers</li> </ul>

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0 to 5 years

5 to 9 years

9 to 13 years

13 to 17 years

### **Green behaviours**

- holding or playing with own genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about other children's genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults
- games e.g. mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses
- enjoying nakedness
- interest in body parts and what they do
- curiosity about the differences between boys and girls

#### **What is green behaviour?**

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

**What can you do?**

### **Amber behaviours**

- preoccupation with adult sexual behaviour
- pulling other children's pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will
- talking about sex using adult slang
- preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people
- following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them
- talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online

#### **What is amber behaviour?**

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- unusual for that particular child or young person
- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

**What can you do?**

### **Red behaviours**

- persistently touching the genitals of other children
- persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults
- simulation of sexual activity in play
- sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects
- forcing other children to engage in sexual play

#### **What is red behaviour?**

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

**What can you do?**

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0 to 5 years

5 to 9 years

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### Green behaviours

- feeling and touching own genitals
- curiosity about other children's genitals
- curiosity about sex and relationships, e.g. differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same-sex relationships
- sense of privacy about bodies
- telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body

#### What is green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

What can you do?

### Amber behaviours

- questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given
- sexual bullying face to face or through texts or online messaging
- engaging in mutual masturbation
- persistent sexual images and ideas in talk, play and art
- use of adult slang language to discuss sex

#### What is amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

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- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What can you do?

### Red behaviours

- frequent masturbation in front of others
- sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able children
- forcing other children to take part in sexual activities
- simulation of oral or penetrative sex
- sourcing pornographic material online

#### What is red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

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0 to 5 years

5 to 9 years

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13 to 17 years

### Green behaviours

- solitary masturbation
- use of sexual language including swear and slang words
- having girl/boyfriends who are of the same, opposite or any gender
- interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online
- need for privacy
- consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peer

#### What is green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

What can you do?

### Amber behaviours

- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- verbal, physical or cyber/virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) targeted bullying
- exhibitionism, e.g. flashing or mooning
- giving out contact details online
- viewing pornographic material
- worrying about being pregnant or having STIs

#### What is amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- unusual for that particular child or young person
- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What can you do?

### Red behaviours

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- distributing naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- sexually explicit talk with younger children
- sexual harassment
- arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret
- genital injury to self or others
- forcing other children of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities
- sexual activity e.g. oral sex or intercourse
- presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- evidence of pregnancy

#### What is red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

Sexual behaviours traffic light system

Use the traffic system below to identify any sexual behaviour demonstrated by children.

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Green behaviour identified – what can you do?	Amber behaviour identified – What can you do?	Red behaviour identified – What can you do?
<p>I have identified a green behaviour Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability</li> <li>• reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices</li> </ul> <p>Expressing sexuality through sexual behaviour is natural, healthy and a part of growing up.</p> <p>Green behaviours provide an opportunity to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour, and to provide further information and support.</p> <p>All children and young people have the right to relationships and sex education which equips them with the information and skills they need to form healthy and positive sexual relationships and keep their traffic lights green.</p> <p>If you are a professional working with young people and your organisation has internal guidance or safeguarding frameworks, please refer to these to decide on the next steps to</p>	<p>I have identified an amber behaviour Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy development. They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unusual for that particular child or young person</li> <li>• of potential concern due to age or developmental differences</li> <li>• of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur</li> </ul> <p>Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to consider appropriate action.</p> <p>Recognising that behaviour may be unhealthy is the first step in a process.</p> <p>If you are a professional working with young people and your organisation has internal guidance or safeguarding frameworks, please refer to these.</p> <p>You may be required, or feel it is necessary, to inform your safeguarding lead or another member of staff.</p>	<p>I have identified a red behaviour Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening</li> <li>• involving significant age, developmental or power differences</li> <li>• of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur</li> </ul> <p>Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action, though it is important to consider actions carefully. When determining the appropriate action, identify the behaviour, consider the context and be guided by:</p> <p>relevant national legislation and guidance organisational policies, procedures and guidance human rights the identified risks or needs of the young person the potential or real risks to others</p>

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<p>take. Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a designated safeguarding lead who can be notified and will provide support.</p> <p><b><i><u>I am not a professional working with young people. Where can I go for help?</u></i></b></p> <p>If you are not a professional working within an organisation with internal procedures or frameworks, you may want to consider contacting a specialist organisation that can advise you. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contraceptive and sexual health services: visit FPA</li><li>• NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (England and Wales) or visit the NSPCC website</li><li>• National Child Protection Line: 0800 022 3222 (Scotland)</li><li>• Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 0870 000 3344</li><li>• Stop it Now! 0808 1000 900</li><li>• Parents Protect! 0808 1000 900</li></ul>	<p><b>Amber behaviours cannot be ignored, and it is important to think through the options available to you.</b> Consider why the behaviours may be being displayed, and, where possible, gather further information and continue to monitor behaviour.</p> <p>If you are a professional working with young people and your organisation has internal guidance or safeguarding frameworks, please refer to these to decide on the next steps to take. Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a designated safeguarding lead who can be notified and will provide support.</p> <p><b><i><u>I am not a professional working with young people. Where can I go for help?</u></i></b></p> <p>If you are not a professional working within an organisation with internal procedures or frameworks, you may want to consider contacting a specialist organisation that can advise you. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contraceptive and sexual health services: visit FPA</li><li>• NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (England and Wales) or visit the NSPCC website</li><li>• National Child Protection Line: 0800 022 3222 (Scotland)</li><li>• Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 0870 000 3344</li></ul>	<p>If you are a professional working with young people and your organisation has internal guidance or safeguarding frameworks, please refer to these to decide on the next steps to take. Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a designated safeguarding lead who can be notified and will provide support.</p> <p><b><i><u>I am not a professional working with young people. Where can I go for help?</u></i></b></p> <p>If you are not a professional working within an organisation with internal procedures or frameworks, you may want to consider contacting a specialist organisation that can advise you. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contraceptive and sexual health services: visit FPA</li><li>• NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (England and Wales) or visit the NSPCC website</li><li>• National Child Protection Line: 0800 022 3222 (Scotland)</li><li>• Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 0870 000 3344</li><li>• Stop it Now! 0808 1000 900</li><li>• Parents Protect! 0808 1000 900</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop it Now! 0808 1000 900</li><li>• Parents Protect! 0808 1000 900</li></ul>	
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