**TAKE ACTION: call on leaders in your local area to fund vital prevention work with children and young people.** Use this template letter to write to local commissioners who could fund a Whole School Approach to preventing and tackling sexual harassment and abuse in our schools. This includes:

* Police and Crime Commissioners - you can find your local PCC here: <https://www.apccs.police.uk/find-your-pcc/>.
* Health commissioners/Integrated Care Board (ICBs) - you can find your local ICB here: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/find-your-local-integrated-care-board/>.
* Local authorities - you can find your local authority/council here: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>. We’d recommend that you address your letter to the relevant cabinet minister at your local authority/council responsible for children and young people/education. Contact information for the relevant councillor should be available on your local council’s website.

**TEMPLATE LETTER:**

**Dear Commissioner,**

I am writing to you as a [*insert relevant description e.g. young person/ concerned parent / local resident/ local specialist women’s organisation etc]* to ask what action you are taking to prevent and tackle sexual harassment and abuse faced by young people in our schools? As a local commissioner, will you support a ‘Whole School Approach’ to tackle sexism, misogyny and sexual harassment in our schools?

Sexism, misogyny and sexual harassment are endemic within schools. According to a recent survey conducted by the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW), almost a [third of girls don’t feel safe from sexual harassment in school](https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/new-campaign-film-its-about-time-things-changed/), and [80% of girls think schools need to do more to tackle the issue](https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/new-campaign-film-its-about-time-things-changed/). These findings echo the [2021 Ofsted review into sexual harassment and abuse in schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges), yet still so little has been done to create meaningful change.

Furthermore, these issues can be even worse for Black girls, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), LGBT+ young people, and others who face other forms of discrimination. For example, research from Plan International has shown [82% of Black girls have faced public sexual harassment](https://plan-uk.org/file/everything-is-racialised-reportpdf/download?token=bVe1kW6-).

The recent rise and influence of toxic individuals online is fuelling misogyny and impacting young people's experiences within school. What’s more, young people are not just experiencing sexism from their peers - [60% of girls surveyed by EVAW have heard teachers use sexist language](https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/new-report-its-about-time-a-whole-school-approach-to-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls). For many young people, school culture is harmful, leaving many feeling unable to participate fully in school life.

Under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1988), children have a right to experience school free from violence. Schools, central government and other public bodies have legal obligations to protect young people from sexual bullying, harassment and violence under the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. Schools have a duty to create safe environments for young people to thrive. Yet they are being let down and **it's #AboutTime things changed. Will you take action?**

What we need is a ‘Whole School Approach’ to addressing these issues – a model recommended by the [2021 Ofsted report](https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/ofsted-review-on-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges-almost-all-girls-report-at-least-one-form-of-abuse/). The End Violence Against Women Coalition’s recent report, [It's #AboutTime: A Whole School Approach to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls](https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/new-report-its-about-time-a-whole-school-approach-to-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls), outlines the wealth of longstanding evidence on the scale of the issues, and why a Whole School Approach is the most effective way to both transform young people’s experiences at school and prevent violence against women and girls across the whole of society. The report also includes examples of best practice of a Whole School Approach, many of which are funded by local PCCs and local authorities, and a series of recommendations including for local commissioners. **TAKE ACTION:**

* Champion a Whole School Approach to preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) among primary and secondary schools, including academies, in your area;
* Fund partnership work between schools and specialist VAWG services, including ‘by and for’ organisations, to deliver a Whole School Approach to tackling VAWG;
* Ensure prevention work is central to the work of local partnerships with relevant voluntary sector agencies, including the specialist VAWG sector and ‘by and for’ partners, primary and secondary schools.

We cannot solely rely on national government to take the much needed action to prevent and tackle sexual abuse and harrassment in our schools, and at a local level real change is possible. Will you be part of driving that change?

Best wishes,

*[Insert name]*