



From Guidelines to Protection: Are Schools Safe for Learners?

A Scoping Study on the Implementation of Sexual Harassment Guidelines in Ghana's Schools

August 2026

This report was developed by Africa Education Watch
with support from  OXFAM



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ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
G&C	Guidance and Counselling
GES	Ghana Education Service
KII	Key Informant Interview
JHS	Junior High School
MoE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SEI	Secondary Education Institution
SHS	Senior High School
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SHTS	Senior High Technical School
SSFP	Safe Space Focal Person
T-TEL	Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning
VLC	Value Learning Community
VVOB	VVOB–Education for Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service, developed a Guideline for Addressing Sexual Harassment in Secondary Education Institutions in 2023, and formally launched it in 2024. The Guideline was part of broader efforts to strengthen safeguarding systems, promote learner protection, and create safe learning environments across the pre-tertiary education sub-sector.

Two (2) years since its launch, Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch) commissioned this scoping study to assess implementation progress. The scoping assesses the awareness and dissemination of the Guideline, institutional preparedness and compliance, reporting and case management systems, capacity building efforts, monitoring mechanisms, and implementation challenges.



INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment within educational institutions has increasingly been recognised as a critical safeguarding and human rights concern that undermines the creation of safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments. In Ghana, concerns over sexual harassment in Secondary Education Institutions (SEI) have gained heightened national attention due to reported incidents involving learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, and other members of school communities.

Recognising the impact of sexual harassment on learner protection and educational outcomes, the Ministry of Education (MoE), through its agencies, has intensified efforts to strengthen safeguarding within the pre-tertiary education sector. These efforts are guided by national commitments to child protection, gender equality, inclusive education, and safe learning environments, as reflected in existing legal and policy frameworks, including the Safe School Policy and institutional codes of conduct. However, despite these frameworks, challenges persist in awareness creation, reporting, response mechanisms, accountability processes, and institutional capacity to effectively prevent and address sexual harassment within school settings.

In response, MoE, together with the Ghana Education Service (GES), developed the *Guideline for Addressing Sexual Harassment in Secondary Education Institutions (2023)*¹ as a comprehensive framework for the prevention, reporting, response, redress, and accountability mechanisms in secondary schools. Central to the operationalisation of the Guideline is ensuring that school stakeholders are adequately aware of its provisions, possess the requisite capacity for implementation, and are supported by effective institutional systems that foster safe, respectful, and protective school environments.

This scoping study assesses the implementation progress of the Guideline two (2) years after its operationalisation, with particular focus on dissemination and awareness, institutional compliance, reporting and case management systems, capacity building efforts, and implementation bottlenecks.

¹ Ministry of Education. (2023). *Guideline for Addressing Sexual Harassment in Secondary Education Institutions*.

METHODOLOGY

This scoping study adopted a qualitative research design to assess the extent of implementation of the Guideline. The study was guided by key thematic areas including the level of dissemination and awareness of the Guideline; institutional compliance at the national, municipal, and school levels; the functionality of reporting and case management systems, capacity building efforts undertaken; and the identification of implementation bottlenecks.

The study utilised Key Informant Interviews (KII) as the main data collection method. This approach was selected due to its suitability for engaging directly with stakeholders who play critical roles in the implementation of the Guideline. This facilitated the generation of in-depth insights into institutional practices, experiences, perspectives, and exploring operational realities.

The purposive sampling technique was employed to identify and select respondents with relevant knowledge, experience, and responsibilities in safeguarding and the implementation of the Guideline. Interview guides were developed in alignment with the study objectives and structured around the key thematic areas, while allowing flexibility for probing and clarification. The team carried out all interviews confidentially and ethically, obtaining informed consent from participants before engagement.

Data was analysed thematically by systematically reviewing and organising responses according to the predefined thematic areas, while allowing for the emergence of additional insights. This analytical approach facilitated the identification of patterns, gaps, and variations in the implementation of the Guideline across different contexts.

A total of 24 key informants were interviewed across national, municipal, and school stakeholder groups between 20th April and 31st May. Detailed information on the study institutions and distribution of respondents is provided in the appendix of this report.

FINDINGS

This section outlines the findings from the study regarding the extent to which the Guideline has been disseminated, understood, and operationalised within the selected educational institutions. Drawing on perspectives from national, regional, municipal, school-level, and student respondents, the findings provide insights into existing implementation structures, reporting and response mechanisms, institutional practices, and the challenges and opportunities influencing the effective prevention and management of sexual harassment in schools.

1. Awareness and Dissemination of the Guideline

At the national level, GES officials indicated that approximately 721 Senior High Schools (SHS), Senior High Technical Schools (SHTS) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) schools received copies of the Guideline in 2025, over a year after its launch. Each school received between 10 and 20 copies intended for headteachers, school libraries and Guidance and Counselling (G&C) Coordinators to support institutional awareness and implementation. District-level G&C Coordinators also received copies to facilitate oversight and support sensitisation activities within schools. In addition to the hard copies, the Guideline was made available electronically through the MoE microsite platform², to enable teachers and learners to access the document online.

The SEI studied demonstrated relatively high awareness of the Guideline among school leadership, Safe Space Focal Persons (SSFP), G&C Coordinators, and members of Sexual Harassment Committees (comprising a senior housemaster and/or senior housemistress, housemaster and/or housemistress, two (2) chaplains, two (2) counsellors (SSFP), and two (2) other staff members). In one SHS, respondents indicated that all the Sexual Harassment Committee members, as well as the headteacher, had copies of the Guideline. However, access to the document within schools appeared largely restricted to these designated personnel, with limited availability among the broader teaching staff and student population.

Almost all the SHS assistant school heads interviewed indicated that although they had knowledge of the Guideline, they did not have copies, with one indicating that she was not sure of possessing a copy. The headteacher of a Junior High School (JHS) visited indicated that she had seen it online but had not read it.

“I only have the soft copy, which I received from the Regional G&C Officer at a meeting where we were taken through the Guideline. No school [basic] has received copies yet.”

- A Municipal G&C Coordinator.

² Ministry of Education. (2023). *Ministry of Education Curriculum Resources Platform*.

All the student respondents indicated that although they had received sensitisation on sexual harassment and misconduct, they had neither seen nor directly accessed the Guideline document itself. Expectedly, there was relatively low awareness of the Guideline at the JHS level, where most respondents had either not seen it or had only heard about it indirectly. In many cases, the JHS relied on the provisions of the Safe School Policy³ (still in its draft stage) regarding child protection, bullying, and sexual and reproductive health issues, without direct reference to the Guideline.

2. Capacity Building Efforts

In mid-2025, Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning (T-TEL) organised a two-day capacity building workshop on the Guideline for G&C Coordinators and SSFP from GES regional and district offices, as well as selected secondary schools. The training equipped participants with knowledge on the Guideline, including the forms of sexual harassment, reporting procedures, incident management processes, and safeguarding responsibilities.

While G&C Coordinators and SSFP from the selected SHS in this study participated in the T-TEL workshop, their counterparts in the selected JHS did not participate, as the focus of the Guideline and the training was primarily at the SHS level. However, in one (1) municipality, some teachers at both the SHS and JHS levels participated in GES-led virtual seminars addressing sexual harassment and related safeguarding issues.

At the school level, SSFP (made up of a male and female teacher each) who participated in the T-TEL training cascaded the knowledge acquired to school management, G&C Coordinators, housemasters and housemistresses, and teaching staff. The SSFP promoted awareness through student sensitisation sessions, class-based students' engagements, Value Learning Community (VLC) discussions, 'Worship' sessions, drama presentations, poster campaigns, and activities organised during the annual Orange Month campaign. Despite these efforts, GES and its partners have not organised structured refresher training or follow-up capacity building programmes since the initial T-TEL workshop.

3. Institutional Preparedness and Compliance

At the school level, GES has established structures that support the prevention and management of sexual harassment and other safeguarding concerns, in line with the provisions of the *GES Framework for Guidance and Counselling Services in Secondary Education Institutions (Revised Version)*⁴. Central among these is the G&C Unit, whose mandate is to ensure that learners receive appropriate social, emotional, academic, and career support within safe and supportive environments. The Unit works through G&C

³ Ministry of Education. (2003). *Safe School Policy (DRAFT)*.

⁴ Ghana Education Service. (2025). *Framework for guidance and counselling services in secondary education institutions (Revised Version)*. Ministry of Education Curriculum Resources Platform.

Coordinators to provide counselling services, among others. In addition, schools have structures such as the Dean of Discipline, who addresses disciplinary issues.

Findings indicate growing institutional commitment towards safeguarding and implementation of the Guideline within the SHS studied, although the levels of operationalisation and formalisation of systems and procedures vary across schools. Schools generally demonstrated stronger preparedness through the establishment of safeguarding-related structures such as Sexual Harassment Committees, Anti-Bullying Committees, and peer-to-peer support systems.

Schools have integrated sexual harassment sensitisation into 'worship sessions', counselling activities, peer education activities, and VLC discussions. Further findings revealed that schools were responding to emerging sexual harassment and exploitation incidents using existing administrative and counselling structures.

'In one instance involving the circulation of a student's sexual video on social media, the counselling unit provided psychosocial support to the survivor, which enabled her to successfully sit for her West African Senior School Certificate Examination. The school used the opportunity to educate students on cyber safety.'

Some schools have also introduced preventive measures such as revising school rules as part of efforts to curb the frequent occurrences of peer-to-peer sexual harassment, and strengthening student sensitisation. For instance, at Frafraha Community SHS, students are prohibited from frequenting secluded or obscure areas on the school premises, and are not permitted to stay in classrooms before the official start of school hours. Additionally, teachers are regularly reminded to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their interactions with students.

Despite these demonstrated efforts to strengthen safeguarding, respondents indicated that implementation responsibilities placed on SSFP often competed with their primary teaching and administrative duties. In some schools, officers responsible for driving implementation simultaneously served as subject teachers and held additional leadership roles such as Dean of Discipline, limiting the time and attention available for developing school-specific policies and coordinating safeguarding activities.

There were also concerns regarding the effectiveness of institutional response mechanisms when cases involve school staff. An assistant head highlighted perceived procedural and administrative difficulties in sanctioning teachers implicated in sexual harassment cases, noting that the lengthy and cumbersome disciplinary processes within the GES system often discourage schools from pursuing further enforcement actions.

4. Concerns on Confidentiality, Trust, and Confidence in Reporting Systems

Confidence in existing reporting systems remained low among many learners due to concerns about confidentiality, stigma, embarrassment, and perceived inaction following reports. Some student respondents indicated that fear of exposure when an incident is reported discouraged students from reporting sexual harassment.

“Students are not convinced about confidentiality when they report such matters because they fear the teacher may eventually know who reported the case.”

- A student explained

Concerns about trust and confidentiality were further reinforced by some students' previous experiences with disclosure. An SHS student recounted that a teacher disclosed a sensitive matter she had reported while in JHS, adding that:

“That experience made me lose confidence in reporting such issues to teachers, even now that I am in SHS”.

The findings also suggest that concerns about confidentiality and trust may influence the extent to which students rely on school-based reporting structures, with some learners and parents opting for external interventions, such as law enforcement agencies. In one (1) reported case, a female student disclosed alleged sexual harassment by a teacher to her parents, after which the matter was reported to the school and referred to the school's Sexual Harassment Committee. However, before the school could complete its internal investigation, the parents reported the matter to the police, leading to the teacher's arrest.

Respondents also highlighted the absence of dedicated and private spaces within some schools where students could comfortably report sexual harassment incidents or seek counselling support. According to some SSFP, students often do not feel comfortable approaching them within shared spaces such as the Staff Common Room to discuss sensitive issues, which affects students' confidence in the confidentiality and privacy of the reporting process and may further discourage disclosure of cases.

5. Functionality of Reporting and Incident Management

The Guideline establishes clear procedures for both formal and informal reporting of sexual harassment. The informal procedure emphasizes confidential, supportive, and mediated resolution through the SSFP, who serve as the first point of contact for

complaints. Where mediation is unsuccessful, the behaviour persists, retaliation occurs, or the severity of the incident warrants it, the matter is escalated to the formal procedure, which involves a structured investigation by a Grievance Committee.

In both SHS and JHS visited, school authorities encouraged learners to report incidents to trusted persons such as housemasters, housemistresses, teachers, Sexual Harassment Committee members, and headteachers, while assuring them of confidentiality and support throughout the reporting process. Schools also sensitise learners to report incidents of sexual harassment involving other students or third parties whenever they witness, become aware of, or suspect such conduct.

Labone SHS for instance has established a reporting and case management process whereby incidents are reported to the SSFP or members of the Sexual Harassment Committee. Upon receiving a report, the SSFP conduct preliminary fact-finding and submit the matter to the Committee, which then investigates the case through interviews and engagement with the relevant parties. Following its investigation, the Committee prepares a report and submits its findings and recommendations to school management for appropriate action.

To support implementation of the Guideline, Labone SHS has reproduced and operationalised the official reporting forms contained in the Guideline. Members of the Sexual Harassment Committee utilise these forms to document and manage reported cases. The availability of the photocopied forms was verified during the field visit.

Despite the importance of reporting as a critical first step in addressing sexual harassment and ensuring accountability, no formal reports had been recorded by teachers, G&C Coordinators, or the relevant committees within the six (6) months preceding the data collection for this scoping study. Learners and teachers attributed this underreporting to factors such as shame, embarrassment, fear of retaliation, and victimisation.

At the JHS level, school-based counselling and disciplinary committees generally provided counselling and psychosocial support to affected learners and, where necessary, engaged parents or guardians in managing reported cases. However, one headteacher noted that effective parental or guardian engagement was sometimes challenging because many learners were living as househelps or with extended family members rather than with their biological parents.

A Municipal G&C Officer further indicated that the Municipal Education Office frequently received cases of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, particularly from community or family members involving learners in the basic schools. According to the respondent, the office often intervened directly by reporting the incidents to the law enforcement agencies, and with support from a local Non-Governmental Organisation that assists the survivors by covering the medical examination costs. However, the respondent expressed

concern that some families bypassed formal reporting and response processes to pursue informal (out-of-court) settlements with alleged perpetrators at the household or community level.

Another challenge identified related to incidents that occurred outside the direct school environment, particularly within day schools. Respondents explained that some cases of sexual harassment and exploitation involved neighbours, tenants, transport operators, and other community actors beyond the school's immediate authority, making intervention and follow-up more difficult for school authorities.

While preventive measures within school-based mechanisms appear to be functioning, the case management component of the system remains largely inactive due to the absence of reported cases. Nevertheless, the Sexual Harassment Committees have ensured preparedness by maintaining copies of reporting templates from the Guideline, to facilitate proper documentation should formal complaints arise.

6. Parental Reporting and Community-Based Safeguarding Responses

The study findings revealed that students often disclosed incidents of sexual harassment and abuse to trusted adults, particularly parents, who then initiated further action or support. In some cases, schools collaborated with parents to respond to reported incidents, demonstrating the important role of families and community actors within safeguarding processes.

Respondents also highlighted instances where school management used Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) platforms to address safeguarding concerns affecting students outside the school environment. A day SHS reported a case involving a man who allegedly harassed female students at a junction commonly used by learners on their way to school. Following reports from a student and the subsequent corroboration by others who had experienced similar harassment, the school management shared the information on the PTA platform to alert parents.

7. Monitoring and Oversight

The GES G&C Unit at the headquarters has not yet conducted a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the Guideline. At the SHS level, there have not been any official dedicated monitoring visits by GES, specifically focused on evaluating compliance with or implementation of the Guideline. Nonetheless, Municipal G&C Coordinators periodically visit SHS and basic schools within their jurisdictions to monitor the activities of school-based coordinators and ensure that they are carrying out their responsibilities effectively.

The GES headquarters deliberately channels schools seeking support on the establishment of reporting and redress mechanisms through their respective Regional

Directorates, as part of its decentralised implementation approach. According to key informants at the GES headquarters, approximately 500 of the 721 schools should be implementing the Guideline. However, uptake and implementation may vary across schools.

“Perhaps, this scoping study will provide information that can lead to a large-scale monitoring of schools to see how they are progressing on the implementation of the Guideline”.

- A GES headquarters official

Overall, the findings suggest that although the Guideline has been disseminated and some implementation structures established within schools, monitoring visits have largely focused on general supervisory and safeguarding activities rather than dedicated assessments of implementation of the Guideline itself. Consequently, formal monitoring, accountability, and compliance systems for tracking implementation of the Guideline remain weak and underdeveloped.

8. National Teaching Council Efforts to Strengthen Teacher Capacity on Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response

The study identified an emerging initiative by the National Teaching Council (NTC) that has the potential to strengthen teacher capacity on sexual harassment prevention and response, particularly at the basic school level. As part of efforts to support the implementation of the Guideline, NTC is partnering VVOB-Education for Development (VVOB) – a Belgian philanthropic organisation, to develop a Study and Career Guidance Manual for teachers.

The Manual incorporates content on sexual harassment, safeguarding, and learner protection, and will be implemented through teachers’ Professional Learning Communities. Teachers who participate in the learning activities and utilise the manual will earn Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points as part of NTC’s professional development framework. The VVOB is expected to pilot the manual in selected schools from June 2026, with an initial focus on JHS. Once operationalised, the initiative is expected to address key capacity and implementation gaps identified by this study at the JHS level.

9. Emerging Good Practices

The study identified some promising safeguarding practices across the schools visited. These included the following:

- a. The establishment of Sexual Harassment Committees, appointment of SSFP, anti-bullying structures, peer education initiatives, and student participation in some disciplinary and safeguarding processes.
- b. Some schools integrated safeguarding discussions into 'Worship' sessions, counselling programmes, classroom engagements, and VLC activities to sustain awareness creation among students.
- c. Labone SHS has designated November as Orange Month, to raise awareness about sexual misconduct. The school had also used drama performances on two (2) occasions to raise awareness, as well as the display of posters to reinforce key messages on prevention and reporting.
- d. At Adentan Community School, mentorship and student support systems were identified as emerging good practices, particularly where teachers intentionally created supportive relationships with students beyond the classroom setting.

"We can approach our mentors on any issue bothering us, not just academics".

- A female JHS student remarked.

CONCLUSION

The GES has made notable progress in rolling out the Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention Guideline within SHS through the distribution of the Guideline, training of SSFP and G&C Coordinators, and the establishment of school-level safeguarding structures. These efforts have increased awareness among key school personnel and supported the integration of sexual harassment sensitisation into existing school programmes and activities.

However, implementation remains uneven. Access to the Guideline is largely limited to designated personnel, while the absence of refresher training, formalised and confidential reporting systems, dedicated reporting spaces, and systematic monitoring has constrained effective operationalisation. Learners generally know where to report incidents, but concerns about confidentiality, stigma, victimisation, and perceived inaction continue to affect reporting confidence. Schools also face challenges in enforcing sanctions, developing school-specific safeguarding policies, and responding to incidents involving external perpetrators.

Overall, the findings suggest that while schools have demonstrated commitment to safeguarding and learner protection, GES must strengthen dissemination, continuous capacity building, monitoring, accountability, and reporting systems to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Guideline across the pre-tertiary education sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthening Dissemination and Accessibility of the Guideline

- a. The GES should distribute adequate physical copies of the Guideline to all SHS, particularly to school heads and assistant heads, SSFP, G&C Coordinators, housemasters and housemistresses, safeguarding committee members, and school libraries, to strengthen student awareness, peer sensitisation, and learner participation in safeguarding efforts. In addition, all tablets supplied to students by the MoE should be pre-loaded with electronic copies of the Guideline to ensure easy access and promote wider awareness among learners.
- b. The GES should simultaneously increase awareness and utilisation of the digital version of the Guideline available on the MoE microsite and other approved digital learning platforms across schools by the start of the 2026/2027 academic year.
- c. The GES should extend dissemination and orientation on the Guideline to basic schools to strengthen early safeguarding awareness and preparedness before learners transition to SHS. Regional and Municipal GES offices should ensure that all schools display and promote access to the digital version of the Guideline through the MoE microsite and other approved digital learning platforms.

2. Institutionalising Continuous Capacity Building:

- a. The GES should organise mandatory annual refresher training on the Guideline for all SSFP, G&C Coordinators, and members of school safeguarding committees beginning from the 2026/2027 academic year. Additionally, Regional and Municipal GES Directorates should integrate safeguarding and sexual harassment response training into school-based CPD programmes, and monitor participation levels across schools every academic year.

3. Developing and Operationalising School-specific Sexual Harassment Policies

- a. The GES should require all SHS, SHTS, and STEM schools to develop and adopt school-specific sexual harassment and safeguarding policies aligned with the Guideline by the end of the 2026/2027 academic year. Regional and Municipal GES Directorates should also provide technical support and periodic follow-up to schools to ensure that school-specific sexual harassment policies are developed, approved, disseminated, and operationalised within schools.
- b. The GES should integrate safeguarding and sexual harassment prevention indicators into School Improvement Plans, school appraisal systems, and routine school monitoring frameworks beginning from the 2026/2027 academic year. To further strengthen accountability and support the effective implementation of safeguarding measures, Municipal and Regional G&C Coordinators should integrate the assessment of schools' compliance with school-specific safeguarding and safe school initiatives into their routine supervisory and monitoring visits.

- c. School heads should ensure that all staff, student leaders, and safeguarding committee members receive orientation on the school-specific Sexual Harassment policy at the beginning of every academic year. This is to strengthen institutional ownership and accountability.

4. Strengthening Confidential and Student-friendly Reporting Systems

- a. The GES should ensure that all SHS establish and publicly display formalised reporting and referral procedures for sexual harassment cases, including designated reporting officers, and safeguarding contact points, by the start of the 2026/2027 academic year. At the regional and municipal levels, the GES Directorates should ensure that all SHS designate a dedicated private office or safeguarding space for reporting, counselling, and psychosocial support services by the end of the first term of the 2026/2027 academic year.
- b. The GES should incorporate mandatory training on confidentiality, survivor-centred response, and safeguarding ethics into all sexual harassment and guidance and counselling capacity building programmes for SSFP, counsellors, and school management teams. To support students' welfare and safeguarding needs within schools, heads of both the SHS and JHS should establish structured teacher-student mentorship systems that assign trained female and male staff mentors.

5. Deepening Learner Sensitisation and Empowerment

- a. The GES should require all SHS and JHS to implement at least one (1) structured learner sensitisation activity on sexual harassment, consent, healthy relationships, online safety, and reporting procedures every term beginning from the 2026/2027 academic year. GES should further collaborate with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to integrate age-appropriate safeguarding and sexual harassment prevention content into upper primary and JHS curricula by the 2026/2027 academic year.
- b. Regional and Municipal GES Directorates should ensure and supervise school heads to prioritise targeted empowerment and support programmes for girls and vulnerable learners, including mentorship sessions, counselling engagements, and confidence-building activities, aimed at encouraging reporting and help-seeking behaviours without fear of stigma or retaliation.
- c. Regional and Municipal GES Directorates should partner Civil Society Organisations, religious bodies and child protection agencies, to support regular learner sensitisation and community engagement activities on safeguarding.

6. Enhancing Monitoring and Accountability Systems

- a. The GES headquarters should prioritise safeguarding monitoring and accountability, by developing and operationalising a national monitoring framework for the implementation of the Guideline across all SHS by the beginning of the 2026/2027 academic year. The Service should further institutionalise periodic safeguarding compliance assessments to ensure consistent implementation, strengthen accountability across all levels of the education system, and indicate safeguarding as a national education priority.
- b. Municipal and District G&C Coordinators should integrate safeguarding compliance indicators into routine school supervisory visits and submit periodic implementation reports to Regional and National GES offices every term. The Regional and Municipal GES offices should provide written feedback and corrective action recommendations to schools following monitoring visits while tracking implementation progress within specified timelines.
- c. The GES should establish a centralised safeguarding reporting and data management system to track reported cases, referrals, institutional responses, and implementation progress across schools annually.

7. Promoting Multi-stakeholder and Community Engagement

- a. The GES should strengthen collaboration between schools, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, the Department of Social Welfare, and other child protection institutions to support coordinated reporting, referral, investigation, and survivor support processes. GES should further develop operational guidance for schools on handling cases that escalate from school-level safeguarding processes to police investigation and external legal processes, particularly in incidents involving school staff or external perpetrators.
- b. Municipal and District G&C Units should institutionalise annual community sensitisation programmes for parents and guardians on child protection systems, sexual harassment reporting pathways, referral institutions, and legal response mechanisms.
- c. The GES should build on existing local initiatives, such as the week-long Guidance and Counselling celebrations organised in 2024 and 2025, and integrate them into municipal safeguarding plans in collaboration with schools, PTA, DOVVSU, the Department of Social Welfare, and relevant Civil Society Organisations.
- d. The GES should further encourage schools to actively support and follow up on sexual harassment cases involving external perpetrators. This is especially important in situations where parents or guardians may lack knowledge of appropriate reporting, referral, or legal response institutions.

8. Strengthening Enforcement and Institutional Response

- a. The GES should review and streamline disciplinary, reporting, and case management procedures relating to sexual harassment cases involving staff by the beginning of the 2026/2027 academic year. This is to ensure timely, transparent, survivor-centred, and legally compliant responses across schools.
- b. The GES Headquarters should develop clear operational timelines and accountability procedures for investigating and resolving sexual harassment cases involving staff to reduce delays and strengthen institutional responsiveness. Consistent and visible enforcement of sanctions against perpetrators of sexual harassment and misconduct should form part of GES' accountability measures to strengthen institutional credibility, reinforce deterrence, and improve student confidence in school-based reporting and response systems.
- c. Regional and Municipal GES Directorates should monitor the handling and resolution of reported sexual harassment cases across schools and provide periodic oversight reports to GES Headquarters every academic term. School heads and Sexual Harassment committees should ensure that all reported cases are documented, followed up, and handled confidentially in accordance with the Guideline and established safe school procedures.

9. Institutionalising CPD on Sexual Harassment and Safeguarding

- a. The NTC should scale up the VVOB-supported Study and Career Guidance Manual to all JHS by the end of the 2026/2027 academic year and integrate its sexual harassment and safeguarding content into compulsory accredited CPD programmes. This will strengthen teachers' capacity in prevention, reporting, and case management.

APPENDIX

List of Institutions Interviewed for the Study

	INSTITUTION	UNIT/REGION/MUNICIPALITY	# PERSONS INTERVIEWED
1.	Ghana Education Service HQ	Guidance and Counselling Unit	2
2.	Labone SHS (Boarding)	La Dadekotopon Municipal	6
3.	Presby Boys 2 JHS	Korle Klottey Municipal	3
4.	Presby Girls 1 JHS	Korle Klottey Municipal	2
5.	Municipal Education Office	Korle Klottey Municipal	1
6.	Adentan Community JHS	Adentan Municipal	4
7.	Frafraha Community SHS (Day)	Adentan Municipal	4
8.	Municipal Education Office	Adentan Municipal	1
9.	National Teaching Council	Greater Accra	1
Total number of interviewees			24

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