

Experts investigating pupil street harassment

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Experts are working with secondary schools as part of the pilot project. Credit: Nottingham Trent University

School pupils' experiences of street harassment are being investigated by researchers – in a bid to shed light on the nature, scale and impact of the issue.

Experts at Nottingham Trent University are working with three UK secondary schools as part of a pilot project asking 11-16 year-olds to record any incidents they encounter.

Street [harassment](#) – random incidents involving comments, gestures and behaviour which could be sexual, racial, homophobic or gender-related – is not officially recorded in crime statistics for children and there is very little research in this area.

It is hoped the work will provide evidence of the type of incidents pupils are experiencing and how these make them feel.

The study will involve holding focus groups with children and teachers, as well as the development of a bespoke web app, through which pupils will immediately provide specific details of their experiences.

The focus groups will help the researchers to get a better understanding of young people's experiences. The app, meanwhile, will capture details such as whether the secondary school pupil was on their own, in a pair or group; whether they were on their way to or from school; as well as their gender, age and ethnicity.

Children will also be able to record in their own words what happened and how the incident made them feel.

The project is bringing together a psychologist, a linguist, an educationist, a social worker and a legal expert from the University's School of Social Sciences, School of Arts and Humanities and Nottingham Law School.

The research team brings together expertise in bullying, harassment and discrimination among schoolchildren, as well as how children use language to describe their feelings and experiences.

"This data will be crucial in enabling us to examine how pupils experience and describe harassment, as well as being able to identify groups at particular risk", said researcher Dr Lucy Betts.

She said: "The findings could be used to explore the consequences of street harassment on [pupils'](#) study, inform whether incidents are covered adequately by criminal law, and to see how the police could tackle the issue differently in partnership with schools."

Provided by Nottingham Trent University

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