What is School-Related Gender-Based Violence?

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) can be both victims or perpetrators of violence and can occur in many settings such as schools, educational institutions, and online environments. It involves physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse directed towards children and young people, often as a result of gender norms and stereotypes. SRGBV can have far-reaching impacts on children’s physical, mental, and emotional health and development.

What are the Consequences of SRGBV?

Exposure to and experience of SRGBV can have significant consequences for children and young people, including:

- Physical harm: Injuries, STIs, HIV, and pregnancy
- Psychological harm: Anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide
- Substance misuse
- Lack of concentration and school absenteeism
- Bullying, cyber-bullying, sexual violence, and psychological harassment
- Gender discrimination
- Social isolation

Long-term impact:

- Loss of educational opportunities
- Health and emotional problems
- Economic challenges
- Social and emotional problems
- Loss of self-esteem
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships
- Increased risk of violence later in life

Preventing and responding to SRGBV requires a comprehensive response from all sectors, including:

- Education
- Legal/Justice
- Health
- Social Services
- Youth & Sports
- Other sectors

Ethical and safety considerations are crucial to ensure the protection of children and the confidentiality of reporting mechanisms.

What is the Role of Educators?

Educators play a crucial role in preventing and responding to SRGBV. They should:

- Develop and implement codes of conduct for students and staff
- Foster a child-friendly, safe, and supportive environment
- Support students and staff who have experienced violence
- Promote awareness and understanding of SRGBV
- Encourage open communication and reporting

How Can School Authorities Address SRGBV?

School authorities can address SRGBV by:

- Establishing sRGBV prevention and response strategies
- Training and supporting teachers
- Mapping safe or dangerous hotspots
- Developing child-friendly, safe physical environments
- Protecting and ensuring the safety of all students
- Ensuring that students have access to confidential counseling and support
- Responding to incidents of SRGBV

How Can Parents and Community Engage?

Parents and the wider community can support efforts to prevent and respond to SRGBV by:

- Advocating for child-friendly environments
- Ensuring that children and young people have access to safe spaces
- Supporting children and young people who have experienced violence
- Reporting incidents of SRGBV
- Providing emotional and practical support
- Raising awareness and promoting understanding of SRGBV

Conclusion

Preventing and responding to SRGBV requires a coordinated effort from all stakeholders, including educators, school authorities, parents, and the wider community. By working together, we can create safer, more supportive environments for children and young people, ensuring that they receive the education and support they need to thrive.