

Urmston Grammar

Child on Child Abuse Policy



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This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Urmston Grammar safeguarding policy

Aims

Urmston Grammar recognises that safeguarding is built through positive, respectful, and trusting relationships. We are committed to creating a culture where children feel safe, heard, valued and able to seek help. All concerns of child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously, responded to promptly and managed in a way that restores safety, promotes accountability, and supports the wellbeing of the children involved.

Who is this policy related to?

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'children' includes everybody under the age of eighteen. This is in line with guidance provided in keeping children safe in education. However, where students are older than eighteen, safeguarding information, advice and guidance will continue to be shared with students and their families. The same processes will be followed for recording incidents and taking action where required. The key difference will arise if there is social care involvement as this will necessitate a referral to adult social care.

What is child-on-child abuse?

Urmston Grammar recognises that children are capable of inflicting abuse on their peers. Such abuse will never be accepted as 'part of growing up', or as a joke or 'banter'.

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between children of any age and sex. For students subject to such abuse, it can be a stressful and distressing experience, and we will always work with sensitivity and care to best support and protect them.

In the majority of circumstances, incidents of students hurting other students will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy. However, this policy, alongside the safeguarding policy will supersede that in regard to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This may include, but is not limited, to the following:

- A serious and potentially criminal offence
- A situation that may put other students in school at risk
- Incidents that are violent
- Situations where students are compelled to use drugs, alcohol or any illegal substances
- Bullying (Including cyberbullying)
- Allegations of physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise inflicting physical harm
- Any sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault
- Forms of sexual harassment, including sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment
- Situations involving upskirting. The voyeurism (offences) act is commonly referred to as the upskirting act and has been in force since April 2019. Upskirting is the act of taking a picture under a person's clothing (not limited to skirts) with the intention of viewing genitals or buttocks (in the absence or presence of underwear) to gain sexual gratification or for the perpetrator to cause

the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. **This is a criminal offence and can affect male and females**

- Incidents that involve sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Abuse within intimate partner relationships

We will also consider emerging risks as they increase in prevalence, these include:

- Production of AI-generated sexual images and deepfakes
- Sharing or creating synthetic intimate imagery
- Image based abuse
- Coercive control within teenage relationships
- Group based abuse and exploitation
- Online misogyny and harmful online communities
- Technology- facilitated abuse

It is important to recognise that child-on-child abuse can occur both online and offline. People now face additional risks due to the progression of AI in allowing the creation, possession and distribution of AI generated intimate images.

Wherever it is possible to do so, we will engage with parents/carers to ensure that all relevant information is shared. Judgements will be made in each individual circumstance and whether there is a risk that this may be unsafe. We may elect to not share information with parents/carers in these instances.

The wishes, feelings and lived experiences of the child will be central to all safeguarding decisions. Children will be supported to express their views and understand the actions being taken to protect them.

Protected characteristics

Urmston Grammar recognises that child-on-child abuse may be motivated by prejudice, discrimination or hostility towards protected characteristics and will respond robustly to all such incidents. These protected characteristics include:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexuality
- Gender
- Disability
- Faith

Managing allegations

If a student makes an allegation against another student:

- The DSL, Deputy DSL or colleagues named in the safeguarding policy in their absence, must be informed immediately
- The reporting member of staff should not investigate the matter themselves

- The DSL (or deputy) will contact the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL (or deputy) will make a local authority social care team referral if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL (or deputy) will discuss a support plan and put one in place for all children involved (both the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s))
- The DSL (or deputy) will ensure a named person is provided for all involved to speak to if needed
- The DSL (or deputy) will also consider if wider support is needed for friends, or witnesses to incidents as appropriate

Staff will recognise that children who display harmful behaviours may themselves have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma, or adverse childhood experiences. Responses will seek to understand the underlying needs while ensuring accountability and safety.

Restorative practice

Where appropriate and safe, the school will always consider restorative practices to repair relationships, rebuild trust, and strengthen the school community. Restorative practices in these circumstances will need consent from those involved. They will never replace safeguarding procedures or criminal investigations.

Support for victims/perpetrators

Safety plans will consider the following:

- A named trusted adult
- Safety planning
- Timetable adjustments as needed
- Mental health support
- Peer support
- Ongoing review meetings
- Measures to prevent a repeat of poor behavioural choices

Support will continue for as long as required and will not end when the investigation concludes.

Contextual safeguarding

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur beyond the school site, including online, in the community, on public transport and within friendship groups. Assessments will consider the wider context in which harm occurs.

Creating a safe and respectful culture

The school will:

- Promote respectful relationships
- Teach consent and healthy relationships
- Challenge sexism, misogyny and discriminatory language
- Foster inclusion and belonging
- Ensure children know how to report concerns
- Provide trusted adults
- Use pupil voice to shape safeguarding practice
- Monitor trends and patterns of incidents.