



Managing Allegations Against Other Pupils Policy

DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education says that 'all staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse' and that they 'should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.' The guidance also states the importance of minimising the risks of peer-on- peer abuse. In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be covered by the school's behaviour policy.

At Ivy House School, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults and other students in the school.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

These procedures have been established to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and show how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with. The school has clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse will be supported; and we acknowledge and advocate that **abuse is abuse** and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Prevention

As a school we will minimise the risk of allegations against other pupils by: -

- ❖ Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe
- ❖ Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued
- ❖ Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk
- ❖ Developing robust risk assessments & behaviour plans, whilst providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.

Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation: -

- Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence

- Raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- Violence, particularly pre-planned
- Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- Blackmail or extortion
- Threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)
- Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Procedure: -

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, school leaders will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at heart.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL should contact the social care duty officer to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.

- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, social care will refer the case on. Police will become involved.
- Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' files.
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.
- In the case of pupils with complex learning difficulties their own levels of understanding and intent in the alleged actions will need to be considered and appropriate support/ programmes/ supervision also put into place for the accused party. (The pupils at Ivy House School are developing physically but their emotions and comprehension of rules, right and wrong lies behind their chronological age.)

Links to other policies

- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)