



Venture
Learning

Managing Child-on-Child Abuse Allegations and Concerns

Venture Learning

Document Owner

Rhys Griffiths

Version

8.0

Effective From

01/09/2026

Next Review Date

01/09/2027

At Venture Learning, we believe that all students have a right to attend and learn in a safe and positive environment. Students should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

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

Child-on-child abuse is any form of abuse perpetrated by one child against another child. It can occur inside or outside school, face-to-face or online, and may occur between children of any age or gender.

Venture Learning recognises that:

- child-on-child abuse is never acceptable
- it will never be dismissed as banter, teasing, part of growing up or horseplay
- Child/children who may have experienced harm/abuse will be supported and protected
- alleged perpetrators will also be supported through an appropriate safeguarding response
- all concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.

When assessing concerns, the school will consider whether abuse is motivated by:

- race
- religion
- disability
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- other protected characteristics

Venture Learning recognises that children with special educational needs and disabilities may be at increased risk of child-on-child abuse and may face additional barriers to recognising and reporting abuse. Staff will ensure that safeguarding responses are tailored to individual communication and support needs.

All forms of discriminatory behaviour will be challenged and addressed.

Venture Learning adopts a victim-centred approach. The wishes, feelings, safety and wellbeing of the child who may have experienced abuse will be central to all decision making.

The school will consider:

- the child's views
- ongoing safety
- educational arrangements
- emotional wellbeing
- support requirements
- the impact of the incident on the wider school community



Venture Learning recognises that children who display harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma, neglect or exploitation.

The school adopts a contextual safeguarding approach. Where appropriate, assessments will consider wider environmental factors including friendship groups, community influences, transport routes, online activity, extracurricular activities and locations where children spend time.

Safeguarding responses will consider the needs of:

- the child harmed
- the child displaying the behaviour
- any other affected children

Students will be taught how to recognise child-on-child abuse, how to report concerns about themselves or others and how to access support. The school will actively encourage bystander reporting and ensure all concerns are taken seriously.

Safeguarding allegations

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, child on child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual exploitation. It is likely, that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil, or vice versa, 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 / Harmful Sexual Behaviour

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography



- Creating and/or Sharing nude and semi-nude images, including AI generated content.

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the DSL. Decisions regarding referral pathways will take account of the wishes of the child, proportionality, ongoing safety and advice from partner agencies.

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

Additional forms of child-on-child abuse

- sexual harassment
- sexual violence
- harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- misogyny and sexist behaviours
- image-based abuse
- sharing nude and semi-nude images
- online abuse
- cyberbullying
- initiation/hazing behaviours
- coercive control
- intimate relationship abuse between young people
- prejudice-based abuse
- abuse linked to protected characteristics
- serious violence

Child-on-child abuse may occur online as well as face-to-face.

This includes:

- online sexual harassment
- sharing of sexual images without consent
- coercion through social media
- online bullying
- exploitative online relationships
- use of artificial intelligence tools to create harmful or abusive content

Venture Learning recognises that harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence exist on a continuum. Early identification and intervention are essential to prevent escalation and protect children from harm.

Venture Learning recognises misogyny, sexist attitudes, gender-based harassment and discrimination as safeguarding concerns. Such behaviours will be challenged, recorded and addressed at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation into harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence.



Child Criminal Exploitation

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards pupils from other students

On occasion, some students will present a safeguarding risk to other students. The school should be informed that the young person raises safeguarding concerns, for example, they are coming back into school following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves.

These students will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

What to do

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.

A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.

All concerns, discussions, decisions, rationale, actions and outcomes will be recorded in writing.

Records will include:

- the concern raised
- the views of the child
- actions taken
- risk assessments
- referrals made
- outcomes and reviews

Records will be stored securely in accordance with safeguarding procedures and information-sharing requirements.

The DSL will undertake an initial safeguarding assessment and determine whether:

- internal management is appropriate;
- Early Help / Family Help support is needed;
- children's social care involvement is required;
- police involvement is necessary;
- multi-agency intervention should be initiated.

It is possible that Children's social care are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.



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.

If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the alleged perpetrator and the alleged victim).

It may be appropriate to consider suspension where necessary and proportionate the alleged perpetrator for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither children's social care nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

Where needs do not meet statutory thresholds, Venture Learning will consider whether Family Help intervention or other early support services would be beneficial.

Where appropriate, the DSL will complete a written risk assessment considering:

- nature of the incident
- ages and developmental stages
- level of vulnerability
- educational arrangements
- supervision requirements
- contact between children
- transport arrangements
- online contact
- wider school risks

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. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection legislation. Venture Learning recognises that data protection legislation does not prevent the sharing of information where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Support measures for the child/children who have experienced harm/abuse may include:

- pastoral support
- counselling
- therapeutic services
- adjustments to timetables
- supervised movement around the site
- safe spaces
- changes to contact arrangements



- external specialist support

