



The Vyne Community School

Managing Allegations against Pupils Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Linked Policies/Documents:

Confidentiality

Behaviour Management

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Online Safety Policy

Anti-Bullying

Anti-Drug

Sex and Relationship Education

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS

Introduction

At The Vyne Community 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 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 the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). It is also likely that incidents dealt with under this policy will involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable.

The Safeguarding Implications of Sexual Activity between Young People¹ The intervention of child protection agencies in situations involving sexual activity between children can require difficult professional judgments. Some situations are statutorily clear – for example, a child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity. But it will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. In our society generally the age at which children become sexually active has steadily dropped. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent) and sexual activity involving a power imbalance, or some form of coercion or exploitation. It may also be difficult to be sure that what has or has been alleged to have taken place definitely does have a sexual component.

As usual, important decisions should be made on a case by case basis, on the basis of an assessment of the children's best interests. Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Key specific considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the children;
- Any disability or special needs of the children;
- Their social and family circumstance;
- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed;
- Any evidence of pressure to engage in sexual activity;
- Any indication of sexual exploitation.

There are also contextual factors. Gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge can all be used to exert power. A sexual predator may sometimes be a woman or girl and the victim a boy

¹ Taken from The safeguarding implications of events leading to the closure of Stanbridge Earls School – A Serious Case Review (2015)

Policy:-

At The Vyne Community 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.

Prevention

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

- Providing an appropriate Personal Development Curriculum which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe
- Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff in confidence, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued
- Delivering targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe those pupils identified as being at risk
- Developing robust risk assessments and providing targeted work for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils.
- Develop a robust tutoring and mentoring programme to include information on safeguarding behaviours, inclusion and further develop an open safeguarding culture.

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

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 using CPOMS.
- 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 children's reception team (CRT) to discuss the case if there is an immediate risk. The DSL will follow this up with a referral
- If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, a referral to police will be made.
- Parents, of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral/s.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion, rationale and any outcome and keep a copy in the safeguarding files of both pupils.
- 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.