



CHILD-FRIENDLY SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

'This policy will be implemented in a way which honours the vision that every FCJ school is a community of persons - students, staff, governors - bound together in mutual respect and ready to rely on each other in fulfilling their privileged task as educators in a Catholic school.'

This policy is for you

At Upton Hall School, your safety and wellbeing matter. Safeguarding means all the things we do to help keep you safe, healthy and able to learn. Child protection is the action adults take when they are worried that a child may be being harmed or may be at risk of harm.

You have the right to feel safe in school, at home, online and in the community. You also have the right to be listened to, treated with dignity and taken seriously.

The most important things to remember

- If something is worrying you, tell an adult you trust. You do not need to be certain that something is "serious enough".
- You can talk about something that is happening to you, to a friend, at home, in school, online or somewhere else.
- Adults at school will listen carefully and will not blame you for asking for help.
- We cannot promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret. We may need to share it with people who can help keep you or somebody else safe.
- You can keep speaking up if you still feel worried or do not think something has been sorted.

1. Who can I talk to?

You can speak to any member of staff you trust. This could be your Form Tutor, Head of Year, a teacher, a member of the pastoral or inclusion team, or one of the safeguarding team.

Safeguarding role	Who
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mr Philip Jones – Assistant Headteacher
Deputy DSL	Mr Paul McAleese – Deputy Headteacher
Deputy DSL	Mrs Andrea Gaunt – Headmistress
Deputy DSL	Miss Paula Etheridge – SENCO

Other ways to tell us

If talking face-to-face feels difficult, you can use SpeakUp through the Thrive Hub. A message sent through SpeakUp goes to the DSL, who will decide what help is needed. You can also write something down and give it to a trusted member of staff.

In an emergency, if you or somebody else is in immediate danger, call 999 or ask an adult to do this for you.

2. What is a safeguarding concern?

A safeguarding concern is anything that makes you worried about your safety or somebody else's safety or wellbeing. Harm can happen once or many times. It can happen in person or online, and it can be caused by an adult or by another young person.

Examples include

- Physical abuse – being deliberately hurt, hit, kicked, shaken or injured.
- Emotional abuse – being repeatedly threatened, humiliated, frightened, controlled or made to feel worthless.
- Sexual abuse – being pressured, forced, tricked or encouraged into sexual activity, including online activity or sexual images.
- Neglect – not having important needs met, such as enough food, safe care, suitable clothing, medical help or supervision.
- Bullying or child-on-child abuse – including physical, verbal, sexual, prejudiced or online abuse.

- Exploitation – when somebody uses, pressures, manipulates or controls a child for their own benefit. This can include criminal or sexual exploitation.
- Domestic abuse – harmful, controlling, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a family or relationship that affects you.
- Online harm – grooming, threats, scams, harmful content, cyberbullying, sexual images, fake or AI-generated images, or somebody trying to control you online.

You do not need to know the correct name for what is happening. Tell us what has happened or what is worrying you, and we will help.

3. What happens when I tell someone?

We know that telling somebody about a worry can feel difficult. The member of staff should listen, stay calm and take you seriously.

- They will give you time to explain in your own words.
- They should not ask you lots of leading questions or make you repeat your story unnecessarily.
- They will explain that they may need to pass the information to the safeguarding team.
- They will make an accurate record so that the right people can help.
- The DSL or a Deputy DSL will consider what needs to happen next and how best to keep you safe.
- Where it is safe and appropriate, you should be kept informed about what is happening.

Will you tell my parents or carers?

Usually, school will work with parents or carers because they are important in supporting you. However, we will not tell them first if doing so could make you less safe, put somebody else at risk or interfere with an investigation. The safeguarding team will decide what is safest.

Will everybody know?

No. Safeguarding information is private and is only shared with people who need it to help protect or support you. Sometimes this includes professionals outside school, such as Children's Social Care, health services or the police.

4. Pastoral worries and mental health

Not every worry means that a child is being abused. Sometimes you may be struggling with friendships, anxiety, family difficulties, attendance, bereavement, confidence, schoolwork or other pressures. These are still important.

Staff may record and respond to pastoral concerns so that patterns are noticed and support can be offered early. If a pastoral worry suggests that you may be at risk of harm, it will be passed to the safeguarding team.

Mental health

Mental health difficulties can affect anyone. A change in mood, behaviour, attendance, relationships, sleep, eating, self-care or engagement can sometimes show that a young person needs help. Mental health concerns can also sometimes be connected to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

If you are worried about your mental health, including thoughts of hurting yourself, tell an adult. School can consider support in school and, where appropriate, support from outside services. Asking for mental health support will never stop us taking safeguarding action if you are at risk.

5. Keeping safe with other young people

Children and young people can harm other children. We call this child-on-child abuse. It is not "banter" or something you have to put up with.

- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- physical violence or threatening behaviour
- controlling or abusive behaviour in friendships or relationships
- sexual comments, sexual harassment or unwanted sexual touching
- pressuring somebody to do something sexual
- sharing, threatening to share or asking for nude or semi-nude images
- upskirting, cyberflashing or sexualised behaviour online
- abuse connected to groups, gangs or exploitation

If you report child-on-child abuse, we will consider the safety and needs of everyone involved. We will not dismiss a concern because the person causing harm is also a pupil.

Nudes, semi-nudes and AI-generated images

If an image of you has been shared, created or changed without your agreement, including with AI, tell an adult. Do not forward the image to prove what happened. You will be supported and the school will decide what safeguarding action is needed.

6. Staying safe online

Online safety is part of safeguarding. Harm can happen through social media, games, messaging, livestreams, websites and AI tools.

Tell an adult if...

- somebody online makes you feel frightened, uncomfortable, pressured or controlled
- somebody asks you for sexual images, personal information, money or secrecy
- you see content about self-harm, suicide, violence, hatred or sexual abuse that worries you
- somebody threatens to share an image or information about you
- you are being bullied, impersonated or targeted online
- you think an image, video or voice recording has been manipulated or generated using AI to harm somebody.

School uses filtering and monitoring systems on school technology to help protect pupils. Alerts may be reviewed by the safeguarding team when they suggest that somebody could be at risk. These systems do not replace speaking to an adult if you are worried.

7. Some safeguarding risks have special names

You may hear adults use particular safeguarding terms. You do not need to remember these names, but you should know that you can ask for help about any of them.

Term	What it means in simple language
Child sexual exploitation (CSE)	A child is manipulated, pressured or given something in exchange for sexual activity or sexual images.
Child criminal exploitation (CCE)	A child is pressured, tricked or forced into crime, for example carrying drugs or money.
County lines	Criminal groups use children or vulnerable people to move drugs or money between areas.
Grooming	Somebody builds trust or a relationship so that they can exploit, abuse or control a child.
Radicalisation	Somebody is influenced towards extremist ideas that may support terrorism or serious harm.
FGM	Female genital mutilation: deliberately cutting or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal and a form of abuse.
Forced marriage	A marriage where one or both people do not freely agree.
Modern slavery / trafficking	A person is controlled, moved or exploited for somebody else's benefit.

If any of these words relate to something happening to you or someone you know, tell a trusted adult. You will not be expected to investigate it yourself.

8. Your rights and individual needs

Safeguarding applies to every pupil. We know that some young people can face extra barriers to being heard or may be more vulnerable to harm. This can include pupils with SEND or medical needs, young carers, pupils in care or previously in care, pupils affected by discrimination, pupils with a social worker, and pupils experiencing difficulties at home.

We will make reasonable adjustments so that you can communicate in a way that works for you. We will take account of your age, understanding, communication needs and individual circumstances.

Respect and equality

You should not be harmed, harassed or treated unfairly because of who you are. This includes racism, sexism, homophobia and other prejudice or discrimination. Tell us if you experience or witness this.

Your voice matters

Adults should listen to your wishes and feelings and take them seriously. This does not always mean that we can do exactly what you ask, because adults have a responsibility to act when somebody may be unsafe. We should explain decisions to you in a way you can understand wherever possible.

9. Adults in school must behave safely too

Adults who work or volunteer in school have professional rules to follow. If an adult's behaviour makes you uncomfortable, worries you, seems inappropriate or makes you feel unsafe, tell another trusted adult.

You can report a concern about any adult, including a teacher, support member of staff, volunteer, visitor or contractor. Concerns about adults are taken seriously and are dealt with using specific safeguarding procedures.

Physical intervention

Staff should use calm approaches and de-escalation wherever possible. In exceptional situations, reasonable force may be used to prevent somebody being hurt, serious damage or serious disorder. It must never be used as a punishment, and staff must consider individual needs such as SEND, medical needs or trauma.

Searching and prohibited items

In some circumstances, authorised staff can search a pupil or their possessions when the law allows this, particularly where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a prohibited item. The school's Behaviour Policy explains these procedures in more detail.

10. If you are worried about a friend

You do not have to deal with a friend's safeguarding problem on your own. If a friend tells you something serious, listen to them and encourage them to speak to an adult. If they will not, you should still tell a trusted adult if you think they may be unsafe.

Do not promise to keep a dangerous situation secret. Getting help is a caring thing to do.

11. If you think we have not listened

Tell another trusted adult, a Head of Year, the DSL or a Deputy DSL. You can also use SpeakUp through the Thrive Hub. It is okay to keep asking for help until you feel that your concern has been heard.

12. Remember

- It could happen to anyone.
- It is never wrong to ask for help.
- You will not be in trouble for making a genuine safeguarding report.
- You do not need proof before telling an adult.
- If something does not feel right, speak up.
- Your safety comes first.

Key school safeguarding contacts

School telephone: 0151 677 7696

Emergency: 999. If you are outside school and need urgent safeguarding help, a trusted adult can also contact Wirral Children's Social Care / Integrated Front Door.

This child-friendly policy summarises the parts of Upton Hall School's full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that are most useful for pupils. The full policy contains the detailed legal duties and procedures that adults in school must follow.