

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Public policy - all Unmatched Coaching school-based sessions

UNMATCHED COACHING LTD. Version 1.1

Document owner: Unmatched Coaching Ltd

1. Purpose and approach

Unmatched Coaching Ltd is committed to protecting every child from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The child's safety and welfare come first. This policy applies to directors, coaches, contractors and anyone representing Unmatched in school-based activities. We follow relevant national guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education and DfE guidance for out-of-school settings, alongside host schools' safeguarding arrangements.

2. Responsibility and contacts

Unmatched Coaching's safeguarding lead can be contacted at contact@unmatchedcoaching.com. During delivery on school premises, coaches must also use the host school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and its safeguarding reporting pathway. Coaches must know how to reach the DSL or duty safeguarding contact for each venue, including when the school day has ended.

When concerns relate to the safeguarding lead or cannot safely be reported internally, staff and parents may contact the relevant local authority children's social care service or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as appropriate, and may contact police directly. Nobody is required to seek the safeguarding lead's permission to report a safeguarding concern externally. For immediate danger, call 999; otherwise make a prompt referral to children's social care or police as appropriate.

3. Recognising concerns

Concerns may arise from something a child says or shows, unexplained injury, changes in behaviour, bullying, online harm, exploitation, discriminatory abuse, neglect, or an adult's conduct. Staff should remain alert to SEND-related communication barriers and not assume that a child's additional needs explain away possible abuse.

4. What to do when worried

- Listen calmly and take the child seriously. Do not promise secrecy, ask leading questions, investigate or confront the person alleged to be responsible.
- If immediate harm is possible, protect the child, summon emergency services and contact the school's safeguarding arrangements without delay.
- Report a concern promptly to the school DSL and the safeguarding lead, or an independent route if the concern relates to the safeguarding lead or reporting internally is unsafe.
- Record the facts on a Safeguarding Concern Form as soon as practical, preferably the same day. Include date, time, child's actual words, observations, witnesses and who was informed; distinguish facts from opinion.
- Pass the record securely to the appropriate safeguarding lead. Do not rely on email alone for urgent concerns. Continue reporting or escalating if action is not taken and a child remains at risk.

5. Allegations about staff and low-level concerns

Any allegation that an adult may have harmed a child, committed an offence against a child, or posed a risk of harm must be reported promptly to the school's DSL and appropriate employer/organisation safeguarding lead, with LADO advice/referral as appropriate. Do not conduct your own investigation before consulting statutory safeguarding professionals. If the concern involves the safeguarding lead, contact the LADO or children's social care independently and follow the host school's procedure. Lower-level boundary concerns must also be recorded and responded to proportionately.

6. Staff suitability and standards

Coaches undergo suitable recruitment checks, enhanced DBS checks and barred-list checks where required for their role, references and suitability review before independent work. Unmatched's current operational rule is that a DBS result must be confirmed before any coaching or shadowing with children begins. All coaches complete induction, safeguarding training, KCSIE reading and refreshers; qualifications, training and first aid are tracked. Coaching is supervised and inappropriate conduct is addressed promptly.

7. Handover, safety and emergency arrangements

We agree venue-specific handover and collection arrangements with each school. Coaches maintain a register, account for children, follow the school's fire/lockdown procedures, and respond immediately to a child at risk or believed missing. Children remain supervised until a safe authorised handover. Where urgent support is needed and school staff are unavailable, call emergency services and/or children's social care as appropriate.

8. Records, information sharing and confidentiality

Paper concern forms are restricted safeguarding records, not ordinary coaching registers. They are handed securely to the appropriate DSL or sealed for authorised transfer and stored with restricted access. Details are shared only on a need-to-know basis, including with schools and statutory safeguarding bodies where necessary. Data protection law does not prevent appropriate information sharing to protect a child. Children and parents cannot be promised absolute confidentiality.

9. Publication, review and concerns

This policy is available to parents and schools on request or through our website. It is reviewed at least annually and sooner after an incident, significant operational change or guidance update. Concerns can be raised through contact@unmatchedcoaching.com or directly with the school's DSL or the relevant statutory authority.

10. Child-on-child harm and additional vulnerabilities

Harm between children is a safeguarding matter and must not be dismissed as ordinary rough play or banter. Staff must act on bullying, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, intimidation, exploitation and online threats. Record the concern, safeguard any children involved and refer promptly to the school DSL and Unmatched safeguarding lead. Do not investigate the allegation independently.

Children with SEND, communication differences or additional vulnerabilities may need adapted approaches to being heard and supported. Staff must not assume signs of harm are explained by a disability or behaviour need.

11. Reporting about adults, concerns about practice and escalation

Allegations involving a person working with children are referred through the school and employing organisation safeguarding routes. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is consulted or informed where the allegation meets the relevant threshold; lower-level concerns are still recorded, assessed and addressed. Where an allegation concerns the director, staff may contact the school DSL, the LADO or children's social care directly and must not report only to the person concerned.

If the school DSL cannot be reached, does not act, or a child remains at risk, staff must contact children's social care or police directly. A coach must never wait for permission from a parent or manager to seek urgent protective help. Where statutory conditions are met for removal from regulated activity because of harm or risk of harm, Unmatched will make the required separate referral to the DBS.

Any staff member can speak up about safeguarding failures through the Whistleblowing Policy without fear of retaliation.

12. Keeping children safe during one-to-one contact

Most sessions involve groups. If a coach unexpectedly becomes alone with one child, they should remain observable, avoid secluded or locked rooms, inform an appropriate member of school staff or the director, and arrange a second suitable adult or safe handover where practicable. Children must never be left without appropriate supervision to obtain that help.

Personal messages, private social media contact and unapproved one-to-one transport are prohibited. Any concerning boundary situation is recorded and reported.

13. Missing child response

A child believed missing after entering our care is treated as an emergency. The coach must keep the remaining children appropriately supervised, raise the alarm, contact the host school and management, and arrange a proportionate immediate search by suitable adults. Staff must not leave the other children alone.

Following the DfE training recommendation, if a child aged five or under is believed missing from our care, call the police immediately. For any age, call 999 immediately where the child may be in danger; do not wait for parental agreement or a prolonged search. Inform parents without delaying police contact. Record a full incident chronology and follow the school emergency plan and the separate Missing Child Procedure.

14. Sharing information and continuous improvement

Safeguarding information is shared lawfully with appropriate agencies when needed to protect a child. Parental consent is not a universal precondition for sharing safeguarding concerns, and confidentiality cannot be promised absolutely. Records are secured separately from routine registers with an audit trail of access and transfer.

Staff receive induction, updates and relevant refresher training. This policy is reviewed annually and following a serious incident, relevant legislative change or change in provision. Parents, schools and staff can access the policy and safeguarding contact route.